

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?



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The ocean provides us with tremendous and often unseen economic, social and cultural benefits; it acts as a vast highway for commerce, it provides a place for recreation and, importantly, it supplies food or income for billions of people worldwide.

Unfortunately the ancient tradition of fishing has in many cases left in its wake dangerously depleted fish stocks and an ecosystem whose balance has been sufficiently tipped to jeopardise the existence of a number of key species. This has led to an urgent need to better understand and manage the rich marine resources that provide such diverse benefits to humankind.

Sustainable seafood, however, is more than just ensuring that our marine ecosystems are adequately protected. There is a strong business case for engaging in seafood sustainability in business supply chains.

WWF Southern African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (WWF-SASSI) is committed to working hand-in-hand with the seafood industry towards a future in which sustainable fisheries and responsible aquaculture thrive at a level that supports the communities and businesses that depend on them. Supporting a sustainable seafood industry means purchasing environmentally responsible seafood by following best-practice guidelines for sustainable seafood. This in turn supports responsible fisheries and aquaculture operations and the many communities which rely on healthy ecosystems to provide them with livelihoods. Not only does this help to reduce the pressure on our threatened marine resources, but, with an increasingly environmentally-aware market, it could mean a world of difference to a business's bottom line.

Public Relations & Strategic Planning

Responsible businesses stand to increase the loyalty of existing customers and attract new clientele who appreciate the business's efforts and



knowledge around seafood sustainability issues. Ultimately, businesses with outstanding reputations will be able to recruit the best people, enjoy privileged access to new markets, and generate greater loyalty from the communities within which they operate. By choosing to focus their business on sound ethical and environmental principles, these businesses are making a strategic investment, placing themselves amongst the leaders in a field that is undoubtedly going to grow in the future.

Reduced Risk Exposure

Businesses that deal in overexploited seafood species are vulnerable to the unpredictable supply of these species. In dealing with overexploited and often illegal fish species, businesses can also expose themselves to significant legal risks. By shifting their dependence away from overfished stocks towards more sustainable species, these businesses can improve the reliability of their seafood supply chains.

Better Quality Seafood & Improved Service Levels

Sustainable seafood can often be an indicator of better quality seafood as both sustainability and quality criteria are largely underpinned by full traceability, which in turn indicates a supply chain that is effectively managed. Furthermore, sustainable seafood substitutes that exist for many overexploited species are often cheaper by virtue of the fact that they are more abundant. It thus makes sense to source your seafood based on sustainability criteria, as this strategy more often than not leads to stable and reasonably priced products.

Well-educated staff can engage with interested customers, thereby improving the quality of your service, and potentially increasing your marketability. A business that aims to integrate sustainability into its operations would thus strive to empower staff through ongoing training and development. This will assist in improving their future employability and will also improve your business's corporate social responsibility profile.

Consumer Expectations

As consumers have become sensitised to the environmental issues around seafood, businesses involved in the seafood industry have come under increasing pressure to ensure the sustainability of their operations, not just on the vessels out at sea but also throughout the supply chain. In order to be relevant to a market that has added environmental considerations to their purchasing criteria, seafood businesses now need to take a proactive stance on sustainability, not just to ensure the survival of our marine ecosystems but also their own.

For a list of local green-listed alternative recipes developed by the WWF-SASSI champion chefs, please click here1 Find recipes for fish and seafood from fisheries that have been certified as meeting the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) environmental standard for sustainable fishing by clicking here².



1. http://www.wwfsassi.co.za/?m=5&s=12

^{2.}http://www.msc.org/cook-eat-enjoy/recipes



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

True sustainability is all in the details and it requires seafood businesses to look at a number of different aspects in their operations. Therefore, responsible businesses looking to transform their seafood operations need to be well informed on the issues affecting seafood sustainability and should develop their capacity to adequately address the following focus areas:

Impacts & Solutions

Over the last century, commercial fishing has dramatically altered our marine ecosystems in order to supply the world's demand for seafood. In order to ensure that seafood will be available for future generations, we need to understand not only how our fishing practices impact our marine ecosystems, but also how we can change our fishing methods and seafood choices to prevent further damage and allow recovery of the damaged ecosystems.

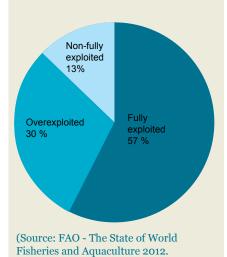
Businesses should thus be aware of the current concerns regarding the fishing and aquaculture industries to better inform the decisions they make when addressing seafood sustainability in their operations.

A good understanding of these four topics should be developed:

- **Overfishing:** According the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), approximately 87% of the world's fisheries are either fully exploited or over exploited. Perhaps the most worrying trend is that some fisheries have failed to show any signs of recovery even after many years of protection. For more information please click here4.
- **Fisheries Ecosystem Impacts:** In the past, fisheries management largely focused on individual management for each type of target fish. What this did not take into account was that harvesting a target fish can have significant impacts on other fish, foodweb functioning, habitats such as the ocean floor and other vulnerable species like turtles or seabirds. Subsequently, as pressure on resources and the ecosystem increases, the shortcomings of this approach have become more obvious. For more information please **click here**⁵.
- Environmental Impacts of Aquaculture: Aquaculture if often touted as the solution to overfishing, however aquaculture operations are not without their environmental impacts. For more information please click here6.
- **Solutions:** To ensure abundant fish stocks for the future it is vital to keep ecosystems balanced and healthy. It is therefore necessary to manage fishing activities within ecological limits, which means making sure that we only take out the volume of fish that will not jeopardise the delicate balance of a healthy ecosystem. For more information on how this can be achieved, click here7.

In 2010, global fisheries capture and aquaculture supplied the international seafood market with 148 million tonnes of fish estimated to be worth US\$ 217.5 billion, of which 128 million tonnes (86%) was used for human consumption, estimated to be at an all-time high of 18.6 kilograms per capita. Furthermore, it is estimated that 180 million people around the world find primary or secondary employment in the fish industry, supporting the livelihoods of 660-820 million people worldwide, equivalent to roughly 10-12% of the global population.

Status of Global Fish Stocks



- 3. http://www.fao.org/docrep/016/i2727e/i2727e00.htm
- 4. http://www.wwfsassi.co.za/?m=4&s=1&idkey=523
- 5. http://www.wwfsassi.co.za/?m=4&s=2

Click here³ to view publication)

- 6. http://www.wwfsassi.co.za/?m=4&s=3
- 7. http://www.wwfsassi.co.za/?m=5&s=2

For seafood dealers:

The Marine Living Resources Act (MLRA) and its amendments determines how we utilise our seafood resources. Some of the key points that relate to seafood dealers are the following:

- You need permits to harvest, sell, import or export marine resources (Section 13(1)).
- Recreational fishers may not sell their catch (Section 20(1)).
- There are specific regulations pertaining to the management of certain species and fisheries, for example size and bag limits, closed seasons and no-sale species.
- The Act allows for penalties of up to R2 million or five years imprisonment.
- You need to possess the correct import permits for seafood from other countries. These are issued by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (Fisheries Division) and the International Trade Administration Commission of South Africa (ITAC).

Please **click here**⁸ for further information.

Fishing methods

All fishing methods have some degree of environmental impact.

This could be something as simple as a seagull becoming entangled by a piece of fishing line from a recreational angler, to the destruction of centuries-old deep sea corals by heavy trawling gear. **Click here**⁹ for more information on various fishing methods and their associated impacts.

Aquaculture

Aquaculture will undoubtedly become a more and more important source of seafood, but one needs to bear in mind there are certain production methods that also have negative environmental, and sometimes human health, implications.

Click here¹⁰ for more information on various aquaculture production methods and their associated impacts.

Procurement & Labelling

A greater understanding of seafood products and where they come from enables businesses to measure changes in their seafood supply and to take action to improve the long-term sustainability of their procurement streams. For this reason, it is critical to continually verify the following information on seafood species procured (or the species used in seafood products procured):

- · Common and Scientific names;
- Country of Origin;
- Fishing Gear or Aquaculture Production Method used; and
- Sustainability status (a good start would be to use the search function on the WWF-SASSI website, **click here**¹¹ to access the website).

Using the information above, businesses can now accurately identify seafood sustainability risks in procurement. They can then take pro-active steps to reduce their exposure to these risks by changing their buying practises.

When there is a good understanding of the sustainability status of the seafood that a business buys and sells, an environmentally responsible operation can then focus on incorporating the following considerations into their procurement criteria going forward:

- Ensuring that all their seafood on offer is legal;
- Always offering seafood that is traceable to its origins;
- Not procuring unsustainable seafood species (a good start would be to avoid all WWF-SASSI Red-listed species, click here¹² to view the list);
- Phasing out unsustainable seafood products and replacing them with sustainable alternatives; and
- Preferentially procuring sustainable seafood species / products
 (e.g. WWF-SASSI Green-listed¹³ or certified by the Marine
 Stewardship Council (MSC)¹⁴ or the Aquaculture Stewardship
 Council (ASC)¹⁵. WWF-SASSI recognises these two eco-labels as
 the most credible on-package assurances of sustainable fisheries and
 responsible aquaculture practices).

Once a business can verify seafood species information, it is important to reflect this information on product labelling. Seafood businesses should thus improve their labelling practices to ensure that all seafood products sold are clearly labelled. This will enable consumers to effectively use the WWF-SASSI awareness tools to make informed choices about the products they are buying.

Seafood product labels should clearly indicate:

- · Acceptable market or common name for the species;
- Full scientific name for the species;
- Fishing method (trawl, longline, linecaught, etc.) or farming method used (pond culture, sea cages, rope & raft, etc.);
- Country of origin.

^{8.} http://www.wwfsassi.co.za/?m=5&s=3&idkey=1138

^{9.} http://wwfsassi.co.za/?m=4&s=4

^{10.} http://wwfsassi.co.za/?m=9&idkey=1310

^{11.} http://www.wwfsassi.co.za/?m=5&s=1

^{12.} http://www.wwfsassi.co.za/?m=5&s=10 13. http://www.wwfsassi.co.za/?m=5&s=8

^{14.} http://www.msc.org/

^{15.} http://www.asc-aqua.org/



Watch out for mislabelling as it is one of the ways in which illegal seafood enters the market, and exposes businesses to significant risk. It also makes it difficult for consumers to make sustainable choices because they are not getting the correct information about the seafood they are buying. It is important to note that WWF-SASSI does not condone the use of colour-coded labelling or any reference to the WWF-SASSI database on product labels. Please note that WWF-SASSI is an awareness initiative and not an eco-label.

Policy & Commitment

Having understood the challenges and assessed the seafood it procures, a responsible seafood business should now embark on implementing strategies to address sustainability concerns in its operations. This is best achieved by developing a sustainable seafood policy which informs business strategy and guides procurement decisions.

The following aspects should be adequately addressed in a sustainable seafood policy:

- Note that the business recognises the challenges facing the sustainable seafood trade and that it understands the environmental concerns associated with overfishing;
- Define what the business regards as sustainable seafood. WWF-SASSI recognises its Green-listed species and MSC or ASC certified products as being sustainable; and
- Commit to a date by which the business aims to be trading only
 in sustainable seafood. Include a note to indicate that source
 fisheries / farms that are actively working towards improving the
 sustainability status of their seafood products will continue to
 be supported past the commitment date (provided that they can
 demonstrate continual progress through their implementation of
 credible improvement projects).

It is important to remember that transforming a seafood business is a journey that rarely happens overnight. It is a process that will involve not only the business concerned, but also its suppliers and customers. For this reason, it is vital to carefully consider the formation of a sustainable seafood policy and to set realistic seafood sustainability targets. By creating a credible policy on sustainable seafood, businesses publicly reflect their commitment to action and provide guidelines for sustainable business practices.

Click here¹⁷ to see the sustainable seafood policies and commitments of some of the major role-players in the South African seafood sector.

Fisheries Improvement Projects

Healthy fish stocks mean a better deal for both marine ecosystems and those who rely on them, the recovery of our fish stocks shouldn't have to come at the expense of fishers livelihoods.

WWF's ultimate goal is to implement positive changes on the water which improve the long-term sustainability of not just our aquatic ecosystems, but of our fishing and aquaculture industries as well. Bringing about these changes is not going to happen overnight and in order to achieve these changes WWF is working hand-in-hand with the fishers and farmers on the water through Fisheries Improvement Projects all over the world.

The purpose of these improvement projects is to address specific sustainability concerns with the relevant fisheries/ farms in order get them operating at a level consistent with best sustainability practices. Thus, although these products may not yet be on the WWF-SASSI green-list, WWF encourages retailers and suppliers to continue to support these fisheries/farms that are engaged in credible time-bound Improvement Projects; this is how WWF and responsible suppliers and retailers are helping to drive positive change in fisheries around the world. Click here¹⁶ for more information on the various types of Improvement Projects.

Training courses

WWF-SASSI offer Seafood Sustainability training courses in Cape Town,
Johannesburg and Durban. The course is designed to equip any interested parties with information and skills on how to develop a sustainable seafood strategy in their business, and includes sections on:

- The state of our marine resources in South Africa
- Understanding the problems related to overfishing
- Environmental concerns around aquaculture (fish farming)
- WWF-SASSI's sustainable seafood solutions
- The benefits of sustainable seafood and how to implement WWF-SASSI's guidelines in your business
- WWF-SASSI updates

For more information please email sassi@wwf.org.za.

Communication & Awareness

By informing customers and communicating with suppliers, a business can increase understanding of seafood sustainability. This will equip these key stakeholders to play a critical role in the business achieving the targets set out in its Sustainable Seafood Policy. Key actions a business can take are:

- Commit to training management, sales team and procurement staff so
 they are aware about the issues of environmentally responsible seafood
 (see the WWF-SASSI website¹⁸ for dates and venues of WWF-SASSI
 training);
- Adequately prepare sales team to help customers make sustainable seafood selections, ensure that sales representaives are aware of certified MSC / ASC products available and that they can guide customers on choosing WWF-SASSI Green-listed options; and
- Inform suppliers, management, employees and customers of its Sustainable Seafood Policy and the seafood sustainability targets it has set, to be effective the policy needs to be publicly available and should be easily accessible on the business website.

SASSI-tools

WWF-SASSI have developed various electronic tools that can be used to check the sustainability status of seafood species.

- The WWF-SASSI website offers detailed information on seafood species and content on seafood sustainability issues www.wwf. org.za/sassi
- The WWF-SASSI mobi site allows you to access the WWF-SASSI seafood database from any cell phone which has the ability to browse the internet www.wwfsassi.mobi
- to make on-the-spot choices about seafood with just one SMS. Simply type the name of the seafood species into a text message and send it to 079 499 8795. You will receive a response with sustainability information on the species
- WWF-SASSI has joined forces with local software development company The Lateral Alternative to release a SASSI app which is available for download with versions for native Blackberry, iOs and Android.

IN CLOSING

This should be viewed as a starting point for businesses that share an interest in supporting the long-term viability of our seafood supply and the health of our oceans.

This guide provides a basic how-to for sustainable seafood and while WWF-SASSI encourages all businesses to follow these principles, following these guidelines does not consitute an endorsement of any company by WWF-SASSI. We trust that this guide is helpful in your endeavours to support the sustainable seafood trade in South Africa and would appreciate any feedback. Please complete the "**Feedback**¹⁹" form with your comments; alternatively please send an email to sassi@wwf.org.za.

^{18.} http://www.wwfsassi.co.za/?m=1
19. http://www.wwfsassi.co.za/?m=5&s=7





BUSINESS AND SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD

SEABIRDS

Seabird mortality in the local hake trawl fishery has dropped significantly due to a change in fishing practices over the last decade.

23% Of South Africa's key commercial fish resources are overexploited.

JOBS

South Africa's commercial fisheries employ some 43 000 people.

NO FISHING

11% of our coastline is protected by no-take MPAs.



To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.