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WWF-SA's communications surrounding WWF-SASSI Retailer / Supplier Participation Scheme Participant commitments

As the end of 2015 approaches, a number of the WWF-SASSI Retailer / Supplier Participation Scheme Participants are nearing the target date that they set for themselves to achieve their public commitments to sustainable seafood. While these commitments were made to the individual Participant's consumers and the broader public, as the conservation partner to these retailer / supplier Participants, it will be important to ensure transparency and cohesiveness between WWF-SA and Participants' public communications around their commitments. As such, WWF-SA has developed this communications guide to help Participants with their own communications strategies and to ensure transparency around our own. These communications will essentially focus on WWF-SA's position on the following issues:

1. Participants that have met their commitments within their target date.
2. Participants that have not met their commitments within their target date.

It is important to note that WWF-SA does not play an auditing role in assessing a Participant's seafood procurement and we are therefore reliant on information submitted to us by the Participants themselves. WWF-SA will therefore only be able to recognise Participants as having met / not met their sustainable seafood commitment target dates on the basis of procurement information submitted to WWF-SA through the WWF-SASSI Retailer / Supplier Participation Scheme.

Through the WWF-SASSI Retailer / Supplier Participation Scheme, WWF-SA currently works with the following companies in South Africa that have made time-bound commitments to sustainable seafood:

1. Breco
2. Fruit & Veg City
3. I & J
4. John Dory's
5. Ocean Basket
6. Pick n Pay
7. SPAR
8. Sun International
9. Woolworths

1) Participants that are meeting their commitments to sustainable seafood:

In the context of the target dates that the individual WWF-SASSI Retailer / Supplier Participation Scheme Participants have set for themselves, WWF-SA will publicly recognise Participants as meeting their commitments to sustainable seafood if they are procuring seafood species that are:

1. Sourced from fisheries that are certified by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) or farms that are certified by the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) or equivalent certification, i.e. the species included in the .

MSC certified fisheries can be found here: <https://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/fisheries-in-the-program/fisheries-by-species>.

ASC certified farms can be found here: <http://www.asc-aqua.org/index.cfm?act=tekst.item&iid=4&iids=204&lng=1>

The end-product of these species does not need to carry the MSC or ASC ecolabel, but the species must be included in the scope of the certification.

2. On the WWF-SASSI Green-list.

WWF-SASSI Green-listed species found here: <http://wwfsassi.co.za/sassi-list/>

3. Sourced from fisheries or farms that are classified as “Under Improvement”. In order for a seafood product to be considered as “Under Improvement”, it must either:
 - a. Come from a fishery engaged in a formal Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP) with the goal of the source fishery achieving a level of operation consistent with the MSC standard for sustainable wild-capture fisheries, the credibility of which will be reviewed by WWF-SA.
 - b. Come from a farm engaged in a formal Aquaculture Improvement Project (AIP) with the aim of achieving a level of operation consistent with the ASC standard for responsible aquaculture, the credibility of which will be reviewed by WWF-SA.
 - c. Come from a local fishery/farm engaged in a Fisheries Conservation Project (FCP) led by WWF-SA with the aim of improving a species sustainability status on the WWF-SASSI listing and noted on the WWF-SASSI website here: <http://wwfsassi.co.za/working-to-transform-fisheries/>
 - d. Comply with a Participant-specific procurement strategy collaboratively developed by the Participant and WWF-SA which supports the implementation of best available practices within the relevant production sector. These are specific approaches to procuring species for which it is not currently possible to bring an entire sector under improvement. The Participant must therefore adopt specific strategies to ensure that, regardless of the broader sector practices, their own suppliers are implementing best available practices. These strategies will be relevant to the following species groupings: tuna, salmon, prawn and “linefish”. WWF-SASSI has developed procurement guidelines for these species groupings and Participant procurement strategies should align with these guidelines. The WWF-SASSI procurement guidelines are available here: <http://wwfsassi.co.za/working-to-transform-fisheries/>.

More detailed information on FIPs, AIPs, FCPs and species grouping procurement guidelines can be found in the WWF-SASSI communications around species Under Improvement document that can be downloaded from <http://wwfsassi.co.za/sassi-participants/>.

It is important to note that while Participants may choose to approach their commitments differently, WWF-SA’s position is that these commitments relate only to species that appear on the WWF-SASSI listing. These targets therefore exclude species that are currently “Not-assessed” by WWF-SASSI. While WWF-SA has worked with Participants to identify potential environmental sustainability concerns associated with these “Not-assessed” species, until a species is formally adopted onto the WWF-SASSI listing, WWF-SA cannot hold Participants publically accountable to sustainability commitments around these species.

More information on WWF-SASSI’s communication to species that are “Not-assessed” can be found in the WWF-SASSI communications around Not-assessed species document that can be downloaded from <http://wwfsassi.co.za/sassi-participants/>.

It is similarly important to note that addressing species-specific procurement through making public sustainable seafood commitments is only one focus area of the WWF-SASSI Retailer / Supplier Participation Scheme. WWF-SA’s engagement with Participants also includes work around staff training, product labeling, supply chain transparency and traceability system integrity as well as the Participant’s

direct interactions with source fisheries and farms. Although much of this work is ongoing and will extend past the individual Participant's commitment dates, Participants are encouraged to communicate around each aspect of their work on sustainable seafood on at least an annual basis.

It is equally important to be clear about what communications WWF-SA will and won't support around Participant's commitments. WWF-SA will support statements made by Participant's who have met their commitment target dates that align with the following:

- (Participant) has met our commitments to selling sustainable seafood and is supporting fisheries and farms that are "Under Improvement".
- (Participant) will only sell WWF-SASSI Orange- and Red-listed species if they are from fisheries or farms that are "Under Improvement".
- (Participant) continues to work on any sustainability concerns with species that are currently "Not-assessed" by WWF-SASSI.
- (Participant) has implemented systems to ensure that all new seafood products meet our commitments to sustainable seafood.

As the Participants' commitments were made to the public and not to WWF-SA, Participants should not claim to be "WWF-SA or WWF-SASSI compliant" but instead are encouraged to communicate that "WWF-SA or WWF-SASSI supports the credibility of the Participant's commitments". Participants must also ensure that they don't claim to only procure and sell "sustainable seafood", as while WWF-SA considers MSC / ASC certified and WWF-SASSI Green-listed seafood as sustainable, seafood that is noted as "Under Improvement" is not yet sustainable.

2) Participants that have not met their commitments:

WWF-SA recognises that improving the sustainability of all seafood products and the fisheries / farms from which they originate is a challenging and a long-term process. Through the WWF-SASSI Retailer / Supplier Participation Scheme, WWF-SA has endeavoured to help all Participants to meet their public commitments to sustainable seafood by providing procurement advice on the sustainability of specific seafood species as well as working with the Participants to develop procurement guidelines, improve seafood labeling, interrogate traceability systems and increase staff awareness through the provision of training courses. However, it is important to note that WWF-SA does not have any control of Participant's ultimate procurement decisions and as such cannot be held accountable for a Participant's failure to meet their commitments to sustainable seafood.

For Participants who have not met their commitments to sustainable seafood within the timeframes that they have set themselves, WWF-SA believes it will be important for each Participant to produce public communications to be released at the end of the current commitment period acknowledging their inability to meet their commitments and answer the following questions:

- Which species are still not meeting commitments?
- What strategies will be used by the Participant to address the sustainability of these species?
- When will these species meet the Participant's sustainability criteria?

Where a Participant is continuing to procure products that do not meet their commitments post their target date, WWF-SA will commit to working with the Participant to help develop and implement credible strategies to address the outstanding species within a maximum period of 2 years. In such a case, WWF-SA will need to publicly communicate that the Participant did not meet their commitments by their initial target date. However WWF-SA will acknowledge the Participant's progress and will continue to encourage consumers to hold the Participant accountable to any further commitments to sustainable seafood that they make. Furthermore, in order to continue a partnership with WWF-SA, there would need to be public communication from the Participant of their intention to address any remaining seafood sustainability

concerns within the above-mentioned 2 year period as well as comprehensive reporting on the questions posed in the three bullet points above. Any Participants that fail to meet their renewed commitment target dates will no longer be supported by WWF-SA through the WWF SASSI Retailer / Supplier Participation Scheme.

Should Participant's not wish to publicly provide clarity on their revised approach to products not meeting commitments, WWF-SA will not be able to continue supporting the Participant through the WWF-SASSI Retailer / Supplier Participation Scheme or support any Participant communications regarding seafood sustainability.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Where will information regarding Participants progress towards meeting their commitments to sustainable seafood be communicated by WWF-SA?
 - In the WWF-SASSI Retailer / Supplier Participation Scheme Annual Report titled "Sea Change" will be published in February 2016.
 - Via the #SASSIstories campaign in January / February 2016 through the website www.sassistories.co.za.
 - Through a WWF-SA Press Release to be issued in February 2016.
 - Through WWF-SASSI and WWF-SA Social Media channels in January / February 2016.
 - Via a presentation at the 4th MSC / WWF-SASSI Sustainable Seafood Symposium in February 2016.
2. Will WWF-SA stop working with Participant's once they have met their commitments to sustainable seafood?
 - If mutually beneficial, WWF-SA will continue working with Participants and focus on the following areas:
 - Raising consumer awareness around WWF-SASSI.
 - Participant's direct engagement with source fisheries and farms.
 - Monitoring of fisheries or farms supplying Participant that are "Under Improvement".
 - Improving traceability systems for seafood products.
 - Seafood product labeling.
3. How does WWF-SA engage with smaller seafood retailers / suppliers / restaurants?
 - Although WWF-SA believes that all seafood traders should be addressing seafood sustainability within their operations, it is not possible for WWF-SA to work with all seafood traders in South Africa. For this reason WWF-SA engages formally with the major seafood traders in South Africa through the WWF-SASSI Retailer / Supplier Participation Scheme to transform the majority of the seafood market thereby creating an enabling environment for smaller seafood traders to similarly transform their own operations. In the interim WWF-SA does support smaller seafood traders through the following:
 - Hosting WWF-SASSI training sessions in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban to provide seafood traders with information regarding seafood sustainability.
 - Publishing the WWF-SASSI Newsletter which keeps subscribers up to date with the latest seafood sustainability information.
 - Co-hosting the annual MSC / WWF-SASSI Sustainable Seafood Symposium where seafood traders can learn about current trends, share challenges and celebrate successes stories.
 - Developing resources like the "Business Guide to Sustainable Seafood" that provide seafood traders with a framework to address seafood sustainability in their operations.