

SEAFOOD PROGRESS: SOBEYS



Legacy report of this retailer's Seafood Progress profile as published in August 2020.

Report generated on: September 1st, 2020

REPORTING PERIOD

July 2019 - August 2020

LOCATION

Across Canada's provinces

NUMBER OF STORES

1,500+

WEBSITE

<https://www.sobeys.com/en/>

RETAILER SNAPSHOT

Sobeys is committed to not selling “any seafood species that have major sustainability issues associated with them”. This means it avoids sourcing species listed as endangered or critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), seafood sourced from high-risk fisheries that are not engaged in an improvement project, or products from suppliers known to engage in illegal, unreported or unregulated (IUU) fishing. Whenever possible, Sobeys sources wild-caught products that have been certified by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and farmed products that have been certified by the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) or Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP). In 2020, Sobeys published its first (recent) account of its procurement against its commitment; Sobeys reported that for the last fiscal year, 94% of its private label brand (Compliments and Sensations) fresh and frozen seafood was certified as sustainable by third-parties, for example, the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) or Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP).

In terms of social responsibility, Sobeys' expectations are that the people who catch, farm, and process their seafood products do so under “accepted global standards for safe and fair working conditions”, and suppliers in “at risk” countries must provide independent audits that they are meeting this expectation.

SeaChoice recognizes Sobeys' data collection program which includes the species' scientific name, geographic origin and method of production for all fresh, frozen and private label products, and encourages it to expand its program to include canned tuna and other shelf-stable seafood products. SeaChoice also recommends that Sobeys voluntarily include more information, such as scientific name and geographic origin, on its seafood labels so that its customers can purchase seafood that is in line with their values and preferences.










In the process of developing this profile, SeaChoice corresponded with Dawn Snyder, Sobeys' Frozen and Processed Seafood National Category Merchant, and Geneviève Paradis, Sobeys' Sustainability Specialist.

Note: For 2020's analysis, due to the nationalization of Sobeys' sustainable seafood program to its banner Safeway, we did not conduct a separate analysis for Sobeys and Safeway and now include all of Sobeys' banners, including Safeway, under its profile.

Scope information: see below for information on which types of products are included in the scope of Sobeys' sustainable seafood policy

COMMITMENT SCOPE

How retailers' sustainable seafood policies and commitments apply to different segments of their products.

	FRESH	FROZEN	SHELF STABLE
Grocery store brand			
Seafood company brand			
No brand			N/A

● = Retailer has made a commitment to this segment
 ● = Retailer has not made a commitment to this segment

Sobeys (owned by Empire Company Ltd) owns the following banners (store brands) and its sustainable seafood policy applies to all of them:

- FreshCo
 - IGA*
 - IGA extra
 - Price Chopper**
 - Safeway
 - Sobeys
 - Sobeys Extra
 - Sobeys Urban Fresh
 - Thrifty Foods
- Foodland

*Most of the IGA stores in BC are owned by Georgia Main Food Group, only three in BC are operated by Sobeys. The IGA stores in Quebec are managed by Sobeys Quebec.

**Sobeys only owns one store

STEP 1: DOES THE RETAILER HAVE A COMPREHENSIVE COMMITMENT ON SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD?



Does the policy include time-bound objectives for addressing environmental issues, social concerns and traceability?

The step score is based on the average of Step 1 key performance indicators (KPIs, or step elements) listed below; click the + signs for more detailed information.

Note that the KPIs changed from 2018 to 2019 to move the assessment of retailers' traceability commitments from a stand-alone KPI to a component of the scoring for the KPIs relating to environmental and social commitments.

If it looks like you are only seeing the score for one year it is because the score did not change from year to year. Try clicking off the 'June 2019' button below the score bar.

STEP ELEMENTS

1.1 Has a publicly available commitment or policy to source more environmentally sustainable seafood

Sobeys



SCORING RATIONALE

Sobeys' commitment is to “not sell any seafood species that have major sustainability issues associated with them”. This includes not sourcing any species listed as Endangered or Critically Endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), from high-risk fisheries or farms without an improvement plan, or from suppliers known to engage in illegal, unreported or unregulated (IUU) fishing. Whenever possible, Sobeys sources wild-caught products that have been certified by the MSC and farmed products that have been certified by ASC or BAP (personal communication, D. Snyder, 13/06/2019).

COMMITMENT SCOPE

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SCORING RUBRIC

- 0% No publicly available environmental sustainability commitment or policy
- 20% General commitment to environmentally sustainable seafood without clear objectives, traceability policy or timelines
- 40% Commitment to environmental sustainability that includes clear objectives for sustainable procurement, but no traceability policy or timelines
- 60% Commitment to environmental sustainability includes clear objectives that are supported by references to credible standards (such as Seafood Watch or Ocean Wise rankings, eco-certifications, etc.), but no traceability policy or timelines
- 80% Commitment to environmental sustainability includes clear objectives that are supported by references to credible standards and a clear and effective traceability policy, but no timeline

100% Commitment to environmental sustainability includes clear objectives that are supported by references to credible standards, a clear and effective traceability policy, and a timeline for meeting the commitment (unless the commitment has already been met).

1.2 Has a publicly available commitment or policy to source more socially responsible seafood



STEP 2: IS THE RETAILER COLLECTING DATA TO SUPPORT THEIR COMMITMENT?



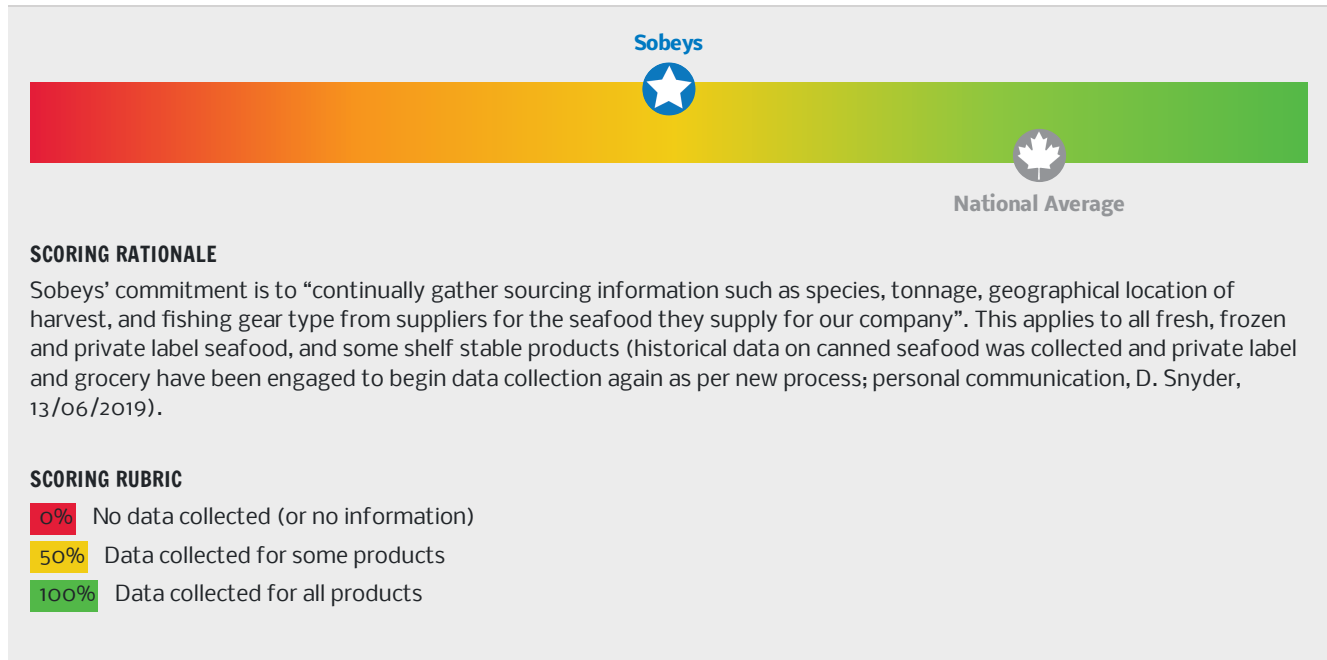
What information is the retailer collecting to monitor the environmental and social sustainability of their seafood products?

The step score is based on the average of Step 2 key performance indicators (KPIs, or step elements) listed below; click the + signs for more detailed information.

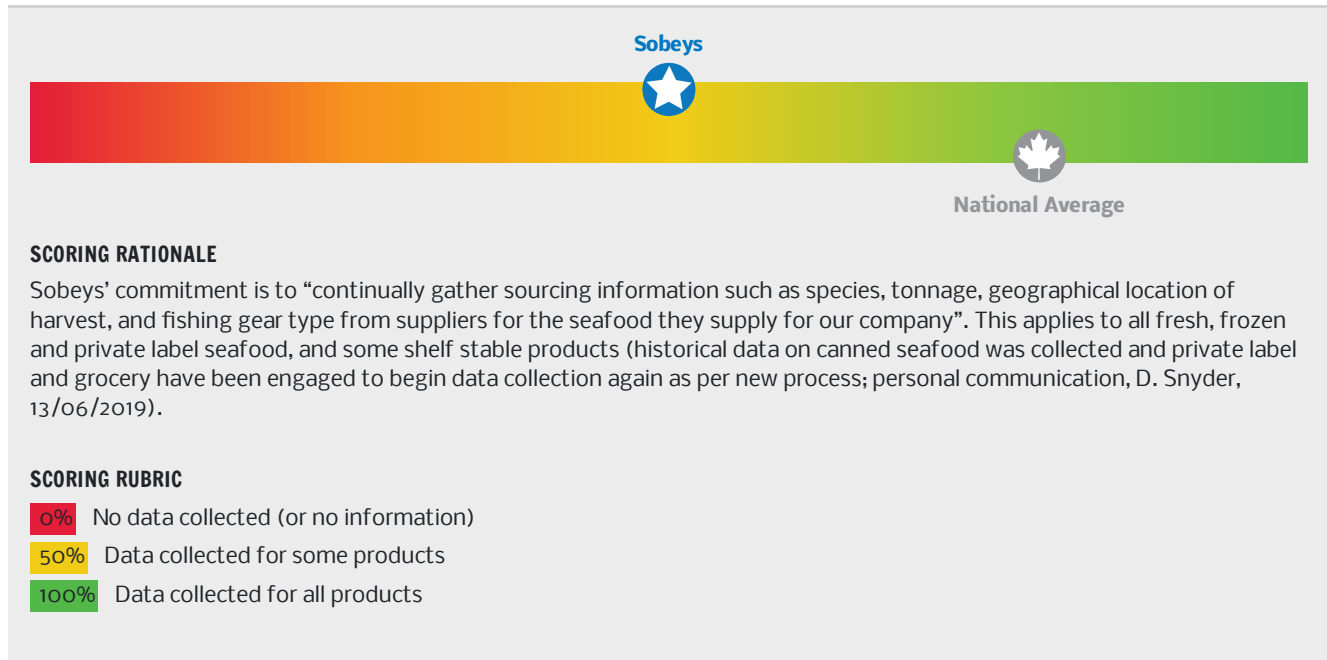
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STEP ELEMENTS

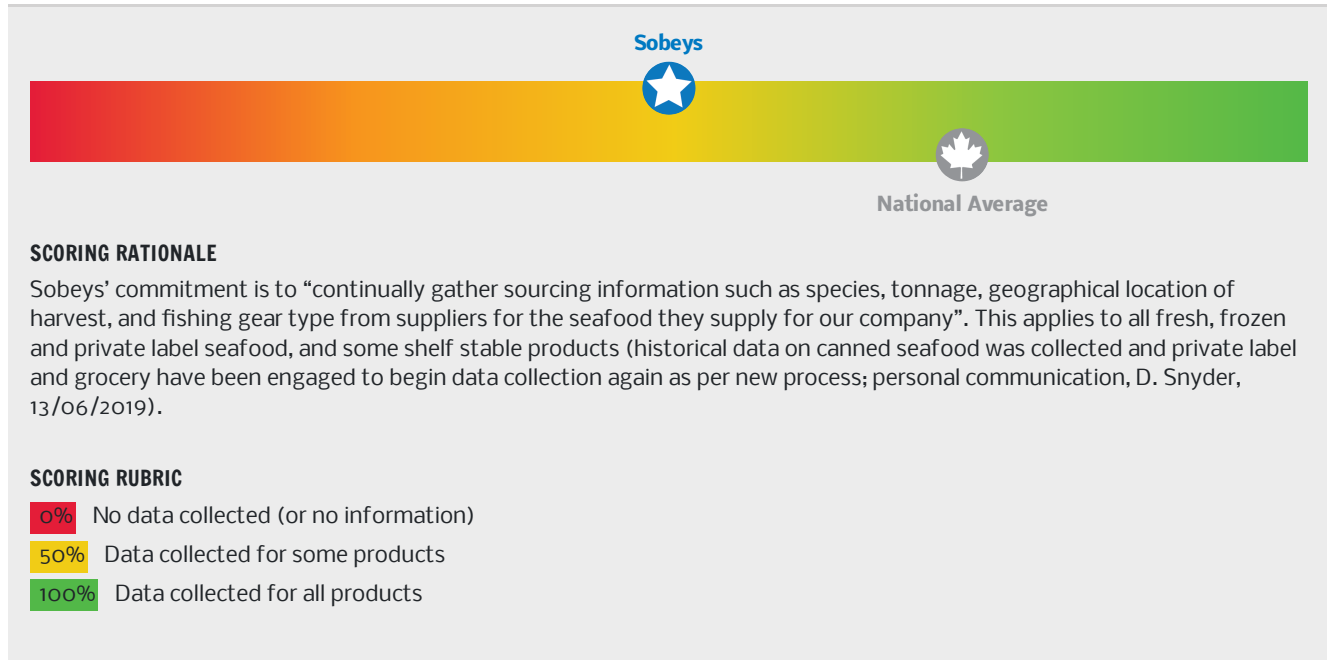
2.1 Retailer collects data on species scientific (Latin) name for seafood products being sold - the "what"



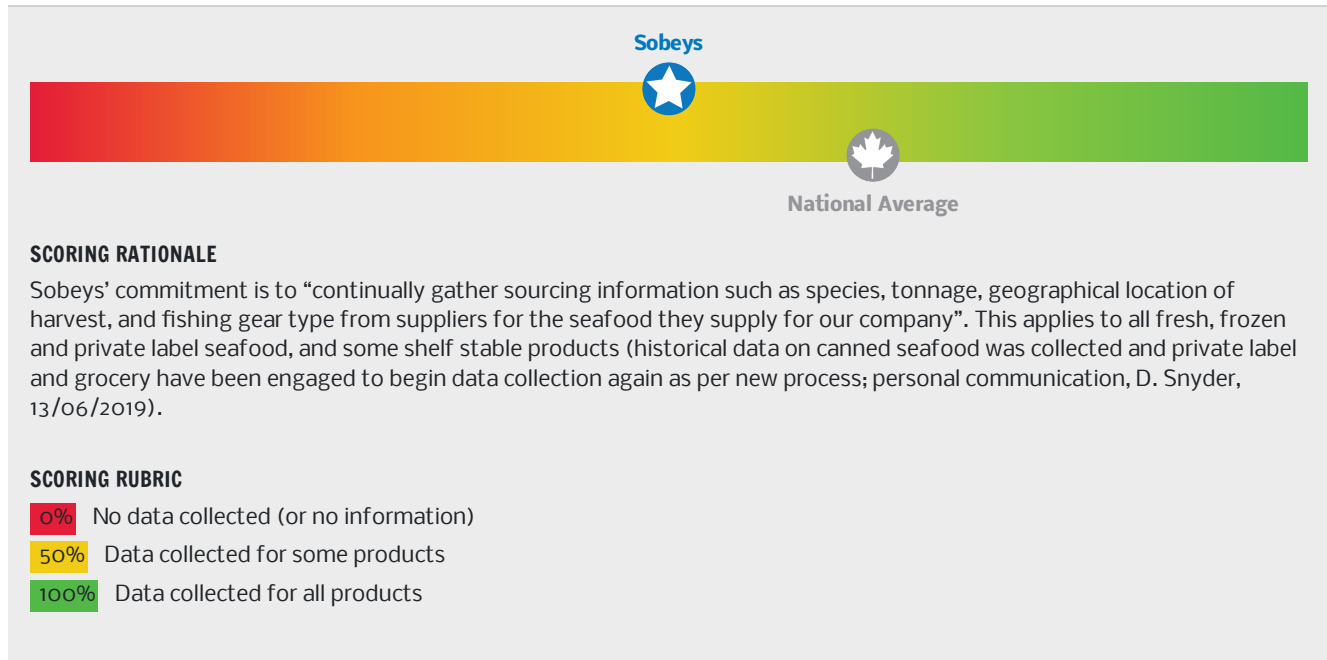
2.2 Retailer collects data on country of origin of seafood products being sold - the "where"



2.3 Retailer collects data on whether the seafood products being sold are wild or farmed - the "how"



2.4 Retailer collects data on the gear type or farming methods for seafood products being sold - the "how"



STEP 3: IS THE RETAILER MAKING RESPONSIBLE SOURCING DECISIONS?



Are the retailer's procurement decisions supporting their environmental and social sustainability commitments?


The step score is based on the average of Step 3 key performance indicators (KPIs, or step elements) listed below; click the + signs for more detailed information.



Note that KPI 3.3 was changed in 2019 from “Retailer works with suppliers to address potential human rights and labour abuses, and support sustainable livelihoods for producers” to more specific indicators around retailers’ agreements with their suppliers/vendors to uphold their environmental and social commitments.

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STEP ELEMENTS

3.1 Retailer uses an established seafood certification or ranking standard to inform purchasing decisions.





National Average

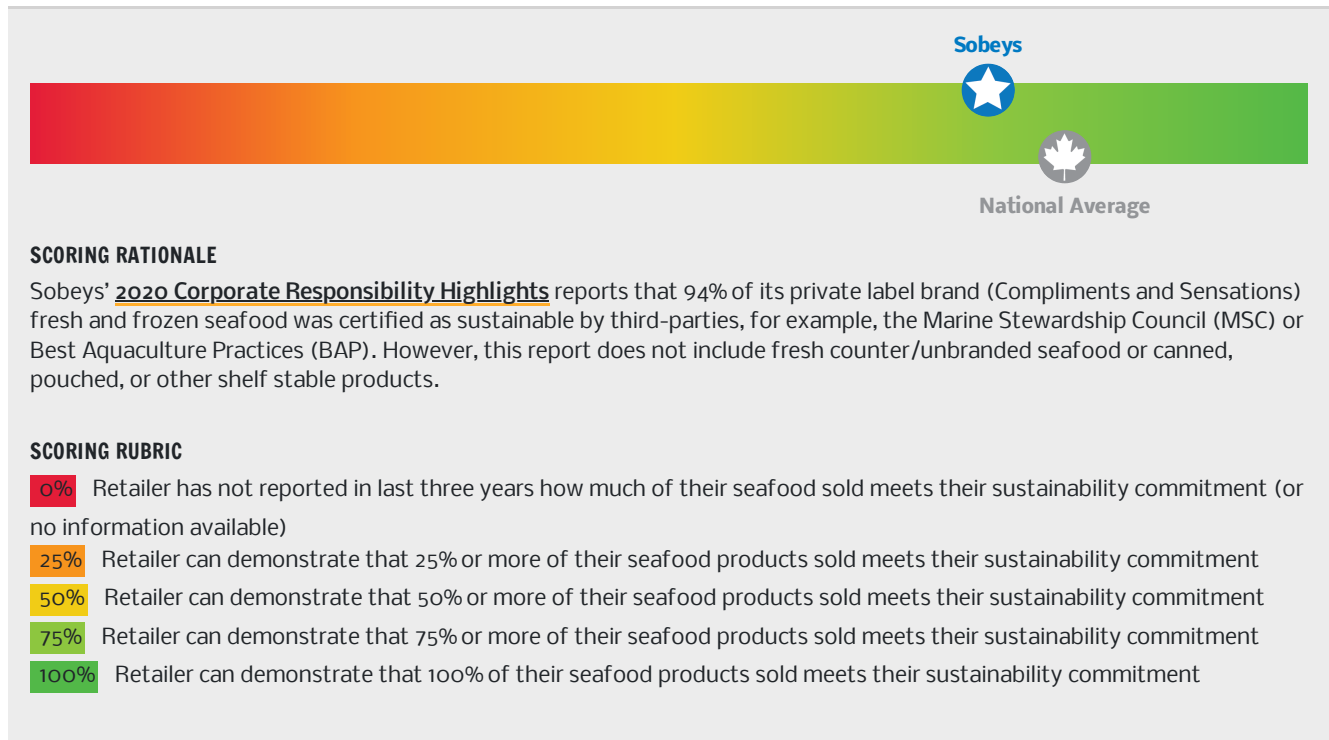
SCORING RATIONALE

To help inform its purchasing decisions and ensure it is meeting its sustainable seafood commitment, Sobeys considers Ocean Wise Recommendations, prioritizes sourcing products from eco-certifications including MSC and BAP, and supports fisheries improvements by sourcing products from active Fisheries Improvement Projects (personal communication, D. Snyder, 27/05/2019).

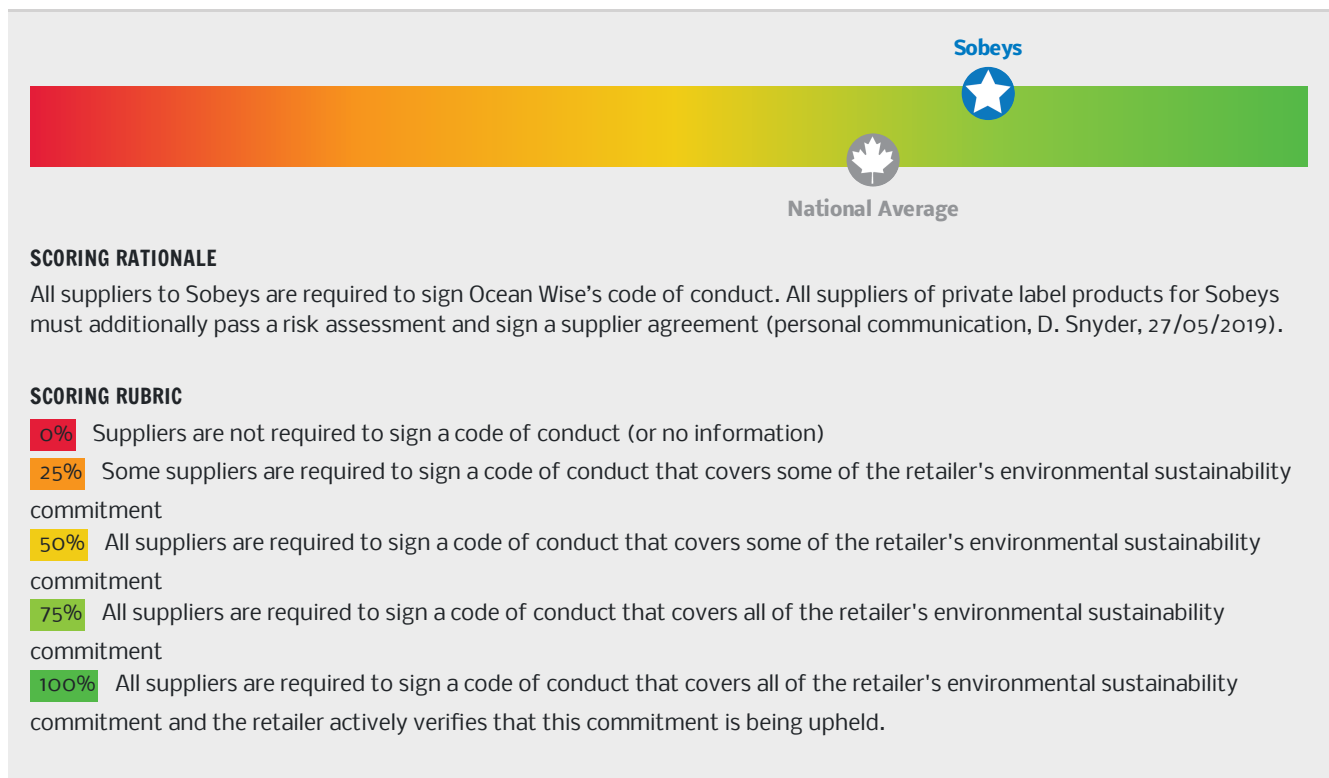
SCORING RUBRIC

- 0% No sustainability criteria used to inform purchasing decisions (or no information available)
- 100% Sustainability criteria used to inform purchasing decisions

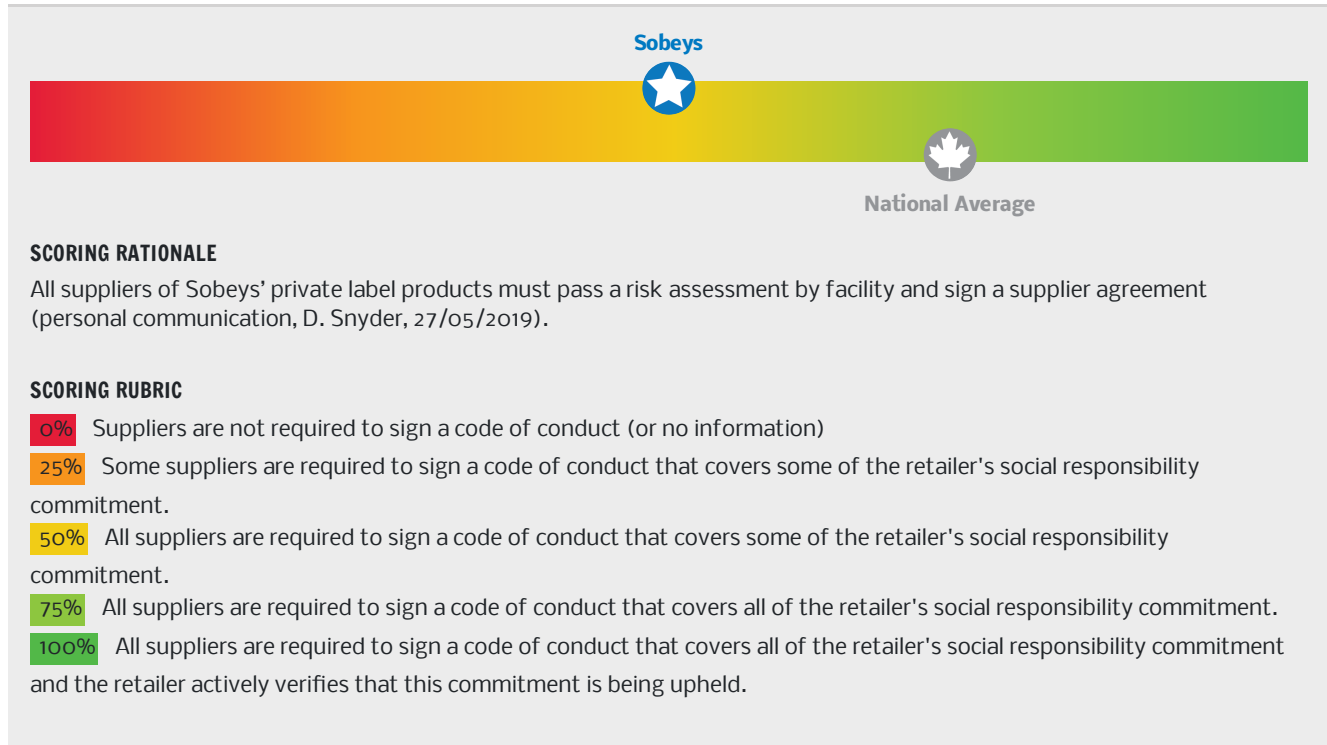
3.2 Retailer can demonstrate that X% of their seafood sold in the last three years meets their sustainability criteria by volume/value.



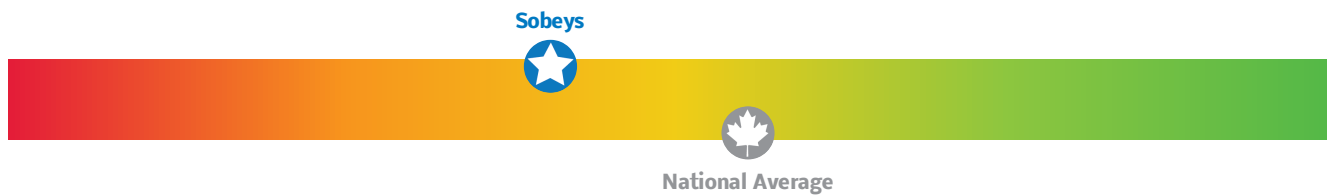
3.3 Suppliers are required to sign a code of conduct to uphold the retailer's environmental sustainability commitment.



3.4 Suppliers are required to sign a code of conduct to uphold the retailer's social responsibility commitment.



STEP 4: IS THE RETAILER TRANSPARENT ABOUT THEIR COMMITMENT?



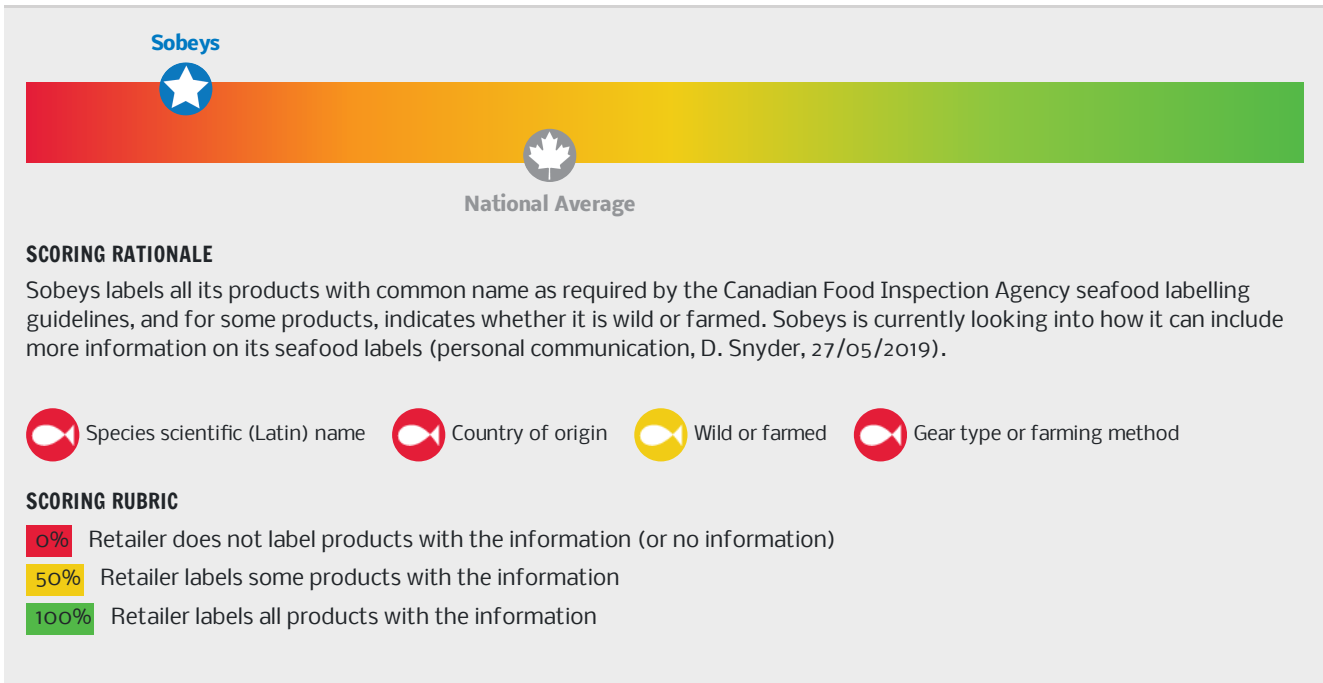
Is the retailer making information regarding the environmental and social performance of their seafood products publicly available and are they reporting on progress against their sustainable seafood commitment?

The step score is based on the average of Step 4 key performance indicators (KPIs, or step elements) listed below; click the + signs for more detailed information.

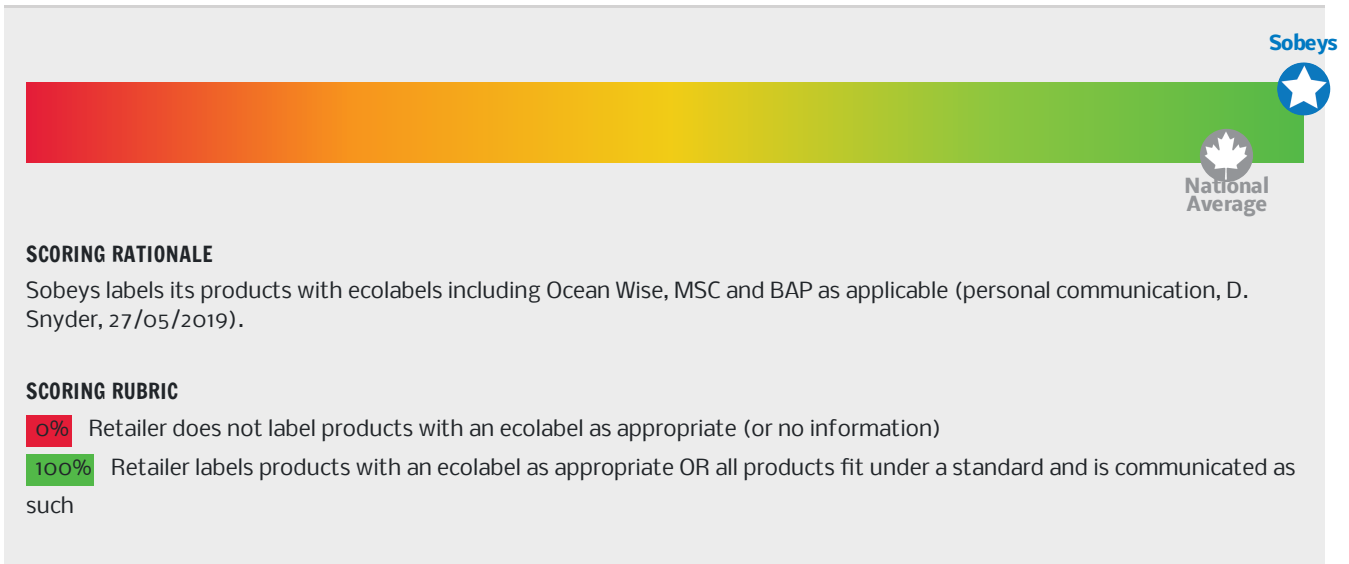
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STEP ELEMENTS

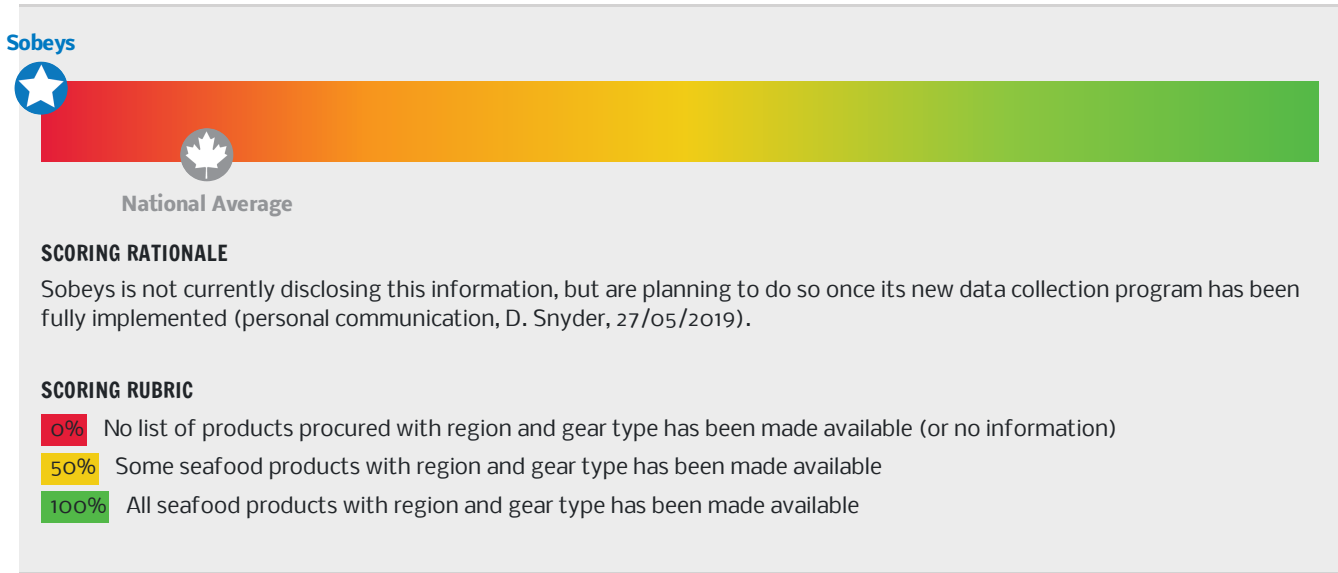
4.1 Retailer labels seafood with the information that allows consumers to make informed decisions - what (species' scientific name), where (country or region of origin), and how (wild/farmed and harvest method)



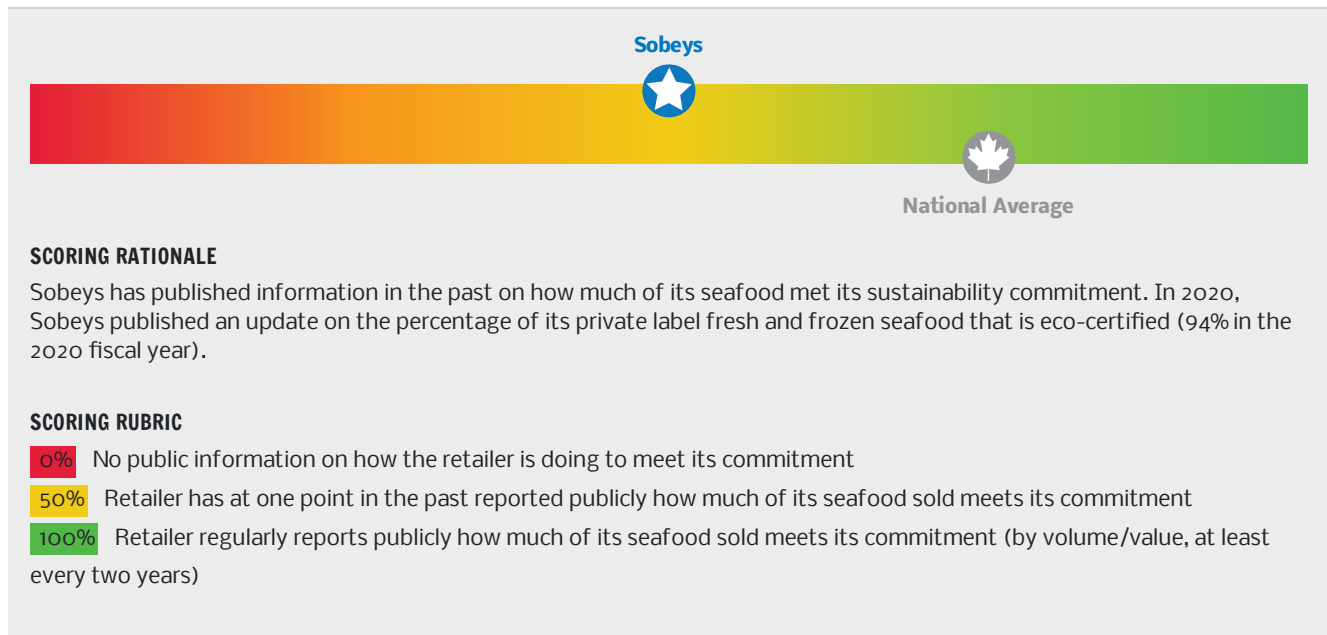
4.2 Retailer labels products with an ecolabel, allowing consumers to make informed decisions OR all products fit under a standard and is communicated as such



4.3 List of products procured with region and gear type data has been made available (e.g. as per Ocean Disclosure Project)



4.4 Retailer publicly reports how much of its seafood meets its sustainability criteria (by volume or value of sales).



STEP 5: DOES THE RETAILER EDUCATE STAFF, CUSTOMERS AND/OR VENDORS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THEIR COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD?



Is the retailer educating their employees, customers, suppliers and other key stakeholders about their sustainable seafood commitment, environmental and social issues in seafood, and the importance of traceability?

The step score is based on the average of Step 5 key performance indicators (KPIs, or step elements) listed below; click the + signs for more detailed information.

Note that KPI 5.3 changed in 2019 from “Suppliers are required to sign a Code of Conduct to uphold the retailer’s sustainable seafood policy” (now covered by KPIs 3.3 and 3.4) to an indicator of what actions retailers have taken to educate their suppliers/vendors about their sustainable seafood commitment.

If it looks like you are only seeing the score for one year it is because the score did not change from year to year. Try clicking off the ‘June 2019’ button below the score bar.

STEP ELEMENTS

5.1 Training programs are conducted for seafood staff.

SCORING RATIONALE

Sobeys requires all seafood staff to complete an online training program as part of their onboarding training. This program will be revised to align with Sobeys new seafood commitment, and all seafood department staff will be required to complete the revised training program in 2020 (personal communication, D. Snyder, 27/05/2019).

SCORING RUBRIC

- 0% Training programs not conducted for seafood staff (or no information)
- 50% Training programs sometimes conducted or for only some seafood staff
- 75% Training programs conducted for all seafood staff, but infrequently (less than every two years)
- 100% Training programs regularly (at least every two years) conducted for all seafood staff

5.2 There is a description of the retailer's sustainable seafood program for customers in store

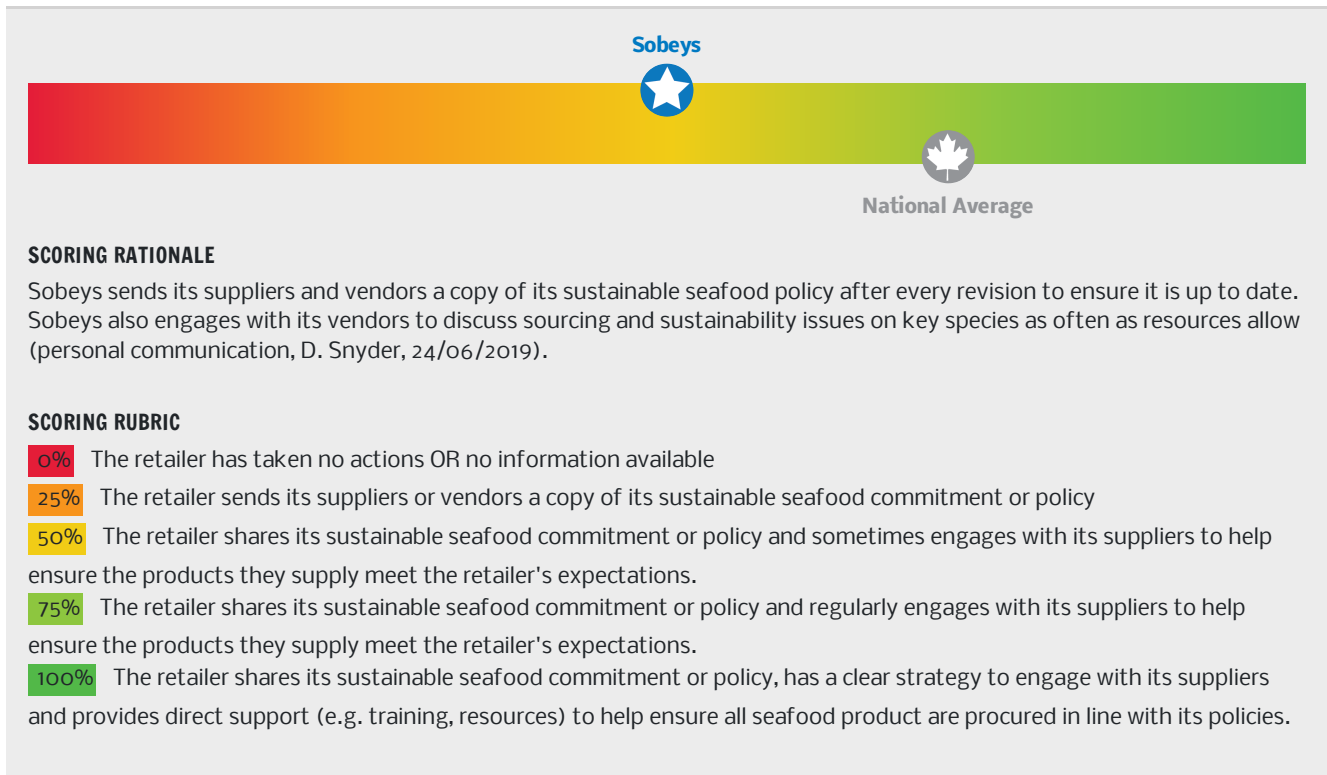
SCORING RATIONALE

Some stores under the Sobeys umbrella (e.g. Sobeys, IGA, and Thrifty Foods) in Western Canada and Quebec include information on its partnership with Ocean Wise (personal communication, D. Snyder, 27/05/2019).

SCORING RUBRIC

- 0% There is no description of the sustainable seafood program in store (or no information)
- 50% This is some description of the sustainable seafood program in store
- 100% There is a comprehensive description of the sustainable seafood program in store

5.3 The retailer has taken actions to ensure its suppliers or vendors are aware of its sustainable seafood commitment or policy.



STEP 6: DOES THE RETAILER SUPPORT IMPROVEMENTS IN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE?



Does the retailer sell 'Priority Seafood' products (seafood that has high volume of sales in Canadian retail stores and that is generally not recommended by the Ocean Wise Seafood Program), and if so, do they support improvement and how?

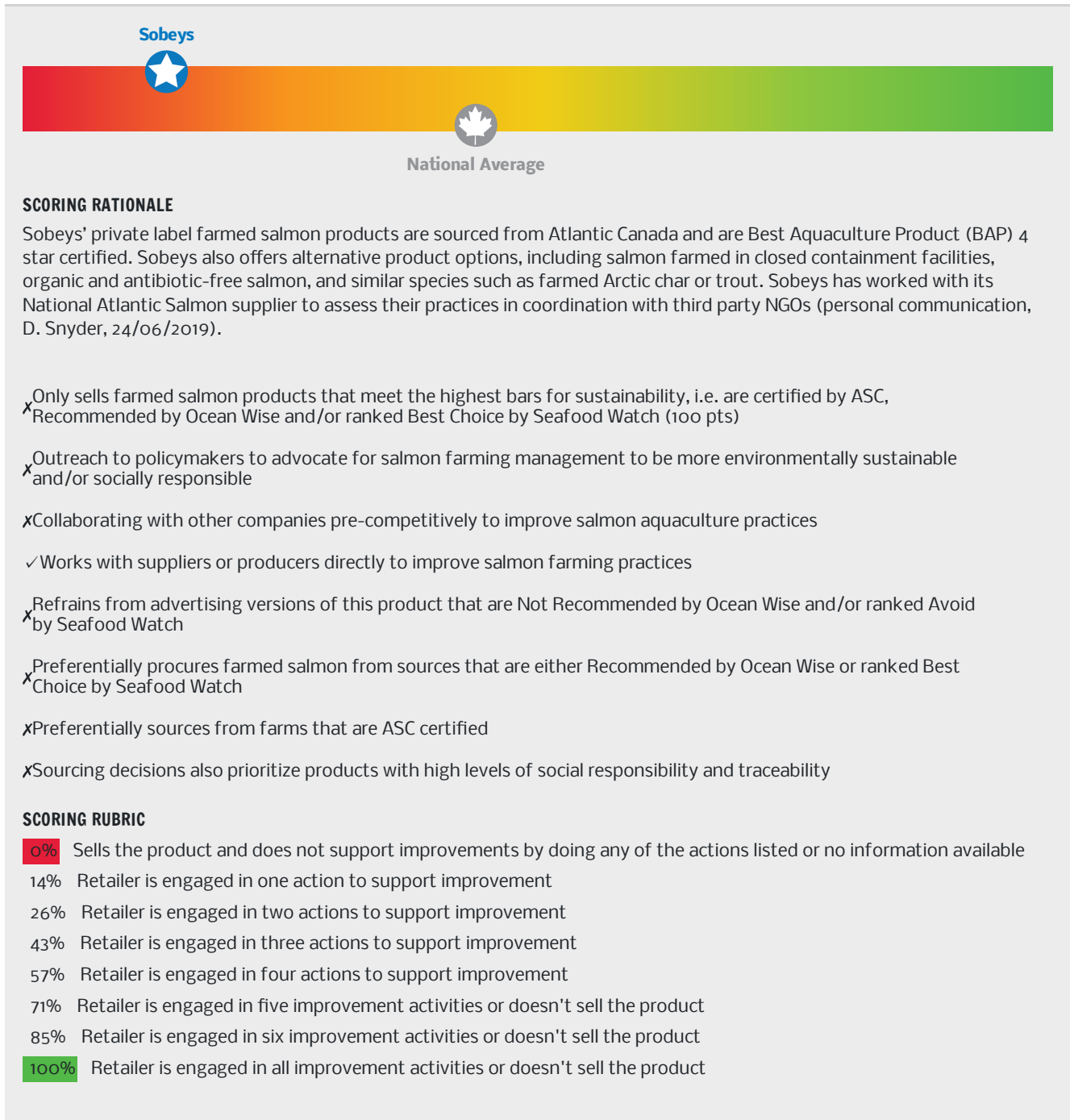
The step score is based on the average of Step 6 key performance indicators (KPIs, or step elements) listed below; click the + signs for more detailed information.

Note that this Step was changed significantly in 2019 to introduce two additional 'Support Improvement' actions for each of the Priority Seafood products. This means that if a retailer was engaged in the same actions in 2019 as in 2018, and no more, their score will appear to have decreased). Additionally, KPIs 6.4 and 6.5 on other SeaChoice priority seafood products were generalized into a new KPI that allows retailers to showcase any other actions they are taking to support improvement of specific seafood products (besides shrimp, farmed salmon and skipjack), or to support improvements in seafood sustainability in general.

If it looks like you are only seeing the score for one year it is because the score did not change from year to year. Try clicking off the 'June 2019' button below the score bar.

STEP ELEMENTS

6.1 Does the retailer support improvements in the production of farmed Atlantic salmon (either Canadian produced or imported)?



6.2 Does the retailer support improvements in the production of imported farmed shrimps and prawns?



6.3 Does the retailer support improvements in the production of skipjack tuna?



SCORING RATIONALE

Sobeys has been encouraging its tuna suppliers to move towards more sustainable tuna fishing practices. Its main tuna supplier Clover Leaf is now committed to 100% FAD-free skipjack tuna by 2022 (personal communication, D. Snyder, 13/06/2019).

- Only sells skipjack tuna products that meet the highest bars for sustainability, i.e. are certified by MSC, Recommended by Ocean Wise and/or ranked Best Choice by Seafood Watch (100 pts)
- Outreach to policymakers to advocate for skipjack fishing methods and management to be more environmentally sustainable and/or socially responsible
- Collaborating with other companies pre-competitively to improve skipjack fishery management practices
- Works with suppliers or producers directly to improve skipjack fishing practices
- Refrains from advertising versions of this product that are Not Recommended by Ocean Wise and/or ranked Avoid by Seafood Watch
- Preferentially sources from more sustainable sources that are either Recommended by Ocean Wise or Best Choice by Seafood Watch
- Preferentially sources from fisheries that are MSC certified
- Sourcing decisions also prioritize products with high levels of social responsibility and traceability

SCORING RUBRIC

- 0% Retailer sells the product and does not support improvements by doing any of the actions listed or no information available
- 14% Retailer is engaged in one action to support improvement
- 26% Retailer is engaged in two actions to support improvement
- 43% Retailer is engaged in three actions to support improvement
- 57% Retailer is engaged in four actions to support improvement
- 71% Retailer is engaged in five actions to support improvement
- 85% Retailer is engaged in six actions to support improvement
- 100% Retailer is engaged in all support improvement activities or doesn't sell the product

6.4 Is the retailer engaged in any actions to improve production of any other seafood products?

