

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR THE UN GLOBAL COMPACT **SUSTAINABLE OCEAN PRINCIPLES**

FISHERIES



**Sustainable
Ocean Business**
Action Platform



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Note: The Practical Guidance maps current regulations, business standards and best and emerging practices for a particular sector. Under the auspices of the UN Global Compact Sustainable Ocean Business Action Platform, the guidance has been mainly developed by companies operating within the sector.

The guidance is a dynamic working document. It will be reviewed on a regular basis to follow new legislation, best business practices, higher standards and market innovations. Input, feedback and comments from all stakeholders are welcome. If you would like to contribute, please contact: ocean@unglobalcompact.org

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

1. THE UN GLOBAL COMPACT SUSTAINABLE OCEAN PRINCIPLES

The UN Global Compact has, in consultation with more than 300 stakeholders worldwide, developed the Sustainable Ocean Principles. The purpose is to promote the well-being of the ocean for current and future generations, as well as to emphasize the shared responsibility of businesses to take necessary actions to secure a healthy and productive ocean.

The nine principles cover three areas: ocean health and productivity; governance and engagement; and data and transparency. Signatories confirm their endorsement of the principles, setting out a framework for responsible business practices across relevant sectors and geographies. The principles build upon and supplement the overarching Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact, including the fundamental responsibilities in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.

The principles are relevant for companies with activities that may impact ocean health and companies that are part of an ocean productivity value chain. The principles are, therefore, also relevant for land-based industries, including the financial sector. The principles are directed at company boards and executive management. They are designed as a tool for moving beyond minimum standards and towards excellence in sustainability. They can be used as basis for due diligence assessments and serve as a reference point for interaction between companies on sustainable uses of the ocean.

Companies should understand the broader environmental and social consequences of their activities. Companies should ensure that material ocean-related risks and opportunities are integrated in corporate strategy, risk management and reporting. They should ascertain that the ensuing responsibilities are clearly defined within the organization. The company board should effectively guide, monitor and review company management in these efforts.

The principles are not introducing a new set of reporting measures, but rather encourage companies to use existing mechanisms to disclose their practices.

*DISCLAIMER : This guidance and the information contained therein are intended as a general guide to the issues addressed. They must not be considered a substitute for legal advice and questions regarding the legal interpretation and application of the information should be directed to appropriate legal counsel. Any actions taken or omissions or alterations made on the basis of this information are done at the user's risk.

The mention of specific companies and practices is for illustrative purposes only and does not imply that these have been endorsed or recommended by the authors/contributors in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned.

The guidance was issued in January 2021 and will be updated on a regular basis to ensure that relevant developments, expectations, standards and requirements are properly reflected.

2. THE GUIDANCE

WHAT?

This guidance document is complementary to the UN Global Compact Sustainable Ocean Principles and is intended to broadly outline ways to operationalize these nine principles to specific industry sectors. The guidance aims at guiding signatories on how they can deliver on the principles in practical terms.

WHO?

First and foremost, the audience is the set of companies operating in the sector targeted by the guidance. The guidance may also be used by financial institutions and insurers as a due diligence tool and to inform their decisions. The guidance may also support policymakers and civil society organizations to better understand the challenges, opportunities, regulations and standards of the sector.

WHY?

The guidance aims at identifying shared challenges, common solutions, risks, opportunities, relevant partnerships and reporting frameworks needed to help operationalize the principles.

HOW?

The document starts with an introduction presenting the authors and contributors, defining the scope of the document and general considerations for the sector, in line with the preamble of the Sustainable Ocean Principles.

The guidance is organized in three sections: following the Sustainable Ocean Principles

- **OCEAN HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY**
- **GOVERNANCE AND ENGAGEMENT**
- **DATA AND TRANSPARENCY**

For each of these sections, the guidance describes the main challenges and opportunities of the sector.

The document also highlights relevant reporting frameworks and partnerships which will help companies in the implementation of the principles.

Under each principle, the document seeks to provide clear and practical tools on how to implement the principles in business operations. In order to inspire companies, the document also identifies good practices from companies or initiatives.



Sustainable Ocean Principles

The ocean is vital to the wellbeing and prosperity of humankind. To achieve the world community's ambitions as laid out in the Sustainable Development Goals, there is a need to expand our use of the ocean to produce food, energy, raw materials and transportation. Carrying out these activities in a sustainable manner will contribute to reducing global warming and environmental degradation. Ensuring a healthy ocean provides significant opportunities for business and global economic growth.

As described in Sustainable Development Goal 14 on Life Below Water, there is an urgent need to protect and restore the health of the ocean, which is rapidly deteriorating due to increasing temperatures, acidification, depletion of natural resources and pollution from land and sea. Businesses have a shared responsibility, alongside Government and civil society, to take necessary actions to secure a healthy ocean.

These Sustainable Ocean Principles provide a framework for responsible business practices across sectors and geographies. They build upon and supplement the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. We, as signatories of these principles, recognize the urgency and global importance of a healthy ocean, and will take action to promote the well-being of the ocean for current and future generations. As relevant to their business, we believe that companies should:

OCEAN HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

Principle 1: Assess the short- and long-term impact of their activities on ocean health and incorporate such impacts into their strategy and policies.

Principle 2: Consider sustainable business opportunities that promote or contribute to restoring, protecting or maintaining ocean health and productivity and livelihoods dependent on the ocean.

Principle 3: Take action to prevent pollution affecting the ocean, reduce greenhouse gas emissions in their operations to prevent ocean warming and acidification, and work towards a circular economy.

Principle 4: Plan and manage their use of and impact on marine resources and space in a manner that ensures long-term sustainability and take precautionary measures where their activities may impact vulnerable marine and coastal areas and the communities that are dependent upon them.

GOVERNANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

Principle 5: Engage responsibly with relevant regulatory or enforcement bodies on ocean-related laws, regulations and other frameworks.

Principle 6: Follow and support the development of standards and best practices that are recognized in the relevant sector or market contributing to a healthy and productive ocean and secure livelihoods.

Principle 7: Respect human-, labour- and indigenous peoples' rights in the company's ocean related activities, including exercise appropriate due diligence in their supply-chain, consult and engage with relevant stakeholders and communities in a timely, transparent and inclusive manner, and address identified impacts.

DATA AND TRANSPARENCY

Principle 8: Where appropriate, share relevant scientific data to support research on and mapping of relevance to the ocean.

Principle 9: Be transparent about their ocean-related activities, impacts and dependencies in line with relevant reporting frameworks.

FISHERIES GUIDANCE

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SCOPE

The scope of this document is marine capture fisheries, defined as the sum (or range) of all activities to harvest and process a given fish¹ resource from the ocean. The guidance is addressed to all stakeholders operating throughout marine fishery value chains.

Note: The document focuses on marine capture fisheries. Guidance for additional ocean resources (e.g.: seaweed) and inland fisheries are being developed separately. If you have comments and/or would like to contribute to future versions, please send an email to: ocean@unglobalcompact.org

This guidance takes into consideration many existing instruments and guidelines (see Annex 3) discussed among a variety of fisheries-related stakeholders, focusing on those elements that are most useful for companies related to fisheries and their associated value chains to address the UN Global Compact Sustainable Ocean Principles. In particular, the guidance takes into consideration the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries as a globally recognized text contributing to the sustainability of fisheries.

Outcomes of the recently held International Symposium on Fisheries Sustainability (18-21 November 2019)² are also integrated in relevant parts of this guidance. A compilation of relevant instruments and guidelines for the different areas and principles covered by this guidance are included in Annex 3.

DEFINITIONS

Based on the definitions included in the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA)³; and the Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas (CA)⁴

1. Unless otherwise specified, throughout this publication, the term "fish" indicates fish, crustaceans, molluscs and other aquatic animals, but excludes aquatic mammals, crocodiles, caimans, seaweeds and other aquatic plants.

2. International Symposium on Fisheries Sustainability (18-21 November 2019, Rome, Italy), <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/sustainable-fisheries-symposium/en/>

3. FAO. 2016. Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing. <http://www.fao.org/3/i5469t/i5469t.pdf>

4. FAO 1995. Agreement to promote compliance with international conservation and management measures by fishing vessels on the high seas. <http://www.fao.org/3/X3130M/x3130m.pdf>

Fishing companies: companies searching for, attracting, locating, catching, taking or harvesting fish or any activity which can reasonably be expected to result in the attracting, locating, catching, taking or harvesting of fish; (PSMA).

Companies engaged in fishing-related activities:

companies or individuals engaged in any operation in support of, or in preparation for, fishing, including the landing, buying and selling, packaging, processing, transshipping or transporting of fish, as well as the provisioning of personnel, fuel, gear and other supplies at sea; (PSMA).

Port: includes offshore terminals and other installations for landing, transshipping, packaging, processing, refueling or resupplying; (PSMA).

Fishing vessel owner: owner of any vessel used or intended for use for the purposes of the commercial exploitation of living marine resources, including mother ships and any other vessels directly engaged in such fishing operations; (CA).

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

The global community is challenged with meeting a growing demand for fish as an important source of protein, and other macro- and micro-nutrients, while simultaneously ensuring the sustainability of harvested stocks. Sustainable mariculture and marine capture fisheries could supply over six times more food than they do today (364 million metric tons of animal protein)⁵. This represents more than two-thirds of the edible meat that the FAO estimates will be needed to feed the future global population. FAO has estimated that global capture fisheries production reached an all time record of 96.4 million tonnes in 2018⁶, with marine capture fisheries contributing to 87.6 per cent of the global total. If managed appropriately, capture fisheries production is projected to remain at comparable levels⁷, with the potential for expansion if overfished stocks are rebuilt.

An estimated 59.51 million people were engaged (on a full-time, part-time or occasional basis) in the primary sector of capture fisheries (39.0 million people) and aquaculture (20.5 million people) in 2018. Of all those engaged in primary production, most are in developing countries, and most are small-scale, artisanal fishers and aquaculture workers. The highest numbers of these primary production workers are in Asia (85 per cent), followed by Africa (9 per cent), the Americas (4 per cent), and Europe and Oceania (1 per cent each).

The total engagement of women across both fisheries and aquaculture was about 14 per cent of the workforce in the primary sector. When post-harvest operations data are included, it is estimated that 50 per cent of the workers in the sector are women.⁸ Reducing and eliminating harmful or otherwise ineffective management approaches and practices that may lead to overcapacity, overfishing, and/or illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing as well as other adverse human rights impacts such as labor rights and community impacts are important means for sustainability. It is also crucial to increase the resilience of the sector to be able to withstand acute crisis such as the one created by the Covid-19 pandemic and to long-term impacts associated with climate change. Ensuring that fishing pressure is commensurate with stocks' productivity and using sustainable harvest methods that minimize the impact to non-target species and marine ecosystems is an essential aspect of sustainability.

Mechanisms to improve and reward compliance with management and harvest regulations, voluntary steps towards best practice and transparency, as well as investment in innovation and research, should be promoted among seafood industry stakeholders. While aquaculture plays an increasing role in supplementing seafood supplies, sustainable and socially just fisheries that are more resilient to the challenges of the twenty-first century can contribute to the global pursuit of many SDG targets⁹.

There is a global opportunity to promote more responsible stewardship of aquatic resources while mainstreaming sustainable fishing management, practices/methods and gears wherever feasible. Stakeholders throughout seafood value chains need to be suitably informed and empowered to make decisions that align to a more responsible and SDG-focused future of fisheries. The implementation of evidence-based assessment and management, improved transparency of data collection, management and analysis, together with sustainable harvest methods, is crucial to ensure maximum sustainable yields (MSY) or maximum economic yield (MEY).

It should be noted that more and more stakeholders involved in the marine capture fisheries sector and its value chain are demonstrating their interest and commitment to integrating sustainability and human rights principles in their business plans, including through participation in various global initiatives and in benchmarking against internationally agreed targets and standards.

5. <https://www.oceanpanel.org/blue-papers/future-food-sea>

6, 7, 8. FAO. 2020. The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2020. Sustainability in action. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/ca9229en>

9. Österblom et al. 2020. <https://oceanpanel.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/Towards%20Ocean%20Equity.pdf>

OCEAN HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SECTOR

The capture fisheries sector is the only major food production industry that relies on the natural cycles of wild populations, and the impacts of a rapidly changing world on the sector are becoming more and more relevant.¹⁰ In general, efficiently managed fisheries have seen a reduction in fishing pressure and increases in stock biomass, with some reaching biologically sustainable levels, while fisheries with less-developed management are in poor shape.¹¹ Moreover, in the case of assessed stocks, recent findings highlight that effective fisheries management can lead to fish stock recovery.¹² In addition, effective management can address biodiversity and achieve ecosystem-scale gains with respect to conservation and fishery production .

The fraction of marine fish stocks fished within biologically sustainable levels has exhibited a decreasing trend, from 90.0 per cent in 1974 to 65.8 per cent in 2017, albeit with an important slowing of this trend in the last decade in response to new modalities of more efficient management. In contrast, the percentage of stocks fished at biologically unsustainable levels increased from 10 per cent in 1974 to 34.2 per cent in 2017, with all regions of the world showing a variable percentage of unsustainable fishing. In terms of landings, it is estimated that 78.7 per cent of current marine fish landings come from biologically sustainable stocks.¹⁴

In addition, the industry is affected by and needs to adapt to the outcomes of human impacts on ocean health and productivity. Such changes include those in productivity and current distribution of target and non-target species due to climate change, the appearance or introduction of non-indigenous species, pollution from land-based sources, plastics and microplastics, habitat destruction, etc. These impacts are expected to affect the productivity, distribution, migration, abundance and availability of living resources, but also fishing operations (e.g. through the frequency of extreme weather events) and demand (e.g. by changes in demography, migrations, etc.).

Moreover, other significant challenges to address include:

- Overfishing, exacerbated by illegal fishing
- Pre- and post-harvest loss and waste, including discards of part of the catch
- Impacts of fishing activities on non-target species, including vulnerable species, and ecosystems for which Significant Adverse Impacts (SAIs) should be avoided
- Impact of fishing with inadequate and/or inappropriate or illegal fish gear
- Ghost-fishing, as created by abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG)
- Other sources of pollution emanating from fishing boats and fishing activities
- Changes to fish populations and marine ecosystems due to climate change impacts on the ocean and the related capacity of the fleets to adapt to changes in distribution and abundance of the fish stocks
- Ensure traceability of sea products to prove their sustainable origin

Healthy ecosystems with rich biological and genetic diversity actually supply more food and are more resilient to shocks than degraded systems. The Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) is a key framework for managing fisheries and implementing the principles of sustainable fisheries. It embraces principles that were inherited from the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and its Agenda 21, and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which are embedded in the 1995 Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF).

10. FAO. 2020. Proceedings of the International Symposium on Fisheries Sustainability: strengthening the science-policy nexus. FAO Headquarters, 18–21 November 2019. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Proceedings No. 65. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/ca9165en>

11. FAO. 2020. The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2020. Sustainability in action. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/ca9229en>

12. Hilborn, R., Amoroso, R.O., Anderson, C.M., Baum, J.K., Branch, T.A., Costello, C., de Moor, C.L., Faraj, A., Hively, D., Jensen, O.P., Kurota, H., Little, L.R., Mace, P., McClanahan, T., Melnychuk, M.C., Minto, C., Osio, G.C., Parma, A.M., Pons, M., Segurado, S., Szuwalski, C.S., Wilson, J.R. & Ye, Y. 2020. Effective fisheries management instrumental in improving fish stock status. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 117(4): 2218–2224 [online]. [Cited 6 February 2020].

13. Jacobsen, N.S., Burgess, M.G. & Andersen, K.H. 2017. Efficiency of fisheries is increasing at the ecosystem level. Fish and Fisheries, 18(2): 199–211.

14. FAO. 2020. The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2020. Sustainability in action. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/ca9229en>

Implementation of the EAF encompasses the principles of sustainable development and provides a framework for considering not only the ecological, but also the economic and social aspects of sustainability and the governance context in which the fishery sectors operate.

REPORTING REGIMES AND STANDARDS OF RELEVANCE

- Reporting from National and Regional Reporting Authorities and RFMOs where applicable
- Certification standards that meet the FAO Eco-Labeling Guidelines,¹⁵ including those recognized by initiatives that benchmark eco-labels against these FAO Guidelines, such as the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI).

PARTNERSHIPS TO BE CONSIDERED

Multi-stakeholder Initiatives:

- Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI)
- International Pole and Line Foundation (IPNLF)
- International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF)
- Strategic Alliance for Legality and Traceability (SALT)
- ProBlue (World Bank)

Private Sector Initiatives:

- Seafood Business for Ocean Stewardship (SeaBOS)
- Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST)

UN Agency Initiatives:

- GloLitter Partnerships Project

Benchmarking Initiatives:

- Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI)
- Seafood Stewardship Index

15. FAO. Guidelines for the ecolabelling of fish and fishery products from marine capture fisheries. Revision 1. Rome, FAO. 2009
FAO. Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Inland Capture Fisheries. Rome, FAO. 2011

PRINCIPLE 1.

ASSESS THE SHORT- AND LONG-TERM IMPACT OF THEIR ACTIVITIES ON OCEAN HEALTH AND INCORPORATE SUCH IMPACTS INTO THEIR STRATEGY AND POLICIES.

GUIDANCE

Companies engaged in fishing-related activities can:

- Develop sustainable seafood sourcing policies with public KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) where appropriate and report publicly on progress (see Principle 9)
- Voluntarily commit to source from fishing companies that do not engage in IUU activities
- Contribute to educating consumers and retailers on the impact of illegal fishing on overfishing and fish stock recovery
- Raise awareness of ocean health issues and mitigating activities
- Contribute to eradicating IUU fishing by committing to take transparent steps to ensure IUU-caught fish does not enter its supply chains, such as having effective traceability and requiring supplier vessels – where applicable – to have permanent and unique vessel identifiers, and if IUU caught fish is uncovered in its products, to take immediate action to withdraw the product from the market place

Fishing companies and fishing vessel owners should comply with management and harvest regulations as established by flag states, coastal states and port states, and competent regional fisheries management organizations, and are encouraged to:

- Identify the environmental aspects related to fishing boats, gears and methods, and assess their associated environmental impacts and risks
- Demonstrate their efforts to mitigate the impact and restore the natural environment both where they operate and adjacent to their operations, as well as to mitigate indirect impacts on the environment
- Assess and address their social and environmental impacts, aligned with the latest science. Engagement with relevant stakeholders such as policy makers, NGOs, scientific institutions and local communities is encouraged
- For fisheries with high bycatch rates, ensure that mitigation measures are being implemented and post-release survival is proactively maximized when avoidance is not effective
- Contribute to sustainable fisheries management and eradicating IUU fishing by collaborating with relevant national and regional authorities including RFMOs, and committing to follow existing regulations, adequately reporting on catches and fishing activities, and applying precautionary principles and voluntary commitments in fisheries lacking comprehensive regulations
- Promote communication and awareness about the impact of illegal fishing on the condition of fish stocks and the communities who depend on them for food security, nutrition and livelihoods

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES

- International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) **ProActive Vessel Register (PVR)**, which is list of vessels implementing sustainability efforts to improve responsible practices in tuna fishing, to assist processors, traders, importers, transporters, marketers and others involved in the seafood industry to identify those vessels that are taking meaningful sustainability efforts, including support of other ISSF's Conservation Measures.
- International Pole & Line Foundation (IPNLF) **Fisheries Improvement Toolbox (FIT)** which provides a clear pathway for companies to actively engage in collaborative improvements in the fisheries they source from and in their associated supply chains. Improvements are focused on social responsibility, ecosystem and management, traceability, plastic neutrality and seafood quality assurance.
- A GGGI-led **FAD Best Practices in the South Pacific** project worked with commercial tuna fishers to develop best management practices around the use of fishing aggregate devices
- International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) conservation measures **CM 3.1 prohibition of transactions with Shark-Finching vessels, CM 3.2 prohibition of transactions with large-scale pelagic driftnets, CM 3.3. full retention on tunas, CM 3.5 transactions with vessels that use only non-entangling FADs, and CM 3.7 transactions with vessels or companies with vessel-based FAD Management Policies** and **vessel-based research pilot projects on developing biodegradable and non-entangling FADs**
- **FAO Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels** is a phased and collaborative global initiative to make available, in a rapid way, certified data from State authorities about vessels and vessel-related activities. The programme aims at providing a single access point for information on vessels used for fishing and fishing-related activities with the primary objective being to combat **illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing** by enhancing transparency and traceability.

Companies practices:

- **Bolton Food - WWF partnership** transformational agreement to assess Bolton Food's chain of custody and incorporate a roadmap for improving Bolton Food's business impacts in its policies regarding ocean health with a long term vision to change the market.
- World Wise Foods approach to **global sourcing with integrity** via their "Food For Thought" procurement guidelines
- **Grupo Calvo Responsible Engagement Initiative** with 6 specific goals related to ocean sustainability that must be met before 2025. Every year since 2020 the company will make public the KPIs linked to those goals that are verified by an independent third party.

PRINCIPLE 2.

CONSIDER SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES THAT PROMOTE OR CONTRIBUTE TO RESTORING, PROTECTING OR MAINTAINING OCEAN HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY AND LIVELIHOODS DEPENDENT ON THE OCEAN.

GUIDANCE

Companies engaged in fishing related activities are encouraged to:

- Consider investing in the certification of source fisheries and eco-labeling products certified to standards in order to lock in sustainable management practice and create market demand and drivers for sustainable seafood
- Avoid sourcing from fisheries that elicit unnecessarily large amounts of discards, bycatch, ghost gear/ abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear) or other ecosystem damage relative to their target catch and/or mortality to endangered, threatened or protected (ETP) species
- Diversify value chains by adding value to new or undervalued resources

Fishing companies and fishing vessel owners are encouraged to:

- Participate in R&D / innovation designed to mitigate unacceptable impacts and contribute to improved biodiversity
- Reduce pre- and post-harvest loss and waste

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES

- Sourcing from fisheries that are certified by a seafood **certification scheme that is recognized by the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative**.
- **The Fair Trade Capture Fisheries Standard** aims to increase the income of fishers by ensuring a transparent and stable trading relationship with their buyer(s) and by requiring payment of a Fair Trade Premium on every Fair Trade Certified product sale.
- IPNLF engagements with its members in **St Helena to improve the local fleet's harvest quality, value and responsible market opportunities**.

Companies practices:

- **Wave of Change program of Iberostar Group**
- **Balfego Group Traceability Program**
- Bolton Food "**Responsible Quality**" Program
- World Wise **Foods Responsible Sourcing Policy**

PRINCIPLE 3.

TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT POLLUTION AFFECTING THE OCEAN, REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IN THEIR OPERATIONS TO PREVENT OCEAN WARMING AND ACIDIFICATION, AND WORK TOWARDS CIRCULAR ECONOMY.

GUIDANCE

Fishing companies and fishing vessel owners are encouraged to:

- Require their fishing fleets to be responsible for marking and collecting their fishing gears in line with the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear
- Where the above is not possible, require fishing vessels to report the rate and total weight of ALDFG, and provide evidence of actionable mitigation measures that are in place to mitigate the amount or impact of ALDFG in the future
- Actively implement the least damaging fishing methods and gears possible within each local context
- Use fishing methods and gears that produce little to no marine pollution
- Support development of new technologies (such as biodegradable material to reduce waste and increase utilization and stability of aquatic food supply by developing new products and markets)
- Invest in electric or hybrid vehicles/vessels and generators, where possible and practicable, and use renewable energy sources

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions (primarily CO₂) in their operations, fishing companies throughout the seafood value chain can:

- Promote good fisheries and fleet management for conservation and sustainable use with low fishing effort and consequently large biomass and high catch volumes per unit fishing effort, leading to low fuel use and thus lower carbon emissions
- Using technologies and predictions that make fishing more fuel efficient
- Develop more efficient designs of the fishing boats and gears
- Use more efficient refrigeration systems on board and in ports
- Support policy removing harmful fuel subsidies that reduce incentives for fleets to improve their fuel efficiency

In addition, companies engaged in fishing related activities can promote energy saving and environmentally friendly technology for fish smoking, cooking/boiling, cold chain, etc. To work towards a circular economy, fishing companies can:

- Set waste targets consistent with "zero waste to landfill" and pursue plastic neutrality wherever feasible
- Reduce and mitigate the impact of lost, abandoned or discarded fishing gear as discussed above

- Contribute to the establishment of policies for reuse-reduce-recycle, for their own operations and suppliers/customers. This includes assessing recycled content and recyclability, working on the recyclability of plastics, feed bags and netting material and supporting R&D in this area
- Map and report plastic use (e.g. per ton of product produced), ensure crew members abide by the laws and do not dump plastic waste at sea, encourage initiatives to reduce plastic usage (e.g. replacing polystyrene boxes with reusable or closed loop recycled materials, use of big-bags) along the value chain and support global efforts to reduce plastic pollution
- Engage in circular economy initiatives to promote sustainable fishing practices along the value chain that emit less greenhouse gases
- Engage with local communities and participate in regular, beach/water ways clean up while reporting waste volume and types of materials collected. In support of the business actions, Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) and Governments can simplify recovery and disposal methods, and establish incentives, such as a free-of-charge deposit system

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE CAN BE FOUND IN THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS:

- **FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear (VGMFG) and Recycling of fishing nets through partnering with dedicated companies** (e.g. NOFIR, AQUAFIL, Plastix, FIL&FAB)
- **CBD Voluntary Practical Guidance on Preventing and Mitigating The Impacts of Marine Debris on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity and Habitats** (CBD COP decision XIII/10)
- **The Best Practice Framework for the Management of Fishing Gear in Capture Fisheries, Global Ghost Gear Initiative, T. Huntington** (2017)
- **CBD Technical Series No. 83— Marine Debris: Understanding, Preventing and Mitigating the Significant Adverse Impacts on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity**
- **Assessment of life cycle greenhouse gas emissions.** PAS 2050-2:2012 - Supplementary requirements for the application of PAS 2050:2011 to seafood and other aquatic food products
- FAO's EX-Ante Carbon balance Tool (EX-ACT), with a **module on fisheries and aquaculture**, to measure GHG emissions reduction.

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES:

- Iceland's fisheries management by **Individual Fishing Quotas** fostering fleet rationalisation and economic efficiency
- **The Myanmar Ocean Project**: removal of ghost gear in the Myeik archipelago
- **GGGI Best Practice Framework** for the Management of Fishing Gear
- **IPNLF Ghost Net Retrieval Project** in the Maldives focused mainly on FADs and nets.
- Glolitter initiative (IMO, FAO and UN Global Compact) aiming at tackling plastic litter from ships and fisheries
- Tuna fisheries seeking **plastic neutrality in their operations**
- OPAGAC fleet efforts in building **biodegradable FAD** with the collaboration of the EU and some RFMO

- Bolton Food signed the Manifesto "**Business call for a UN Treaty on Plastic Pollution**"
- Examples of circular economy initiatives working with fishers to collect end-of-life gear and using it to create a range of products: **Bracenet**, **Aquafil**, **Steveston Harbour Authority** and **Bureo**
- International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) conservation measure **CM 6.2 on managing fishing capacity as well as ISSF promotion of vessel-based research pilot projects on developing biodegradable and non-entangling FADs** (including a **NEFADs and biodegradable FADs Guide** that is available in eight languages) and FAD marking

PRINCIPLE 4.

PLAN AND MANAGE THEIR USE OF AND IMPACT ON MARINE RESOURCES AND SPACE IN A MANNER THAT ENSURES LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY AND TAKE PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES WHERE THEIR ACTIVITIES MAY IMPACT VULNERABLE MARINE AND COASTAL AREAS AND THE COMMUNITIES THAT ARE DEPENDENT UPON THEM.

GUIDANCE

Fishing companies and fishing vessel owners are encouraged to:

- Implement efficient spatial management measures and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) to avoid areas where the presence of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs), as well as other areas designated as ecologically important (e.g., Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs)) are known to occur as well as efficient protocols for displacement when indicators of VME occurred
- Select and use gears in the most responsible ways possible to minimize broader damage to the marine ecosystem
- Support the employment of local stakeholders (in particular those communities that may be adversely affected by the fishing companies' operations) within their fishing and processing operations
- Follow fisheries management measures with mitigation considerations such as fishing capacity control areas, seasonal closures, vessel restrictions or daily and trip landing limits, selective fishing and landing, and maximum economic yield as target

Companies engaged in fishing-related activities can:

- Proactively aim to source from fleets providing more equitable socio-economic benefits to local communities while minimizing negative impacts on supporting stocks and ecosystems
- Promote the consumption of underutilized resources, taking into account that climate change will change productivity and distribution of target and non-target species
- Support the employment of local citizens as much as feasible within their fishing and processing operations

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE CAN BE FOUND IN THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS:

- The ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) is a strategy developed and promoted by FAO in recognition of the need for wider frameworks for the planning, development and management of sustainable fisheries. EAF implementation encompasses the principles of sustainable development, first explicitly introduced to fisheries by the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF). It provides a framework for considering not only the ecological (environmental), but also the economic and social aspects of sustainability and the governance context in which the fishery sectors operate.
- It embraces principles in the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea¹⁷ (UNCLOS), Agenda 21¹⁸ of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the 1995 Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.¹⁹

16. Garcia, S.M.; Zerbi, A.; Aliaume, C.; Do Chi, T.; Lasserre, G. The ecosystem approach to fisheries. Issues, terminology, principles, institutional foundations, implementation and outlook. FAO Fisheries Technical Paper. No. 443. Rome, FAO, 2003. 71 p. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-y4773e.pdf>

17. https://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/convention_overview_convention.htm

18. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/outcomedocuments/agenda21>

19. Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries Rome, FAO, 1995. 41 p. <http://www.fao.org/fishery/code/en>

- In addition, the 2012 Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT)²⁰ and the 2015 Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines)²¹ serve as references to improve and support the communities dependent on fisheries.
- Furthermore, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) have accorded increased attention on mainstreaming biodiversity considerations into sectoral policies and practices, including in the fisheries sector. At its 13th meeting in 2016, the CBD COP adopted decision XIII/3, which called for improved mainstreaming of biodiversity into fisheries and aquaculture through various means. At its 14th meeting, the COP decided to establish a Long-Term Approach to Mainstreaming, which is expected to be adopted at its 15th meeting in 2021.

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES:

- Maldivian fleets application of **bird radars to increase their capacity to competitively maintain focus upon free school, rather than FAD associated tuna fishing.**
- **Hopper project** for Bolton Food owned vessels in the Pacific: "Hopper" is a mobile stainless steel tray that is placed on the deck of the tuna vessel. This project, co-financed by AZTI, DOS and Bolton, tries to demonstrate that the use of Hopper reduces the mortality of non-target accessory species, as they can be detected and released more quickly. The results of this project will be presented globally in all Regional Fisheries Organizations (RFOs).
- **Grupo Calvo** has voluntarily committed to reduce the active FAD by vessel, at level beyond regulations, before 2025 and to guarantee that all are non entangling and biodegradable.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- **Seafood MAP program** – aims at helping improve socio-economic benefits to local communities;
- **GSSI's Global Benchmark Tool** - drives ongoing credibility, clarity and choice in seafood certification schemes targeting environmental sustainability
- **IPNLF Technical Reports and Briefings** on how to minimize fishing impacts
- Ocean Outcomes **Triple Bottom Line Approach** to Fishery Improvement Project
- **Social Responsibility Assessment Tool**

20. Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security. FAO. 2012. 40p. <http://www.fao.org/3/i2801e/i2801e.pdf>

21. Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, FAO. 2015. 35 p. <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/14356EN>

GOVERNANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SECTOR

The focus of fisheries governance, development and management has broadened to include not only conservation of resources and the environment, but also the reduction of waste and increased efficiency along the value chain, as well as the recognition of the social agenda, food security, nutrition, well-being and livelihoods of people working in the sector. Increased emphasis is now being placed on the role of fisheries as sources of livelihoods (e.g. income, food and employment, civil stability), expression of cultural values, and a buffer against biological, economic and social shocks for poor or otherwise economically-limited communities, in particular small-scale fisheries.

Effectively managing fisheries to ensure sustainability in a world with a growing population and an increasing demand for fish and seafood is complex. The sector is subject to socio-economic, technical, political and environmental challenges at several levels which requires a multifaceted approach and better integration of all stakeholders in decision making to ensure adequate biodiversity conservation while addressing food security and human wellbeing objectives. Tackling IUU fishing and harmful fisheries subsidies can also help combat the drivers of substandard working conditions.

There is a need for improved cooperation between safety, labour and fisheries authorities to prevent labour and human rights abuses in the sector. Some of the main issues to be addressed by the sector include:

- Contribute to the identification of evidence-based, economic and social management measures towards the long-term sustainability of fisheries, including in cases where the precautionary approach should be used.
- Curb IUU fishing, by improving compliance with existing rules and regulations, avoiding the use of convenience flags. Ensure adequate reporting of fishing activities and ensure transparent and thorough investigations occur when regulations violations require investigation.
- Increase transparency and traceability of fish and seafood products, including through catch certification.
- Provide decent working conditions, as well as support the well-being and livelihoods of fish workers, while ensuring human rights are maintained.

With many coastal and deep sea resources being shared among neighbor countries and straddling stocks spreading through large areas and being fished by a variety of fleets from different countries, the role of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) and Regional Fisheries Advisory Bodies (RFABs) is crucial in addressing sustainability. A list of RFMOs and RFABs is included in annexes 1 and 2 respectively.

REPORTING REGIMES AND STANDARDS OF RELEVANCE:

- Certification standards that meet the FAO Eco-labeling Guidelines, including those recognized by initiatives that benchmark eco-labels against these FAO Guidelines, such as the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI) ; contribute to environmental, governmental and operational criteria.
- **Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST) Standard 1.0.**
- **Social Compliance Benchmark Tool in the Seafood Industry**, a joint collaboration between the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI)²³ and the Consumer Goods Forum's Sustainable Supply Chain Initiative.

22. FAO. 2019e. Joining forces in the fisheries sector: promoting safety, decent work and the fight against IUU fishing. Outcomes from the Regional Technical Seminar [online]. [Cited 23 October 2019]. www.fao.org/3/ca2511en/CA2511EN.pdf#21. Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, FAO. 2015. 35 p. <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/14356EN>

23. Note: Ecolabel certification and GSSI focus mainly on environmental sustainability while some schemes include social sustainability related indicators

- **Certifications and Ratings Collaborative Framework** for Social Responsibility in the Seafood Sector

Roadmap for Improving Seafood Ethics (RISE): provides a large set of resource documents, responsible sourcing tool, seafood slavery risk tool, etc.: contribute to social responsibility and improve ethics in the sector.

- The Monterrey Framework and its Social Responsibility Assessment Tool: spans issues across human rights from labor rights, access to resources, equality and equity, and livelihood and food security. It is useful as a diagnostic or rapid assessment tool – to assess risk of social issues, to identify areas in need of improvement, and to inform the development of a Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) workplan
- **The FAO Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems** (RAI Principles) acknowledge that responsible investment in agriculture and food systems can contribute to food security and nutrition is the recognition and respect for human rights. They are a set of ten principles that apply to all types and sizes of agricultural investment including fisheries, forests and livestock. They address all stakeholders and apply to all stages of the value chain. As a soft law instrument they are globally applicable and include actions to address a range of environmental, social and economic issues.

PARTNERSHIPS TO BE CONSIDERED:

Policy initiatives and frameworks

- Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) and Regional Fishery Advisory Bodies (RFABs)
- EU sustainable fisheries partnership agreements
- EU Advisory Councils
- EU IUU Coalition

Private Sector Initiatives

- Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST)
- Global Business Coalition Against Human Trafficking

Multi-stakeholder Initiatives

- International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)
- World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF)
- International Pole and Line Foundation (IPNLF)
- World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP)
- International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF)
- Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI)
- GSSI-Consumer Goods Forum's Social compliance Collaboration
- Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FITI)
- ISSF ProActive Vessel Register
- UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs)
- Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI)

PRINCIPLE 5.

ENGAGE RESPONSIBLY WITH RELEVANT REGULATORY OR ENFORCEMENT BODIES ON OCEAN RELATED LAWS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER FRAMEWORKS.

GUIDANCE

Fishing companies and fishing vessel owners – to various degrees depending on the region and the company size and capacity – have already engaged regularly in discussions on fisheries management at various levels:

- With other companies or stakeholders within the framework of forums or associations of fishers, companies or stakeholders
- With local, regional or national administrations in the context of stakeholder dialogue, and
- Within the framework of regional organizations such as RFMOs, RFABs, etc., as well as global policy processes such as those under FAO

Many existing frameworks and guidelines (See Annex 3) call for this dialogue to be strengthened and the responsible participation of the fishing sector be secured and enhanced. In this context, fishing companies, fishing vessel owners and companies engaged in fishing related activities are encouraged to:

- Participate in industry associations
- Contribute to consultations relevant for the industry
- Engage with civil society organization, UN agencies, trade unions and human rights actors such as human rights organizations, experts and national human rights institutions, to understand the human rights related issues related to their activities
- Engage in global and regional policy and regulatory frameworks relevant to marine fisheries (including under FAO, CBD, RFMOs, RFABs)
- Engage in open dialogue with local and national authorities, including in informing and preventing IUU activities and derived products entering the value chain; and participate in RFMOs advisory bodies as well as observing and intervening in the decision-making processes
- Establish collaborative forums to address long term barriers to growth of public-private partnerships (PPPs) and establish a dialogue with the regulators to address these
- Take an evidence-based approach and engage with policy makers, science and civil society to develop solutions to identify sustainability challenges and opportunities in the industry and apply precautionary principles on fisheries lacking comprehensive regulations
- Participate in co-management processes or forums made possible by regulators
- Provide market incentives for Good Practice Examples implementations

- Support needs for improved data collection, product traceability and operational transparency among all stakeholders to both inform sustainable fisheries management and minimize opportunities for IUU fishing
- Develop and implement Social-Responsibility Action Plans in fisheries value chains, particularly to promote decent work and combat Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
- Support the implementation of the **FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes**

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES:

- **Global Ghost Gear Engagement with RFMOs** (especially WCPFC and ICCAT) to see the adoption of best practice management fishing gear measures
- **Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative** (GSSI): allowed for the development and recognition of regional seafood certification programs often working closely with local authorities. e.g. Icelandic Responsible Fishing Scheme, the Alaska Responsible Fisheries Management Certification and Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Standard
- International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) conservation measures **CM 3.4 Skipper Best Practices** with the goal of developing and presenting through workshops, as well as online **skipper guidebooks**, best practice information on responsible fishing operations, reporting requirements and other obligations to RFMOs, and **related ISSF Conservation Measures** for the management of tuna and its larger marine ecosystem.
- ISSF advocacy initiatives such as **RFMO Position Statements** tabled at RFMO meetings, **ISSF joint advocacy letters to RFMOs and countries** with market partners. ISSF advocacy tools for **MCS Best Practices in RFMO** and Best **Practices for FADs and At-Sea Transshipment**
- **G16 Group** of like-minded Coastal States of the Indian Ocean supporting equitable allocation in regional tuna fisheries that will support livelihoods of coastal communities and ensure sustainable stock levels
- **Tuna from Responsible Fishing** (APR) standard
- **Global Tuna Alliance** – aims of stopping illegal tuna getting to market, and promoting improvements in the environmental sustainability and human rights in tuna fisheries
- IPNLF - support **the adoption of a rebuilding program for overfished bigeye tuna by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas** (ICCAT)

PRINCIPLE 6.

FOLLOW AND SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS AND BEST PRACTICES THAT ARE RECOGNIZED IN THE RELEVANT SECTOR OR MARKET CONTRIBUTING TO A HEALTHY AND PRODUCTIVE OCEAN AND SECURE LIVELIHOODS.

GUIDANCE

Developing and sharing good practice examples throughout the fish supply chain from capture to consumption is key to the sustainability of the capture fisheries sector. The adoption of standards can contribute to raise the performance of the industry, improve the footprint of fishing operations and build trust with stakeholders.

The FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries sets out the principles and international standards for responsible practices with due respect for the ecosystem and biodiversity. Moreover, specific guidelines, standards, guidelines and Good Practice Examples are widely available in existing texts (see Annex 1), but in particular, fishing companies, fishing vessel owners and companies engaged in fishing related activities can:

- Collaborate on a pre-competitive basis, as part of multi-stakeholder, transparent, fisheries improvement projects, in line with existing instrument and guidelines
- Identify and implement those practices that provide additional benefits along the value chain, in particular in support of small-scale fisheries, local stakeholders and coastal communities
- Engage with partner organizations to develop and implement standards that are fit for purpose and proactively exceed the minimum requirements of fishery management, reduced loss and waste, food safety, quality, and nutrition
- Engage with local communities and small-scale fisheries in integrating their priorities and preferences into the business plan, thereby effectively contributing to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- Increase accountability and build greater trust in the capacity and transparency of the fisheries sector as a key component of food production systems and Blue Economy

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE CAN BE FOUND IN THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS:

- **Code of Practice for fish and fishery products** (Codex Alimentarius CAC/RCP 52-2003), amongst many other relevant standards and guidelines in Codex for a food safety and quality perspective
- **FAO/ Committee on World Food Security Principles for Responsible Investments in Agriculture and Food Systems** (2012)
- **FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication** (2014)
- **Convention on Biological Diversity Technical Series No. 87**: Assessing Progress towards Aichi Biodiversity Target 6 on Sustainable Marine Fisheries

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES:

- International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) conservation measures **CM 3.4 Skipper Best Practices** with the goal of developing and presenting through workshops, as well as online **skipper guidebooks**, best practice information on responsible fishing operations, reporting requirements and other obligations to RFMOs, and **related ISSF Conservation Measures** for the management of tuna and its larger marine ecosystem.
- **AENOR Atún de Pesca Responsable**, seal on final product for brands based on the UNE 195006 together with a Chain of Custody Reglementation to prove traceability and the need of being part of a Comprehensive FIP according to FisheryProgress
- “**Sustainable Tuna of Ecuador**” brand for products elaborated in those industries that comply with the established standards aligned with FAO guidelines along the value chain (in Spanish)

PRINCIPLE 7.

RESPECT HUMAN-, LABOUR, AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS IN THE COMPANY'S OCEAN RELATED ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING EXERCISE APPROPRIATE DUE DILIGENCE IN THEIR SUPPLY CHAIN, CONSULT AND ENGAGE WITH RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS AND COMMUNITIES IN A TIMELY, TRANSPARENT AND INCLUSIVE MANNER, AND ADDRESS IDENTIFIED IMPACTS.

GUIDANCE

Fishing companies, fishing vessel owners and companies engaged in fishing related activities can proactively ensure the right of fishers and fish workers to have a decent work that sustain their livelihoods, and promote that decent working conditions are ensured along the value chain, as well as the rights of coastal and other communities, including indigenous peoples potentially affected by fishing companies' activities, including by:

- Commit to respecting all human rights, through a human rights policy commitment at the highest level within the company
- Train internal company staff on social and human rights issues
- Practice human rights due diligence (HRDD) in your own operations and throughout the supply chain and chain of custody, through 1.) Assessment of human rights risks and impacts²⁴, 2.) Integration and acting upon the findings through effective mitigation and remediation of these abuses, 3.) Tracking and monitoring of the impacts and 4.) Communicating and reporting
- In assessing and addressing the potential risks and impacts on fishers, fish workers and communities, pay specific attention to the rights of groups at risk of vulnerability, including but not limited to women, children and youth, migrant and undocumented workers, elderly, artisanal fishers and indigenous communities
- Commit to implement policies to promote gender equality, support to younger generations and fishing communities, in relation to own operations and the supply chain
- Engage with relevant stakeholders, including those potentially or actually affected by company activities, such as workers (including supply chain workers) and communities, including indigenous peoples, as well as labor or human rights subject-matter experts, in a meaningful and an ongoing manner as a across-cutting element of HRDD
- Promote, along the value chain, the implementation of principles and standards in line with existing national and international instruments, such as those emanating from the FAO Port State Measures, SSF Guidelines, RAI Principles and Cape Town Agreement, as well as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights,²⁵ the globally recognized framework, unanimously adopted by the UN Human Rights Council, that explains the role of States and businesses to promote and respect human rights
- Ensure, and recommend suppliers to ensure, that every fish worker has a written contract, in line with existing regulations and international labor standards, specifying all terms of work and payment in a language they can understand, including a grievance mechanism

24. For guidance on how to assess and address human rights impacts of company operations, see: Danish Institute for Human Rights, Human Rights Impact Assessment Guidance and Toolbox (2020): <https://www.humanrights.dk/business/tools/human-rights-impact-assessment-guidance-toolbox>

25. OHCHR, The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (2011), https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/guidingprinciplesbusinessshr_en.pdf

- Inform and train fishers and fish workers on their rights and support workers and their representative organizations to draft, adopt and implement codes of conduct with suppliers that include the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining. Allow for alternative forms of employee representation in contexts where unionization is not permitted or where unions not independent
- Proactively implement human rights due diligence (HRDD) requirements throughout supply chains by assessing risk of human rights abuses throughout the chain of custody, and contribute towards the effective remediation of these abuses
- Engage with supply chain actors to implement social safeguards and adopt worker-driven social responsibility models based on binding agreements with workers' representatives, to implement worker-led monitoring and enforcement mechanisms
- Ensure company commitment to supply chain actors, workers, community members and other stakeholders' access to secure, anonymous, confidential, and independent operational-level grievance mechanisms with strong protections against retaliation and ensure that they are aligned with the 8 effectiveness criteria of operational level grievance mechanisms.²⁶
- Encourage Governments to invest in protecting human rights in fish work, enforcement and on-board observers, including through allocating adequate resources and capacity to conduct inspections

Existing frameworks such as the ILO Conventions, in particular ILO C.188, can be used as guiding frameworks to address labour rights issues, in particular the establishment of decent conditions onboard. ILO Convention 169 provides a framework on the rights of indigenous peoples, whose rights should be respected by fishing companies, including in relation to access to marine resources.²⁷

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES:

- The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) **Resolution on Labour Standards for Crew on Fishing Vessels**
- **IPNLF's 2025 Commitment** – pledge to safeguard the health, well-being, and fundamental human rights of all workers in supply chains in line with international standards and recommendations.
- **IPNLF Sourcing Transparency Platform** (STP).
- **UNE Standard 195006** Tuna from Responsible Fishing (APR)

Companies practices:

- Bolton Food:
 - **Tuna Supplying & Sourcing Policy and Vessel Code of Conduct for Tuna Suppliers**
 - **Partnership with OXFAM** to make the tuna fishing supply chain fairer and more inclusive
- **Grupo Calvo Responsible Purchase System**, including a mandatory sign of its Code of Conduct, an internal risk evaluation every year and external audits based on BSCI (Business Social Compliance Initiative) methodology.

26. OHCHR, UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (2011), Principle 31. See. https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/guidingprinciplesbusinesshr_en.pdf (page 33)

27. The Danish Institute for Human Rights, Respecting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: a Due Diligence Checklist for companies. https://www.humanrights.dk/sites/humanrights.dk/files/media/dokumenter/respecting_the_rights_of_indigenous_peoples_-_a_due_diligence_checklist_for_companies.pdf

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- By the Danish Institute for Human Rights:
 - **Due diligence checklist for indigenous peoples rights**
 - **Human Rights Impact Assessment Guidance and Toolbox** on assessing and addressing human rights

- **UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and how they apply to the fisheries and Aquaculture sectors in Africa** (also available in French)

- **Social Responsibility Assessment Tool**

- **Fishwise** - tools for human rights action and traceability best practices

- **Labour Safe Screen** - a tool for food suppliers to promote social accountability in the area of labour rights

DATA AND TRANSPARENCY

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SECTOR

Fisheries managers require timely and accurate data to inform sustainable fisheries management. Improvements to data collection, management and analysis provision and transparency are a critical concern in many countries to properly assess and track the status of their fisheries resources and to design and implement effective management policies and schemes. Fisheries information systems and new information technologies have the potential to align incentives and use data to promote and evidence many sustainable practices among fisheries globally. In addition, the emergence of technologies such as blockchain, big data, artificial intelligence and deep learning is likely to significantly affect the established value chain and to disrupt the sector's management in the short and medium term.²⁸

Some of the main issues to be addressed by the sector include:

- Improve the contribution to fisheries and value chain related data collection systems and data analysis undertaken by mandated institutions, including on aquatic food consumption and socio-economic aspects.
- Adopt practices above minimum standards²⁹ to facilitate the collection and sharing of data and information to support an increasingly demanding decision-making process, and to enable genuinely informed and responsible seafood sourcing
- Ensure that information and data collected, including along the value chain, accurately reflects fishing operations and their outcomes
- Support capacity building in the data supply chain
- Participate in the development of, explore and when possible adopt, new technologies that streamline data collection and sharing while taking into consideration the potential risks and impacts of the use technology on the rights to privacy and non-discrimination.
- Facilitate that the data collected is put at the disposal of experts to contribute with their knowledge and facilitate the analysis of such data in the most useful way for decision makers
- Promote comprehensive, affordable, customizable and interoperable Fisheries Information Systems that can also be implemented by small-scale fisheries

Successful Information and Communication Technologies in the sector include community catch monitoring programmes, self-reporting, electronic monitoring, e-logbooks, and remote tracking of fishing vessels (e.g. VMS, AIS), and tracking for improved safety-at-sea. These initiatives can improve traceability and transparency throughout supply chains.

REPORTING REGIMES AND STANDARDS OF RELEVANCE:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ■ GRI Sector Standard for the agriculture and fishing sector | ■ World Benchmarking Alliance Seafood Stewardship Index |
| ■ UN Global Compact's Communication on Progress | ■ ISO 22005 traceability standard |
| ■ Other certification standards that meet the FAO Eco-labeling Guidelines, including those recognized by initiatives that benchmark eco-labels against these FAO Guidelines, such as the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI). | ■ The Azores Declaration |
| ■ IPNLF Sourcing Transparency Platform (STP) | ■ Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability |
| ■ ISSF Conservation Measures Framework | ■ United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) |
| | ■ Global Record of Stocks and Fisheries (GRSF) |
| | ■ Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS) |
| | ■ AENOR APR Chain of Custody Reglementation |

28. FAO. 2020. Proceedings of the International Symposium on Fisheries Sustainability: strengthening the science-policy nexus. FAO Headquarters, 18–21 November 2019. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Proceedings No. 65. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/ca9165en>

29. FAO Technical Guidelines N° 12 on Information and Knowledge Sharing

PARTNERSHIPS TO BE CONSIDERED:

Multi-stakeholder Initiatives

- United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development
- IPNLF Sourcing Transparency Platform (STP)
- Community Supported Fisheries (CSFs)
- Fishery Transparency Initiative (FiTI)
- ISSF ProActive Vessel Register
- Organization of Associated Producers of Large Freezer Tuna Vessels (OPAGAC)
- Global Fishing Watch
- Global Ghost Initiative Global Data Portal and Ghost Gear Reporter App
- Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI)
- TransparentSea

Policy Initiatives

- FAO Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (Global Record)

Private Sector Initiatives

- Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST)

PRINCIPLE 8.

WHERE APPROPRIATE, SHARE RELEVANT SCIENTIFIC DATA TO SUPPORT RESEARCH ON AND MAPPING OF RELEVANCE TO THE OCEAN.

GUIDANCE

Fishing companies can:

- Require fleets to transparently share their fishing data at an agreed resolution that addresses users needs and fishing companies rights and, in a timely manner, with competent authorities, to inform the generation of fisheries management advice and support compliance monitoring
- Require fleets to collect and submit all data on bycatch and gear losses to enable holistically informed fisheries and marine pollution management decision making
- Develop regulations to prevent fleets that do have AIS or VMS systems onboard from intentionally switching off or tampering with these technologies, while promote transparently and timeously sharing of their AIS and VMS data

Fishing companies and fishing vessel owner can:

- Proactively enable fishery observers, electronic monitoring systems and innovative technologies to contribute to data collection, management and analysis to better assess the status of the target and bycatch species stocks
- Contribute to collect biological, fishery and habitat data information in a rigorous and cost-effective manner, including through facilitating the use of observers (human or electronic) on board and/or at landing points wherever possible to better assess the status of stocks and the impact of fisheries on marine environment and ecosystems
- Install credible monitoring (both human and electronic observer) onboard to survey catch activities where possible and feasible. Levels of monitoring should be sufficient to allow scientifically credible conclusions to be drawn about the efficacy of fishery management rules and guidelines
- Invest in mobile data collection and the use of remote-sensing technologies, involve fisherfolk communities, including women and youth, to reduce the digital divide and ensure smaller scale fleets can use new technologies to contribute data

Fishing companies and fishing vessel owner can:

- Require all fisheries and vessels they source from to provide evidence that they at least meet the minimum data provision demands of their fisheries management authorities soon enough to inform annual management advice
- Contribute to the development of credible vessel tracking tools and data sharing platforms
- Contribute to giving consumers ethical/sustainable choices with robust traceability systems

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES

- International Pole & Line foundation (IPNLF) **Best Practice for Baitfish Management**
- International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) conservation measures **CM 2.2 Quarterly data submission to RFMOs which required companies in the seafood industry shall submit fishery statistics to RFMOs,, 4.3a Observer coverage on transactions with only large-scale purse seines with 100% observer coverage** as well as **ISSF Fishing Best Practices** technical reports where it is requested to submit mandatory fishery statistic data and voluntary detailed fishery data (e.g. FAD tracking and FAD echosounder biomass data in near-real time) to RFMOs
- **IPNLF Technical Reports and Briefings** to advance scientific data collection in data poor fisheries and advance scientific rigor in decision-making
- **Global Atlas** of AIS-based fishing activity
- **Bolton Food** on time traceability system

PRINCIPLE 9.

BE TRANSPARENT ABOUT THEIR OCEAN-RELATED ACTIVITIES, IMPACTS AND DEPENDENCIES IN LINE WITH RELEVANT REPORTING FRAMEWORKS.

Fishing companies, fishing vessel owners and companies engaged in fishing related activities are encouraged to:

- Publicly disclose information relating to source fisheries, their management and environmental and social/human rights impacts
- Implement traceability and transparency improving technologies while integrating them throughout seafood supply chains, while ensuring that no rights are violated (privacy, accessibility, discrimination, etc.)
- Publicly report operational information such as loss rates of fishing gears/tools and ensure they do not contravene the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the marking of fishing gear or MARPOL Annex V
- Develop and implement better mechanisms to incorporate multiple types of available information including local knowledge and expertise, and their integration into assessment and management approaches
- Facilitate the presence of observers (human or electronic) on board and/or other mechanisms such as AIS or VMS on vessels that can cost effectively achieve this

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES

- Several countries including Indonesia and Chile make their VMS data available to the public through Global Fishing Watch
- Transparentsea.org: platform aiming at curbing overfishing and fishing illegal, unregulated and unreported
- International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) conservation measures: **CM 2.4 Supply chain transparency, audit, reporting and purchase requirements** which creates new reporting obligations for participating companies regarding sourcing tuna from Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)-certified fisheries eligible to use the MSC label and **tuna FIPs listed** on FisheryProgress.org; and **CM 2.1** and **CM 2.3** on product traceability and labelling to combat IUU.
- All ISSF Participating Companies are **audited** by an independent third-party auditor to assess their compliance with all ISSF's CMs and compliance reports (both aggregated and for individual companies) are **published** to improve traceability and transparency throughout supply chains.

Companies practices:

- **Marks & Spencer (M&S) interactive digital map** that allows customers and shareholders to track the origin of its seafood products.
- **Bolton Food owned fleet in the Pacific's electronic observers program** in alliance with the IATTC (Inter-American Commission of Tropical Tuna - East Pacific). This is a pioneering program in which, for the first time, a tuna company collaborates directly with a Regional Fisheries Organization in the development of a method fishing control complementary to that of physical observers.

- **Bolton owned fleet in the Pacific's cook-electronic observer project** creation of Cook Islands' own observer corps
- Within the framework of **Responsible Engagement initiative** Grupo Calvo is making public the KPIs linked to the goals the company has committed to achieve before 2025. The goals are updated every year and verified by an independent third party.
- Fisheries not yet able to reach the standard can be benchmarked against this through the **FIP approach** in order to track progress.
- **Fishery improvement projects** for fisheries that aren't certified

REGIONAL FISHERY MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS (RFMOS)

Regional fisheries management organizations are among the most important building blocks of fisheries management, as they have the authority to adopt international legally binding conservation and management measures concerning fishing operations and associated activities. The 1995 United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA), which entered into force in 2001, is the key global treaty relevant to RFMOs. It improved the legal regime for regional cooperation and identified RFMOs as the mechanism through which States can fulfil their obligations to conserve and manage fish stocks.

- CACFish: Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission
- CCAMLR: Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources
- CCSBT: Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna
- CTMFM: Commission for the Argentina/Uruguay Maritime Front
- GFCM: General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean
- IATTC: Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission
- ICCAT: International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
- IOTC: Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
- IPHC: International Pacific Halibut Commission
- IWC: International Whaling Commission
- LVFO: Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization
- NAFO: Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization
- NASCO: North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization
- NEAFC: North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission
- NPAFC: North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission
- NPFC: North Pacific Fisheries Commission
- PSC: Pacific Salmon Commission
- RECOFI: Regional Commission for Fisheries
- SEAFO: South East Atlantic Fisheries Organization
- SIOFA: South Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement
- SPRFMO: South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization
- WCPFC: Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

REGIONAL FISHERIES ADVISORY BODIES (RFABS)

Regional fisheries advisory bodies (RFABs) provide fora for collaboration and coordination and promote sustainable utilization of living aquatic resources by suggesting specific actions and by providing advice to members on fisheries conservation and management. In contrast with RFMOs, RFABs do not have the authority to adopt legally binding measures concerning fishing operations and associated activities. As for RFMOs, there have been numerous calls in various international fora, among them COFI and the United Nations General Assembly, to strengthen RFABs.

- APFIC: Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission
- ATLAFCO: Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation among African States bordering the Atlantic Ocean
- BCC: Benguela Current Commission
- BOBP-IGO: Bay of Bengal Programme-Intergovernmental Organization
- CECAF: Fishery Commission for the Eastern Central Atlantic
- CIFAA: Committee on Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa
- COPPESAALC: Commission for Small-Scale and Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean
- COREP: Regional Commission of Fisheries of Gulf of Guinea
- CRFM: Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism
- EIFAAC: European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission
- FCWC: Fishery Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea
- FFA: Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency
- GLFC: Great Lakes Fishery Commission
- LCBC: Lake Chad Basin Commission
- LTA: Lake Tanganyika Authority
- MRC: Mekong River Commission
- NAMMCO: North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission
- OLDEPESCA: Latin American Organization for the Development of Fisheries
- OSPESCA: Organization for the Fishing and Aquaculture Sector of the Central American Isthmus
- SEAFDEC: Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre
- SRFC: Subregional Fisheries Commission
- SWIOFC: Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission
- WECAFC: Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission

BINDING AND NON-BINDING FISHERIES RELATED INSTRUMENTS

Companies and professional/resource user associations can consider and implement international instruments and guidelines such as:

FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries:

- FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries:
- Precautionary approach to capture fisheries and species introductions (1996)
- Responsible fish utilization (1998)
- Conservation and management of sharks (2000)
- Increasing the contribution of small-scale fisheries to poverty alleviation and food security (2005)
- Best Practices to Reduce Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Capture Fisheries (2009)
- Responsible Fish Trade (2009)
- Recreational Fisheries (2012)
- Best practices to improve safety at sea in the fisheries sector (2015)

Additionally, global conventions and instruments can help inform decisions:

- Aichi Biodiversity Targets, in particular Targets 6 and 11
- The Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) process
- The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
- The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) – Committee of Fisheries (COFI)
- International Maritime Organization – regulations under MARPOL Annex 5 and London Convention and Protocol
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
- FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (1995)
- International Plan of Action for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries (IPOA – Seabirds, 1999)
- International Plan of Action for the Management of Fishing Capacity (IPOA – Capacity, 1999)
- International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA – Sharks, 1999)
- International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA – IUU, 2001)
- 2004 Model Scheme on port State measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
- Guidelines to reduce sea turtle mortality in fishing operations (2005)
- Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA, 2009)
- International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas (2009)
- Guidelines on Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries, Revision 1 (2009)
- Guidelines on Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Inland Capture Fisheries (2011)
- International Guidelines on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards (2011)
- Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification (2011)
- FAO/ILO/IMO Implementation Guidelines on Part B of the Code, the Voluntary Guidelines and the Safety Recommendations (Implementation Guidelines) (2011 IMO, 2012 FAO COFI)
- Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT, 2012)
- Guidelines for the development of Action List and Action Levels for Fish Waste (London Convention and Protocol, IMO, 2012)
- Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines, 2014)
- Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance (VGFSP, 2014)
- CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (RAI, 2014)
- Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes (2017)
- Voluntary Guidelines for the Marking of Fishing Gear (2018)

International conventions and guidance relating to human rights and fisheries

- The International Bill of Human Rights of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS, 1974)
- Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979)
- The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS, 1982)
- The Torremolinos International Convention for the Safety of Fishing Vessels by the International Maritime Organization (IMO,1993)
- The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessels Personnel (STCW-F, IMO, 1995)
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of the 4th World Conference on Women (1995)
- Declaration on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work by International Labour Organization (ILO, 1998)
- The United Nations (UN) Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons (2000)
- The Work in Fishing Convention (No. 188) (ILO, 2007)
- The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (2011)
- OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (updated 2011)
- FAO/ Committee on World Food Security Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forest in the Context of National Food Security (2012)
- The Cape Town Agreement on Fishing Vessel Safety (IMO, 2012)
- FAO-ILO Guidance on addressing child labour in fisheries and aquaculture (2013)
- The Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 P029 (ILO, 2014)
- Guide to Interantional Labour Standards (ILO, 2014)
- FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (2014)
- FAO/ Committee on World Food Security Principles for Responsible Investments in Agriculture and Food Systems (2014)
- The UN Global Compact Guide to Corporate Sustainability (2015)
- General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment (ILO, 2016)
- Guidance for Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains (OECD/FAO, 2016)
- Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct (OECD, 2018)
- International Labour Organization C.190: Convention Concerning the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work (2019)

