

# SSC Sourcing Code of Conduct – Guidance V2.2

**The Sustainable Seafood Coalition is a pre-competitive progressive collaborative platform comprised of businesses and organisations from across the seafood value chain, working to ensure a healthy future for our oceans. Our vision is that all seafood sold is from sustainable sources.**

## **Overview**

This document is designed to support the implementation of the Code on Conduct on Responsible Seafood Sourcing (herein the Sourcing Code).

This Guidance is intended to help SSC members in the interpretation and implementation of the Sourcing Code and includes additional best practice advice. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of individual businesses to ensure alignment with the Sourcing Code.

This Guidance will be reviewed on a biennial basis in line with the Sourcing Code review. In the interim supplementary quarterly updates may be made by Steering Group decision.

Common terms and abbreviation definitions are listed in the Glossary.

## How to use this document

The SSC Sourcing Code and Guidance for implementation of the Code are included together in each section. The Code is in blue at the top of each box, with Guidance in black below this.

The Codes and Guidance are now tiered. **Tier 1 is a requirement for all SSC members.** Tiers 2 and 3 are optional for members to implement, with Tier 2 being more progressive and Tier 3 the most advanced.

Each tier is shown below in one column, with the corresponding guidance given below it. **Some sections are relevant for all members to adhere to** and are not tiered.

## **Contents**

**Note – Use of SSC Logo  
(Pages 4)**

**Guidance on Code of Conduct on Responsible Seafood Sourcing  
(Pages 5-32)**

**Guidance on Sourcing Decision Tree  
(Page 33)**

**Appendix 1  
(Page 34)**

## Note – Use of SSC Logo

The SSC logo is available for use by SSC members to demonstrate their affiliation with the SSC and/or to promote the work of the SSC.

### The SSC logo is not an ecolabel.

It cannot be used to ‘certify’ the environmental status of fisheries or aquaculture sources for particular products and therefore cannot be used on pack or anywhere else it could be deemed an ecolabel (such as on individual tickets at a seafood counter, or next to specific items on a menu) or mislead consumers.

It can, however, be used to show whether a company is an SSC member and/or to promote the work of the SSC.

Use of the logo is not mandatory. Examples of how the logo should or should not be used are shown in Table 1 below. Use of the SSC logo will be accompanied by a link to the SSC website, and in the case of use in store/restaurants, must include a statement that ‘[Name] is a member of the [logo]’. Members may also wish to demonstrate their affiliation in relation to the following:

- On a menu (in a restaurant); or
- On public facing or business to business communications (such as a leaflet or website).

### Examples of suitable wording include:

- [MEMBER] is a member of the Sustainable Seafood Coalition (SSC). Find out more at [www.sustainableseafoodcoalition.org](http://www.sustainableseafoodcoalition.org)
- [MEMBER] is a member of the Sustainable Seafood Coalition. We are working with like-minded businesses towards a sustainable future for seafood. Find out more at [www.sustainableseafoodcoalition.org](http://www.sustainableseafoodcoalition.org)

These examples are not exhaustive and if a member wishes to use their own wording this must be approved by the Secretariat. Guidelines on logo use are further detailed in the [Terms of Reference](#).

Table 1: Examples of proper and improper use of the SSC logo

Sector	Proper use	Improper use
Brand	On a website; exhibition stands; posters; Corporate Social Responsibility reports.	On a specific product; in advertising relating to specific products.
Foodservice	At the bottom of a menu; on a website; posters.	Next to specific food items on the menu; on takeaway food boxes.
Retailer	On a website; leaflets; magazines.	At point of sale where it could be associated with specific food items; anywhere on pack.

# Guidance on Code of Conduct on Responsible Seafood Sourcing

## 1. Objective

1.1. The Sustainable Seafood Coalition (SSC) is a progressive partnership of businesses co-operating to address important issues in seafood sustainability. This Sourcing Code outlines general good practice in seafood sourcing which must be used by SSC members to inform their own policies for seafood procurement.

The SSC Codes do not constitute legal guidance. All members are expected to align with/meet relevant legal and regulatory requirements.

1.2. This Code applies equally to all members irrespective of size or sector and must be implemented within one year of publication or a member joining the SSC. It is accompanied by the SSC Guidance document which helps members to implement the Code. Full adoption and implementation of the Tier 1 of the Code is the core membership requirement (as per SSC Terms of Reference). This will be reviewed during the biennial Implementation Report for which members must provide a timely response.

### **GUIDANCE**

1.1. Members should seek out legal advice if they have concerns over any of their sourcing practices.

1.2. Details about the most recent Implementation Report can be found [here](#).

## 2. Scope

2.1. This Code applies to the sourcing of all products (for human or animal consumption) with a minimum of 5% fish and seafood content (hereafter 'seafood'). Its central focus is on environmental and social aspects relating directly to fisheries and aquaculture. It is not a certification standard.

2.2. This Code relates to sourcing processes and behaviours regarding members' seafood buying practices for own brand seafood and owned brand/branded exclusives/tertiary brand seafood. Members who are buyers of branded products are also encouraged to include these products.

2.3. All members are encouraged to advocate for the wider adoption of the Codes, including encouraging others in the seafood industry to implement the Codes and join the SSC.

### **GUIDANCE**

2.1. Scope includes pet food with minimum 5% fish and seafood content. Members should check specifications for their products to ascertain percentage of seafood content.

2.2. Please see the Glossary for definitions of the various types of products supplied by members. If you are a member who sells brands on behalf of others, you can use the [SSC infographic](#) to encourage other organisations to join the SSC.

2.3. Members can use the [SSC infographic](#) to encourage their suppliers and other organisations to implement the Codes and join the SSC. Members can also advise companies to contact the Secretariat if they want more information about the Coalition.

### 3. Member commitments

3.1. The SSC Code constitutes a continual process: accurate and up-to-date annual data collection, clear evaluation based on that data, decision making and transparent communication.

3.2. SSC members commit to:

- I. Sourcing requirements which must include traceability, transparency, environment, human rights, feed, animal welfare and carbon.
- II. Data collection and risk assessment: conducted and reviewed at a minimum annually.
- III. Evaluation of risks and SMART action plans: prioritising actions to address risks, engaging with supply chain partners, monitoring improvements, and participating in pre-competitive collaborations to address common challenges where industry collaboration is needed for impact (e.g., advocacy)
- IV. Sourcing decisions: based on the outcome of the evaluation.
- V. Transparency: ongoing openness and communication.

#### **GUIDANCE**

3.1. N/A

3.2.

- I. Member sourcing policies should describe any certifications within the supply chain. Ensuring products are certified to standards benchmarked by the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI) are considered best practice – see Appendix 1. Some of these certifications cover human rights and animal welfare as standard.

Products must be traceable to origin using manual or digital systems, and suppliers should consider holding food safety certifications to comply with traceability in the food supply chain (e.g., HACCP, BRCGS, ISO 22000). Companies should disclose sourcing practices where feasible, balancing transparency with legal and commercial sensitivities (e.g. Ocean Disclosure Project).

- II. The SSC Risk Assessment Template will help members to identify low, medium and high-risk supply chains.
- III. Members should refer to the agreed SMART action plan requirements – 7.3.

IV. Members must prioritise suppliers and products that meet the required standards and demonstrate lower risk. Where risks are identified, decisions should reflect the supplier's willingness and ability to improve, as well as the urgency of the issue.

V. Refer to section 5.2.

3.3. The Code has been designed with three Tiers. All members must meet the expectations in Tier 1. Members may choose to meet the requirements in Tier 2 and/or Tier 3.

3.4. All members are expected to commit to continual improvement regardless of the level of Tiering achieved.

#### **GUIDANCE**

3.3. Members should complete the Risk Assessment and review the distinguishing Tier requirements in Code Section 5 to gauge their Tier level.

3.4. If members have risk assessed sources and are only sourcing from low risk with no moderate or significant issues identified, members should look to make continual improvement over and above the expectations of the Code.

## 4. Sourcing policies

4.1. Members must have a sourcing policy that describes how responsible sourcing decisions are made in line with this Code . Members should clearly define the scope of this policy. Policies must be reviewed at a minimum in line with the review of the Codes, which will be at least every two years.

### **GUIDANCE**

4.1. Members must use the Risk Assessment and SMART actions plans if challenges have been identified. The policy should outline the principles, criteria, and processes used to evaluate sources, ensuring alignment with each of the sections of the Code.

If members have limited resources, influences, or market power they can join precompetitive groups and organisations if they require wider industry involvement for change, such as [Sustainable Fisheries Partnership \(SFP\)](#), [Seafish](#), [Global Tuna Alliance](#), [Seafood Ethic Action Alliance](#).

Members should specify which products, supply chains, geographies, and suppliers the policy applies to.

## 5. Sourcing requirements

### 5.1. Traceability

CORE Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
<p>5.1.1. For <b>wild</b> seafood, members must have a traceability system in place that is able to trace all seafood from the point of sale back to source fishery. The system must trace the seafood products through all subsequent stages of handling, transshipment, processing, transformation, and distribution, ensuring any legal requirements are met.</p> <p>5.1.2. Members must test traceability systems at least annually, which could be through external audits.</p>	<p>5.1.6. For <b>wild</b> seafood members must have a traceability system in place that is able to trace all seafood from the point of sale back to source group of vessels, including vessel identification number, license, flag state, and fishery.</p>	<p>5.1.10. For <b>wild</b> seafood, members must have a traceability system in place that is able to trace all seafood from the point of sale back to source vessel and include details of any bait fisheries.</p>
<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 1</b></p> <p>5.1.1. As there is no single, universally accepted traceability system, members should ensure that they and their supply chains have appropriate methods for tracking seafood products through all stages of production, processing and distribution.</p> <p>Further information and resources on traceability can be found here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Traceability and labelling information for fisheries products</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 2</b></p> <p>5.1.6. Further information and resources on traceability can be found here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Global Fishing Watch</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Fishwise</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Sustainable Fisheries Partnership</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Seafood Ethics Action (SEA) Alliance</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Marine Management Organisation - UK vessel identification list</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Pew Charitable Trust</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 3</b></p> <p>5.1.10. Catch certificates can be used to trace to specific vessels.</p> <p>Members can ask their suppliers for details of bait fisheries and assess these against the SSC Code.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST) and GDST's Digital Transformation Journey Explainer</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Seafish</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Traceability Driver</a></li> </ul> <p>5.1.2. Annual testing of the traceability system helps maintain confidence that the system is working as intended and can accurately trace products and ingredients.</p> <p>Where companies are part of a certification scheme (e.g. GSSI benchmarked standards, see Appendix 1) which includes traceability compliance as part of the re-certification process then SSC members do not need to complete a separate traceability exercise.</p> <p>Other examples of certification schemes which cover traceability include BRCGS.</p>		
<p><b>CORE Tier 1</b></p>	<p><b>Tier 2</b></p>	<p><b>Tier 3</b></p>
<p>5.1.3. For <b>farmed</b> seafood, members must have a traceability system in place that is able to trace all seafood from the point of sale back to its aquaculture farm source through all subsequent stages of handling, slaughter, processing and distribution, ensuring any legal requirements are met.</p> <p>5.1.4. For fed species, the feed mill manufacturers must have a traceability</p>	<p>5.1.7. For <b>farmed</b> seafood, members must have a traceability system in place that is able to trace all seafood from the point of sale back to hatchery.</p> <p>5.1.8. For marine ingredients (including those originating from by-products) details of the fishery name, species and FAO area must be collected where available.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<p>system in place that is able to trace feed ingredients.</p> <p>5.1.5. Members must test traceability systems at least annually, which could be through external audits.</p>	<p>5.1.9. Certification status and country of origin (and if possible sub-national region) of the material should be collected for high-risk non-marine raw materials.</p>	
<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 1</b></p> <p>5.1.3. As there is no single, universally accepted traceability system, members should ensure that they and their supply chains have appropriate methods for tracking seafood products through all stages of production, processing and distribution.</p> <p>Further information and resources on traceability can be found here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Traceability and labelling information for fisheries products</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST) and GDST's Digital Transformation Journey Explainer</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Traceability Driver</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Seafish</a></li> </ul> <p>5.1.4. Feed mill traceability systems should have the ability to track all feed raw materials back to their origin, and then forward through all stages of production, processing and distribution.</p> <p>5.1.5. Annual testing of the traceability system helps maintain confidence that the system is</p>	<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 2</b></p> <p>5.1.7. See Guidance for 5.1.3. and include hatchery.</p> <p>5.1.8. For marine ingredients used in aquafeeds the feed mill should be able to provide details of the fishery name, species and FAO area when available.</p> <p>5.1.9. For high-risk non-marine raw materials such as soy and palm used in aquafeeds the feed mill should be able to provide details on the certification status and country of origin/sub-national region.</p>	<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 3</b></p> <p>N/A</p>

<p>working as intended and can accurately trace products and ingredients.</p> <p>Where companies are part of a certification scheme (e.g. GSSI benchmarked standards, see Appendix 1) which includes traceability compliance as part of the re-certification process then SSC members do not need to complete a separate traceability exercise.</p> <p>Other examples of certification schemes which cover traceability include BRCGS.</p>		
--	--	--

## 5.2. Transparency

<b>CORE Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Tier 3</b>
<p>5.2.1. Members must make publicly available their wild and farmed sourcing policies, which must include how sourcing decisions are made.</p> <p>5.2.2. Members must be able to communicate sourcing decisions with relevant stakeholders on request.</p>	N/A	5.2.3 Members must publicly disclose (non-commercially sensitive information) of their seafood sources annually, comprising source fishery / farm country and region of origin, and method of fishing / farming at minimum.
<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 1</b></p> <p>5.2.1. A member’s general sourcing policy should include how the SSC member purchases seafood. As a minimum, the policy should include the types</p>	<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 2</b></p> <p>N/A</p>	<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 3</b></p> <p>5.2.3. This level of transparency supports responsible sourcing and enables stakeholders to assess sustainability and</p>

<p>of seafood covered and the certifications they have in the supply chain.</p> <p>Members should publish their wild-caught and farmed sourcing policies in an accessible format, such as on their company website. These policies must clearly explain how sourcing decisions are made, including the criteria and processes used to assess and select suppliers. Public access to this information supports transparency and accountability, members can use websites such as <a href="#">Ocean Disclosure Project</a>.</p> <p>Members may use external sources such as <a href="#">Good Fish Guide</a>, <a href="#">FishSource</a> and <a href="#">Seafood Watch</a> to inform their sourcing policy.</p> <p>Members should disclose sourcing practices wherever feasible, while respecting supplier confidentiality and complying with legal obligations. Transparency should not compromise strategic interests.</p> <p>5.2.2. Communication can be done through direct communication channels such as email, stakeholder briefings, or sustainability reports.</p> <p>Members should ensure internal teams know where sourcing information is stored and how to respond promptly and accurately to enquiries.</p>		<p>ethical practices. For example, this could be done through the <a href="#">Ocean Disclosure Project</a>.</p>
---	--	---

### 5.3. Environment

<b>CORE Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Tier 3</b>
<p>5.3.1. Members must prioritise sourcing from fisheries that have a healthy stock status, and fisheries and farms that have adequate management and low environmental impact.</p> <p>5.3.2. For <b>wild</b> seafood, members must not knowingly source IUU (Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported) catch.</p> <p>5.3.3. For <b>wild</b> seafood, members must not source from species classified as endangered or critically endangered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) red list.</p> <p>5.3.4. Members must source from fisheries and aquaculture farms with mitigation measures for unwanted catch of ETP species.</p> <p>5.3.5. Members must prioritise sourcing from fisheries and aquaculture farms, certified to third party standards (e.g., GSSI benchmarked certifications) or codes of practice that require environmental stewardship, and or/low risk sources.</p> <p>5.3.6. If certified sources or low risk sources are not available, then members must identify sources where a SMART action plan is in place.</p>	<p>5.3.7. Members must advocate for strengthened government environmental policies and enforcement.</p> <p>5.3.8. Members must source from hatcheries and feed mills certified to third party standards (e.g., GSSI benchmarked certifications) or codes of practice that require environmental stewardship.</p>	<p>5.3.9. Members must invest resources (time and/or financial) in developments to improve the sustainability of source fisheries and aquaculture sites.</p>
<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 1</b></p> <p>5.3.1. Management of the fishery and farm should be in accordance with the</p>	<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 2</b></p> <p>5.3.7. Advocacy may be direct or via membership of a trade body/group.</p>	<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 3</b></p> <p>5.3.9. N/A</p>

[FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries](#). Management of farms should also be in accordance with the [FAO Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture](#).

5.3.2. Various reports are available on fishing stock status:

- [Oceana Taking Stock](#)
- [State of the UK Fish Population 2023](#)
- [Overfished Stocks National Marine Ecosystem Status](#)

5.3.3. The IUCN Red List can be found here:

- [IUCN Red List](#)

5.3.4. N/A

5.3.5. Source fisheries and farms and third party certification standards should be consistent with the principles of the [FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries](#).

Additionally source farms and third party certification standards should be consistent with the [FAO Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture](#) and [FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification](#).

Certification should be accredited to the appropriate standard by recognised international accreditation bodies (e.g. to [ISO 17065](#) or equivalent).

5.3.6. N/A

Advocacy and opportunities can be identified via initiatives such as:

- [Seafood Ethics Action \(SEA\) Alliance](#)
- [Global Tuna Alliance](#)

Examples of advocacy could include letters, meetings with relevant government departments, attendance at relevant forums e.g. IOTC or RMFO meetings.

5.3.8. A list of GSSI benchmarked standards is provided in Appendix 1.

## 5.4. Human rights

CORE Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
<p>5.4.1. Members must make a public commitment to uphold human rights of workers, approved by the highest level in the organisation.</p> <p>5.4.2. Members must promote social responsibility and respect human rights, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs).</p> <p>5.4.3. Members must promote social responsibility and respect human rights in their individual businesses. It must cover both permanent and temporary employees as well as contracted and seasonal labour.</p> <p>5.4.4. Where significant human rights violations are identified; action plans must be developed in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to remedy harms they caused or contributed to and mitigate against these.</p> <p>5.4.5. Certified sources (e.g. SSCI benchmarked certifications) and/or low risk sources must be prioritised first, then members must identify sources where a SMART action plan is in place.</p>	<p>5.4.7. Members must promote social responsibility and respect human rights, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) and fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organisation including the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No.29, and the 2014 protocol).</p> <p>5.4.8. Members must promote social responsibility and respect human rights in their individual businesses, direct and indirect operations, and throughout their direct supply chains. It must cover both permanent and temporary employees as well as contracted and seasonal labour.</p> <p>5.4.9. Members must advocate for strengthened government policies and enforcement.</p>	<p>5.4.11. Members must invest resources (time and/or financial) in developments to promote social responsibility and human rights.</p> <p>5.4.12. Members must promote social responsibility and respect human rights in their individual businesses, direct and indirect operations, and throughout their complete supply chains. It must cover both permanent and temporary employees as well as contracted and seasonal labour.</p>
GUIDANCE Tier 1	GUIDANCE Tier 2	GUIDANCE Tier 3

<p>5.4.1. Public commitments can be made on company websites and/or within relevant company policies.</p> <p>5.4.2. Members can promote social responsibility and respect for human rights or include a commitment on the company website and/or within the relevant company policy.</p> <p>5.4.3. Members can promote social responsibility and respect for human rights through inclusion of human rights themes in worker inductions, contracts and/or internal trainings, and procurement practices that consider human rights.</p> <p>Suggested organisations and resources to engage with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Stronger Together</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Responsible Recruitment Toolkit</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Food Network for Ethical Trade</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Seafood Ethics Action (SEA) Alliance</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">ILO Guidelines for fair labour market services for migrant fishers</a></li> </ul> <p>5.4.4. Significant human rights violations are defined as cases of forced labour, human trafficking, debt bondage and other forms of serious worker exploitation.</p> <p>Incidents should be managed in line with the UK Food Supply Chain Serious Incident Escalation and Management Protocol – available <a href="#">here</a>.</p>	<p>5.4.7. Members can promote social responsibility and respect for human rights in direct and indirect operations, and throughout their supply chains by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion of human rights themes in contracts.</li> <li>• Ensuring human rights is a consideration in the tender process and purchasing decisions.</li> <li>• Conducting human rights trainings for supply chain actors.</li> <li>• Implementing responsible purchasing practices.</li> <li>• Collaborating with relevant third parties to deliver social projects.</li> </ul> <p>See 5.4.3 for relevant organisations.</p> <p>5.4.8. Advocacy opportunities can be identified via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Seafood Ethics Action Alliance</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Global Tuna Alliance</a></li> </ul> <p>5.4.9. Examples of advocacy could include letters, meetings with relevant government departments, attendance at relevant forums e.g. IOTC or RMFO meetings and participation in membership organisation activities.</p>	<p>5.4.11. Members could become <a href="#">Stronger Together Business Partners and Modern Slavery Champions</a> using their toolkits and training.</p> <p>Members could work with industry bodies such as <a href="#">FNET</a> to collaborate on projects.</p> <p>5.4.12. Examples of promoting social responsibility and respect for human rights in direct and indirect operations, and throughout supply chains, could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding external competent third parties to conduct Human Rights Impact Assessments (if internal expertise is not available).</li> </ul>
---	---	---

<p>Relevant stakeholders are defined as closely connected or appropriate to what is being reviewed. Examples can include relevant internal staff, other buyers or supply chain actors and third party human rights organisations.</p> <p>An example of an action plan is Appendix 2.</p> <p>5.4.5. A list of SSCI benchmarked certifications is provided in Appendix 1.</p>		
<p><b>CORE Tier 1</b></p>	<p><b>Tier 2</b></p>	<p><b>Tier 3</b></p>
<p>5.4.6. Members must collect relevant information to evaluate the status of the fishery or aquaculture source, using the SSC Risk Assessment Template; assess actual and potential risks and impact; integrate and act on findings.</p>	<p>5.4.10. Members must work to align their Human Rights Due Diligence, with UNGPs, to identify, prevent, mitigate, and remediate actual and potential risk in their own operations and supply chain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data gathering</li> <li>• Assess actual and potential risks and impact</li> <li>• Integrate and act on findings</li> <li>• Track effectiveness of solutions and commit to continual improvement</li> <li>• Communicate progress.</li> </ul>	<p>5.4.13. Members must undertake Human Rights Due Diligence in alignment with the UNGPs, to identify, prevent, mitigate and remediate actual and potential risk in their own operations and supply chain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging workers and empowering worker voice</li> <li>• Developing (or supporting upstream suppliers in developing) effective operational-level grievance mechanisms and remediation processes for own operations and the supply chain.</li> <li>• Explicitly supporting and advocating for freedom of association and collective bargaining</li> <li>• Ensuring companies' business models align with their commitments,</li> </ul>

		especially when it comes to procurement practices.
<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 1</b></p> <p>5.4.6. Member data gathering should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of workers</li> <li>• Use of labour providers</li> <li>• Salient country risk and product risk</li> </ul>	<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 2</b></p> <p>5.4.10. Members can reference the following frameworks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">UNGP Protect Respect and Remedy Framework</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">ETI HR Framework</a></li> </ul> <p>A Social Responsibility Risk Tool specifically for fishers is available <a href="#">here</a>.</p>	<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 3</b></p> <p>5.4.13. Members can reference the following resources to support with engaging workers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">SEA Alliance</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">FNET membership and working groups</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Common Framework for Responsible Purchasing Practices</a></li> </ul>

## 5.5. Feed

<b>CORE Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Tier 3</b>
<p>5.5.1. For fed species, there must be a written policy that outlines the criteria for sourcing of feed ingredients.</p> <p>5.5.2. Policies must include a commitment to source marine raw materials in line with the environmental requirements of the Code, and in line with human rights requirements of the Code.</p>	<p>5.5.3. Raw materials derived from soy and palm should be from supply chains which are low risk regarding deforestation and land conversion concerns and in line with relevant legislation.</p>	<p>5.5.4. For fed species, there must be a publicly available written policy that outlines the criteria for sourcing of feed ingredients, including disclosure of fisheries.</p> <p>5.5.5 Members must encourage the proactive and progressive adoption of more sustainable alternative/novel ingredients.</p>

<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 1</b></p> <p><i>SSC members not purchasing feed directly will be expected to request information from feed companies.</i></p> <p>5.5.1. Members’ feed policies should include sourcing criteria for the different ingredients and include feed regulations if available.</p> <p>5.5.2. See Sections 5.3 and 5.4.</p> <p>If members are sourcing feed, risk assessments should be carried out according to the SSC Risk Assessment for marine ingredients and develop an action plan aligning with current scientific advice and current regulation of the importing country.</p> <p>Members could refer to feed mills, in-house sustainability specialists or external advisors to ensure policies are in line with the SSC Code.</p> <p><a href="#">SFP Feed Solutions Directory</a> offers a comprehensive directory of tools, standards, and initiatives to help members manage environmental and human rights risks in aquaculture feed sourcing.</p>	<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 2</b></p> <p>5.5.3. SSC members should engage with feed companies to understand which ingredients are considered high risk and take action to mitigate this.</p> <p>Resources are available through the <a href="#">European Feed Manufacturer’s Federation (FEFAC)</a>.</p> <p>Ensuring soy and palm are certified to verified deforestation and conversion free standards (e.g. <a href="#">Proterra</a> Segregated soy or <a href="#">RSPO</a> Segregated palm) will help reduce the risk.</p>	<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 3</b></p> <p>5.5.4. If the SSC member is directly sourcing from a feed company, they should have a written policy publicly available.</p> <p>SSC members should advocate for all feed companies to publicly report on their sourcing policies.</p> <p>5.5.5. More sustainable alternatives could be achieved by looking at different elements of sustainability such as reducing carbon, avoiding conversion of indigenous peoples’ lands and human rights abuses.</p> <p>The <a href="#">WWF Basket</a> has a metric which includes a specific target for the sustainability of aquaculture feed such as reducing the reliance of fish oil in fish meal. For example, the use of by-products instead of forage fish, the use of algal oil instead of fish oil, or the use of land animal protein instead of soy from deforested areas.</p>
---	---	---

## 5.6. Animal welfare

<b>CORE Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Tier 3</b>
--------------------	---------------	---------------

<p>5.6.1. Members must develop animal welfare policies.</p> <p>5.6.2. As a minimum, policies must include a commitment to implement humane harvest/kill, or, in the absence of humane methods, members must seek information about the latest scientifically validated best practices and implement where feasible.</p> <p>5.6.3. Members should promote animal welfare throughout their supply chain.</p>	<p>5.6.7. Members must make a public commitment to upholding animal welfare in their business and supply chain and communicate on its progress.</p> <p>5.6.8. Policies must detail how animal welfare risks are assessed when evaluating sources and describe how this assessment takes place.</p>	<p>5.6.10. Members must ensure animals throughout their seafood supply chain are harvested humanely, or, in the absence of humane methods, members must seek information about the latest scientifically validated best practices and implement where feasible.</p> <p>5.6.11. Members must invest time and resources to improve areas of welfare concern and advocate for strengthened government policies and enforcement.</p>
<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 1</b></p> <p>5.6.1 Scientific research confirms that fish are sentient beings capable of experiencing pain and distress. In the UK, the Animal Welfare Act 2006 is the primary legislation that incorporates the welfare of aquatic animals.</p> <p>The Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022 includes Crustaceans and cephalopods as sentient beings and ensures government policies consider their welfare.</p> <p>Other countries like Norway, Germany or New Zealand include the welfare of aquatic animals in legislation.</p> <p>The UK Farm Animal Welfare Council (Farm Animal Welfare Committee (FAWC)) developed the Five Freedoms as guiding principles for businesses, which include:</p>	<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 2</b></p> <p>5.6.7. A member’s public commitment could align to known standards and certifications and could be included in seafood sourcing and/or animal welfare policies.</p> <p>5.6.8. Animal welfare policies must detail how risks are assessed when evaluating sources. This includes describing the methods, criteria, and data used to identify and manage welfare risks, ensuring that sourcing decisions are informed by a structured and evidence-based approach.</p> <p>SSC members should ensure that sourcing decisions also reflect animal welfare criteria described in the Risk Assessment.</p>	<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 3</b></p> <p>5.6.10. The core principle of humane harvesting is to minimize pain, distress, and suffering during the slaughter by ensuring animals are rendered immediately unconscious and insensible to pain until death occurs.</p> <p>Techniques like percussive or electrical stunning are used to instantly render fish unconscious, however, scientific research has not been developed across all species yet. Where humane methods are not yet available, members must actively seek out the latest scientifically validated best practices and implement them where feasible, demonstrating a commitment to continuous improvement in animal welfare.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freedom from hunger and thirst</li> <li>• Freedom from discomfort</li> <li>• Freedom from pain, injury, or disease</li> <li>• Freedom to express normal behaviour</li> <li>• Freedom from fear and distress.</li> </ul> <p>Animal welfare organisations like <a href="#">Compassion in World Farming</a>, <a href="#">Aquatic Life Institute</a> and <a href="#">Crustacean Compassion</a> have provided guidance on how to meet these requirements for aquatic animals for both aquaculture and wild capture fisheries.</p> <p>Animal welfare in wild capture fisheries is currently being developed due to the nature of the systems but organizations like <a href="#">The Catch Welfare Platform</a> are working with academia to develop science for the sector.</p> <p>5.6.2 Additionally, members should promote animal welfare throughout their supply chains, encouraging continuous improvement and alignment with high welfare standards.</p> <p>Members must promote animal welfare across their entire supply chain. This includes working with suppliers to raise standards, encouraging best practices, and supporting initiatives that improve the treatment and wellbeing of animals at every stage of production.</p>		<p>Gentle handling, reduced crowding, and withdrawal of feed before harvest help reduce physiological stress during harvesting operations. The <a href="#">Humane Slaughter Association</a> provides guidelines for the slaughter of salmon, trout and halibut.</p> <p>5.6.11. Members should advocate for stronger government policies and enforcement related to animal welfare. By engaging with policymakers and supporting regulatory improvements, members can help drive systemic change and raise industry-wide standards across wild capture fisheries and aquaculture.</p>
<p><b>CORE Tier 1</b></p>	<p><b>Tier 2</b></p>	<p><b>Tier 3</b></p>

<p>5.6.4. Members must map their current supply chain and identify welfare concerns.</p> <p>5.6.5. For <b>Aquaculture</b> members must include in their policies that farmed species follow either a certification standard that includes animal welfare within its criteria, and/or a veterinary health plan must be in place to address all aspects of fish health and welfare.</p> <p>5.6.6. For <b>Wild Caught</b>, members must include in their policies a commitment to advocate for and support established scientifically validated welfare best practice to minimise harm and stress in capture fisheries.</p>	<p>5.6.9. Members must develop a plan for continuous improvement based on their identified welfare concerns.</p>	<p>5.6.12. For <b>Aquaculture</b>, members must ensure that farmed species follow either a certification standard that includes animal welfare within its criteria, and/or a veterinary health plan must be in place to address all aspects of fish health and welfare. For the veterinary health plan, the farm must hold this and the member should be able to access on request. Welfare standards must extend to hatcheries, when in use.</p> <p>5.6.13. For <b>Wild Caught</b>, members must adhere to established scientifically validated welfare best practice to minimise harm and stress in capture fisheries. Members must engage with new research and innovation efforts to continuously advance welfare practices in the supply chain.</p>
<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 1</b></p> <p>5.6.4. Mapping of current supply chains to identify where animal welfare concerns may exist helps highlight areas of risk and informs targeted actions to improve welfare standards across all stages of production and sourcing.</p> <p>5.6.5. Members should review GSSI benchmarked (Appendix 1) or other certification schemes (e.g. RSPCA Assured) which cover welfare components.</p>	<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 2</b></p> <p>5.6.9. SSC members should refer to the agreed SMART action plan requirements – 7.3. &amp; 7.4.</p>	<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 3</b></p> <p>5.6.12. The review of VHP/VHWP helps identifying efficacy of disease prevention strategies and effects of treatments in the case of outbreaks. These are key components to understand commitment from farmers to animal welfare.</p> <p>As for any other livestock, hatcheries/nurseries handle the most vulnerable life stages. Poor welfare here can lead to deformities, disease susceptibility, and</p>

<p>A Veterinary Health Plan (VHP)/Veterinary Health and Welfare Plan (VHWP) is a document developed in collaboration with a qualified veterinarian to ensure the health and welfare of aquatic animals in farming operations. It includes preventative health measures, disease management, welfare standards, record keeping and training.</p> <p>VHP/VHWP is recognised as a vital tool in aquaculture and it is included in the certification mentioned above. The <a href="#">World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)</a> integrates VHP/VHWP principles across frameworks and initiatives that support aquatic animal health.</p> <p>5.6.6. Wild-Caught Welfare Practices – for wild-caught seafood, members are encouraged to include in their policies a commitment to follow established, scientifically validated best practices that minimise harm and stress during capture and follow a recognised certification standard. This supports the humane treatment of wild species and aligns with evolving welfare expectations.</p>		<p>high mortality. Ensuring hatcheries have strong animal welfare policies reflects best practice.</p> <p>5.6.13. For wild-caught seafood, members must adhere to established, scientifically validated best practices that minimise harm and stress during capture. In addition, members must actively engage with new research and innovation efforts to continuously improve welfare practices across the supply chain.</p> <p>In 2024, Seafish published the <a href="#">Codes of Practice for the Welfare of Crabs, Lobsters, Crawfish and Nephrops</a> providing guidance on best practice handling and dispatch of live crustacea across the supply chain.</p>
--	--	---

## 5.7. Carbon

CORE Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
-------------	--------	--------

<p>5.7.1. Members must develop a SMART action plan to map and identify their Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions.</p>	<p>5.7.2. Members must develop a plan to measure Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions from their seafood operations and seafood supply chain.</p>	<p>5.7.3. Members develop a plan to reduce emissions identified.</p>
<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 1</b></p> <p>5.7.1. See Guidance in section 7.3. for SMART action plans.</p> <p>Members must review their operational and supply chain, and define which operations fall under each <a href="#">scope</a>.</p> <p>Members must define three scores based on the <a href="#">GHG Protocol Corporate Standard</a>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope 1: Emissions are direct emissions from owned or controlled sources.</li> <li>• Scope 2: Emissions are indirect emissions from the generation of purchased energy.</li> <li>• Scope 3: Emissions are all indirect emissions (not included in Scope 2) that occur in the value chain of the reporting company, including both upstream and downstream, and the further defined into 15 categories as outlined in Chapter Two.</li> </ul>	<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 2</b></p> <p>5.7.2. Members can use an independently verified measurement tool or software to manage this process.</p> <p>Members can use the GHG Protocol Corporate Standard as a template to measure their Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions.</p> <p>When aligning commitments to be in line with net-zero by no later than 2050, members can use <a href="#">the free Net-Zero Standard (SBTi)</a>.</p> <p>Members can use free or paid platforms to calculate their product carbon footprint, which is included in their Scope 3 emissions. These include, but are not limited to, the <a href="#">Seafood Carbon Emission Profiling Tool (SCEPT)</a> and <a href="#">Carbon Cloud</a>.</p>	<p><b>GUIDANCE Tier 3</b></p> <p>5.7.3. See Guidance in section 7.3. for SMART action plans.</p>

## 6. Data collection for Risk Assessment

6.1. Members must annually (as minimum) collect relevant information (on the minimum requirements detailed in 6.2) to evaluate the status of the fishery or aquaculture source, using the content at a minimum of the SSC Risk Assessment Template.

6.2. The SSC Risk Assessment Template's questions represent minimum requirements for the data points that must be collected to evaluate environment, human rights, feed, animal welfare and carbon risks.

6.3. The Risk Assessment must be made available to the SSC Secretariat on request.

### **GUIDANCE**

6.1. The SSC Risk Assessment Template represents the minimum requirements for the data points that must be collected to evaluate a fishery or aquaculture source. Members have the option to create their own version, as long as the minimum data points are included.

6.2. Members have the option to add additional requirements for data points based on the individual business needs.

6.3. N/A

## 7. Evaluation

### 7.1. Evaluation requirements

- I. Members must annually (as a minimum) perform an evaluation to categorise each fishery or farm as low, medium or high risk. This evaluation must include the content of the SSC Risk Assessment Template, including if any significant issues are identified a longside consideration of SMART action plan requirements.
- II. The evaluation must be made available to the SSC Secretariat on request.

### **GUIDANCE**

#### 7.1.

- I. Members can evaluate sourcing more regularly than once per year if that suits their operations.  
Not all data will have changed within a year e.g. IUCN Red List haddock last updated in 1996, whereas other ratings system update more regularly.  
  
For Guidance on what constitutes a significant issue see 7.2.  
  
For Guidance on SMART Action Plans see 7.3.  
  
For Risk Assessment Template Guidance see Section 6.1.
- II. N/A

### 7.2 Significant issues

Members must review the content of the SSC Risk Assessment to consider risks, in particular significant issues:

- I. Proven poor stock status
- II. High risk of decline to poor status without appropriate management
- III. No data or management (even if the fishery is not at high risk of decline)
- IV. Unacceptable environmental impacts including:
  - *Risk of habitat destruction of vulnerable marine ecosystems*

- *Absence of unwanted catch mitigation measures for ETP species*
- *High risk of deforestation and land conversion.*

V. Unacceptable social impacts including:

- *Modern slavery*
- *Forced labour or child labour*
- *Lack of effective grievance mechanisms.*

## **GUIDANCE**

7.2. See also Guidance for 5.3. Environment and Guidance 5.4. Human rights.

- I. If members are sourcing certified volumes, stock status can be identified within the certification documents.
- II. If sourcing non-certified there are various reports detailing stock status of fisheries worldwide:
  - [Oceana Taking Stock 2023](#)
  - [Taking Stock: The State of UK Fish Populations 2023](#)
  - [Overfished Stocks | National Marine Ecosystem Status](#)
  - [Open Knowledge FAO](#)
  - [ICES](#)
- III. The fishery reports will also identify fisheries that do not have enough data to evaluate.
- IV. Risk of habitat destruction could be within a farm or a fishery; member should check location of farm/fishery and identify if it is within a vulnerable ecosystem e.g. Marine Protected Area.
 

Supplier/source should be able to advise what ETP unwanted catch mitigation measures are in place for the fishery.

Risk of deforestation and conversion is for farmed species and non-seafood feed raw materials, ensuring feed raw materials are certified to verified deforestation and conversion free standards will help reduce this risk.
- V. To investigate unacceptable social impact members can search for credible reports of modern slavery allegations. The Risk Assessment for primary processing covers U.S. Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report tiers and List of Products Produced by Forced or Indentured Child Labor to indicate risk.

Lack of effective grievance mechanisms – if certified to a human rights standard or farms have certification this should include a grievance mechanism – a member’s supplier should be able to advise on this for the source.

### 7.3. SMART action plans

7.3.1. If significant issues and/or multiple moderate issues are identified in the Risk Assessment, a member must have a public SMART action plan to reduce and mitigate risks.

7.3.2. SMART actions plans must be:

- I. **Specific** – Detailed actions linked to risks / improvement opportunities identified
- II. **Measurable** – How progress is defined and monitored, communication audiences and frequency
- III. **Achievable** – Resources (including budget / in kind support); commitment from stakeholders for actions
- IV. **Relevant** – Aligns with objectives of SSC’s vision and the member’s seafood sourcing policy
- V. **Timebound** – Timescale for each action, workplan regularly reviewed
- VI. **Prioritised** appropriate to a member’s influence and resources
- VII. **Made available** to the SSC Secretariat on request
- VIII. **Publicly communicated** at minimum annually including progress updates.

7.3.3. Action plans could include improvement projects within a specific framework (e.g. FisheryProgress), which may be active or be ing established, and internal action plans established by the individual member and their supply chain.

7.3.4. Any delays in the progress of the action plan should be documented and explained. Businesses must outline actions taken and planned and demonstrate supply chain commitment to mitigate risks previously identified.

7.3.5. In the absence of sufficient action in the defined timeline of the SMART action plan, businesses must plan for a responsible exit.

### **GUIDANCE**

7.3.1. Members should make actions plan public by publishing on website or social media channels. ‘Multiple moderate issues’ refers to more than one moderate issue identified. An orange rating as identified through the Risk Assessment is an indication of a moderate issue, however this does not automatically equate to a moderate issue as this is context dependent and must be based on member assessment and judgement.

7.3.2. – 7.3.3. For an example action plan – see Appendix 2.

7.3.4. N/A

7.3.5. For responsible exit see 8.2.

#### 7.4. Risk categories

7.4.1. Members must categorise each fishery or farm as low, medium, or high risk:

##### LOW RISK:

- No significant issues and not more than one moderate issue identified.
- The Risk Assessment is reviewed to consider where any additional improvements are needed and can be implemented.

##### MEDIUM RISK:

- Significant and/or multiple moderate issues identified.
- Documented SMART action plan agreed and on-track.

##### HIGH RISK

- Significant and/or multiple moderate issues found and no SMART action plan in place.
- Documented insufficient action in the delivery of the SMART action plan.

#### **GUIDANCE**

7.4.1. For low-risk sources, although a SMART action plan is not mandated, it can be a useful tool to help with continual improvement.

For SMART action plans see 7.3.

## 8. Sourcing decisions

### 8.1. Sourcing decision requirements

- I. Members must annually agree and review SMART action plans to address significant issues and/or multiple moderate issues and use the results of the evaluation to make sourcing decisions.
- II. Members must prioritise their engagement in the SMART action plans appropriate to their influence and resources. Members must use their leverage to influence improvement project development and establishment.
- III. Members must follow the development of certified fisheries and aquaculture farms to ensure non-compliance or conditions are closed in a timely manner.
- IV. Sourcing decisions and SMART action plans (including assigned actions) must be made available to the SSC Secretariat on request.

#### **GUIDANCE**

8.1. See Appendix 2 for example member fishery action plan.

Examples of increased leverage could be through joining other stakeholders to work collectively as a group i.e. FIP, Global Tuna Alliance.

### 8.2. Responsible exit from supply chain

- I. Members must not source seafood where there has been no action in the delivery of the SMART action plan, or in situations in which the member lacks the leverage to prevent or mitigate high risk adverse impacts and is unable to increase its leverage.
- II. If exiting the supply chain, this must be performed responsibly in line with guidance from United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the member must consider credible assessments of potential adverse impacts of doing so.
- III. A responsible exit should be documented and made available to the SSC Secretariat on request.

#### **GUIDANCE**

8.2. Members can refer to [United Nations Guiding Principles](#) for best practice on responsible exit.

## 9. Sourcing Decision Tree

### **GUIDANCE**

SSC members should use the Decision Tree to guide their sourcing decisions, referring to the Code requirements and Guidance at each stage.

# Appendix 1

## GSSI benchmarked certification standards

### Wild capture

- Certified Seafood International (CSI) Certification Program
- Iceland Responsible Fisheries (IRF) Certification Programme
- Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)
- Marine Eco-Label Japan (MEL) Scheme for Aquaculture and Fisheries

### Farmed

- Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC)
- Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP) Certification
- GLOBALG.A.P. Aquaculture Certification System
- Marine Eco-Label Japan (MEL) Scheme for Aquaculture and Fisheries

## SSCI benchmarked certification standards

### Wild capture

- Responsible Fishing Vessel Standard
- The FISH Standard

## Appendix 2

### Example: Individual Member Fishery Action Plan

Significant/Moderate Issue	Action	Who's responsible	Deadline
Seasonal fishery	Request and collate data on crew numbers/fishing hours/fishing effort from supplier	Seafood Sourcing Manager	30/09/2025
Seasonal fishery	Assess data in line with working hour regulations in this location	Data Manager	31/10/2025
Seasonal fishery	If data shows illegal overtime, discuss concerns with supplier and request working hour to meet legal maximum	Seafood Sourcing Manager	31/12/2025
Vessel prosecuted for illegal fishing	Verify source of information is credible	Seafood Sourcing Manager	10/10/2025
Vessel prosecuted for illegal fishing	Work with supplier to remove vessel from supply chain	Seafood Sourcing Manager	31/10/2025
Vessel prosecuted for illegal fishing	Check catch certifications for next 3 months to ensure vessel not in use	Data Manager	31/01/2025
Port state not signed PSMA	Advocate to port state to sign - individual letter from member or join SEAA who are advocating on this issue	Seafood Sourcing Manager	31/07/2025

## Quarterly review change log

Section	Change	Version history
Traceability	Addition of GDST digital transformation journey explainer.	Guidance V2.1
Traceability	Addition of Traceability Driver tool.	Guidance V2.1
Human rights	Addition of ILO Guidelines for fair labour market services for migrant fishers.	Guidance V2.1
Multiple	Removal of specific references to seafood certification schemes and addition of appendix of GSSI and SSCI benchmarked certification standards.	Guidance V2.1
Environment	Addition of guidance that fisheries and farms and third party certifications should consistent with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, FAO Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture and FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification.	Guidance V2.2
Environment	Addition of guidance that certification should be accredited to the appropriate standard by recognised international accreditation bodies (e.g. to ISO 17065 or equivalent).	Guidance V2.2
Evaluation	Addition of clarifying guidance on what constitutes 'multiple' moderate issues	Guidance V2.2