

Sustainable Seafood Coalition Strategy

Introduction to the Sustainable Seafood Coalition (SSC)

The SSC is a pre-competitive collaboration platform comprised of seafood businesses and organisations from across the seafood value chain. It was founded in 2011 to establish voluntary standards for responsible sourcing by seafood buyers, and a harmonised approach to sustainability claims made when selling that seafood.

Vision and aims

The SSC's vision is that all seafood sold is from sustainable sources.

There are four strategic aims to help achieve this:

1. To publish the SSC Codes of Conduct which reflect good practice and latest developments in sourcing and labelling practices, for implementation by all members.
2. To support members to effectively implement their commitments to the SSC Codes of Conduct, through provision of guidance, capacity building and knowledge sharing.
3. To participate in advocacy and engagement activities to influence wider changes in policy and practices relevant to the SSC Codes of Conduct.
4. To provide a forum for collaboration, innovation, and development of consistent approaches across the industry on themes related to sustainable seafood.

Collaboration

Collaboration is at the SSC's core, and a willingness to act in pre-competitive collaboration with other actors in the seafood value chain is a requirement for SSC members.

Collaboration is a cross-cutting theme with crucial importance to achieving the SSC's aims. The SSC will collaborate with other initiatives to avoid duplication of effort and to promote alignment in the global sustainable seafood movement. This will be achieved by maintaining open and regular contact with other relevant organisations, including pre-competitive collaboration platforms, standards holders, certification bodies, consultancies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and advocacy groups.

How the SSC works to achieve its aims

Aim 1: To publish the SSC Codes of Conduct which reflect good practice and latest developments in sourcing and labelling practices, for implementation by all members.

The SSC Codes of Conduct were initially developed in 2011 and were an industry-first in terms of aligning supply chain actors around a consistent approach to sustainable seafood sourcing and labelling.

The Codes remain central to the work of SSC, forming the basis of best practice minimum requirements for responsible seafood sourcing policies and transparent communications. It is a fundamental requirement of membership that all members implement the voluntary Codes, ensuring that their sourcing practices and sustainability claims are clear, consistent, and accurate. The harmonisation of these practices across the industry improves credibility, trust, and brand integrity. Longstanding members continue to benefit from improved standards across the industry.

The SSC will update the Codes to reflect ongoing developments in the sustainable seafood movement and support the adoption of new initiatives by the wider industry. Updates will be considered as part of a biennial review process at a minimum. Revisions could reflect:

- Relevant tools, technologies or methodologies that become available to seafood supply chain stakeholders;
- Best practice agreements reached, or commitments made by significant proportions of the supply chain;
- Externally developed codes of practice, codes of conduct and due diligence processes.

Aim 2: To support members to effectively implement their commitments to the SSC Codes of Conduct, through provision of guidance, capacity building and knowledge sharing.

The SSC will coordinate mutual member support, education, and guidance, particularly for new members during their initial introductory year which commences upon joining the SSC. This improves the accessibility and raises general levels of understanding of the sustainable seafood movement amongst SSC members. Activities could include:

- Publishing Guidance which accompanies the Codes of Conduct, providing recommendations and additional information to help members implement the Codes;
- Signposting key tools, organisations, initiatives, resources, and events for priority topic areas;
- Pre-competitive sharing of data and methodologies, and alignment of sourcing policy data requests where relevant to the Codes;
- Mapping and benchmarking key resources, initiatives etc. on specific issues;
- Providing in-depth educational materials such as webinars.

Aim 3: To participate in advocacy and engagement activities to influence wider changes in policy and practices relevant to the SSC Codes of Conduct.

The SSC brings together a wide spectrum of seafood supply chain actors in a pre-competitive platform capable of coordinating advocacy opportunities. The coalition aims to positively influence relevant policies and legislation to raise sustainability standards across the seafood industry. The SSC will coordinate and convene advocacy which has direct relevance for seafood sustainability in relation to the Codes. It will draw on the expertise of external organisations to minimise duplication and maximise the impact of policy reform.

Advocacy may take the form of public and private letters, public position statements, responses to consultations, media articles, and participation in conferences and meetings. Advocacy may be directed towards national and local government, regional management authorities, negotiators, and policymakers.

The SSC will also engage industry and external stakeholders to promote consistent practices in areas of seafood sustainability relevant to the SSC Codes. This could include:

- Representation at key events;
- Encouraging wider adoption of the SSC Codes, including through SSC membership growth, considering representation of sectors and stages of the seafood supply chain;
- Communications via the SSC website and social media.

Aim 4: To provide a forum for collaboration, innovation, and development of consistent approaches across the industry on themes related to sustainable seafood.

Recognising the evolving science and practice of sustainability, the SSC is keen to contribute its collective expertise and influence to help build sector-wide consistency of approaches for additional topic areas related to sustainable seafood beyond the scope of the Codes. This could include activities within the SSC and in partnership with external stakeholders, such as:

- Collaboration to develop new ideas and approaches to issues where progress has been limited and/or uneven;
- Development and alignment on good practices to emerging topics;
- Supporting innovation amongst members and/or across the wider sector.

In time these activities may lead to alignment on minimum best practice criteria for these topic areas, such that requirements and recommendations may be incorporated into the Codes and Guidance.

Out of scope for the SSC

The SSC is not a certification body, nor does it have formal auditing or publicly disclosed verification functions. The SSC does not constitute an ecolabel and the SSC logo will not be used on any product packaging.

The SSC will not develop new technical standards where other organisations are better positioned to do so.