A retailer’s sustainable seafood policy is a public document that details its commitments to socially responsible and environmentally sustainable seafood. The policy should also include a strategy or method for how the retailer will monitor and report on its progress toward meeting those commitments. This guide outlines the components of a well-rounded, effective and actionable sustainability policy.

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SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD POLICY OUTLINE

Effective Date

The month and year that the policy became effective.

Goal (Synonymous with Vision)

A strong goal or vision statement acknowledges the purpose of your sustainable seafood efforts and identifies how it aims to make the seafood industry more sustainable and responsible.

Example: To improve upon the state of fisheries and aquaculture in our seafood supply chains so that we can provide for our customers in a responsible way now and in the future.

Scope

This section of the plan clearly specifies which banners, segments and brands the commitment covers and which it does not cover.

Example: Our sustainability commitment applies to all of our private label and unbranded fresh, frozen and shelf stable seafood products that we sell under Banner A, Banner B, and Banner C. The commitment does not apply to national brand products or to seafood products sold in Banner X, Y or Z. Our social responsibility commitment applies to all of our fresh, frozen and shelf stable seafood products that we sell under all of our banners.
Responsibilities

The policy should identify which roles are responsible for implementing the policy and which roles are responsible for continuous improvements to the policy.

Example:

*Our Sustainability Manager (Jane Doe [name optional]) is responsible for implementation and our Sustainability Coordinator (Bob Smith) is responsible for continuous improvements.*

Policy Framework

This section of the policy should specify which seafood sustainability-related frameworks were referenced to develop the policy. For instance, the Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions’ Common Vision or the Seafood Progress framework created by SeaChoice.

Example: *We referenced the Seafood Progress framework, created by SeaChoice, to develop this policy.*

Commitment

The sustainable seafood policy should clearly outline what your commitment is in relation to environmental sustainability, social responsibility and traceability. Your commitment must be clearly stated, meaningful and specific as it serves as the foundation of the policy.

Example:

*We are committed to sourcing fresh, frozen and shelf-stable seafood products that are environmentally sustainable, socially responsible and traceable to the source.*
Standards

Another essential part of the commitment framework is identifying which standards you use as the basis for your commitment to sustainability and social responsibility. This section should focus on a few core standards and avoid providing a broad list of standards that have variable requirements and benefits.

Example: Sustainability

All of our seafood products are either Recommended by Ocean Wise or rated a Good Alternative (Yellow) or Best Choice (Green) by Seafood Watch. Additionally, we source canned tuna from International Sustainable Seafood Foundation (ISSF) member suppliers only, and preferentially source Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certified wild and Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) certified farmed seafood products.

Example: Social Responsibility

We apply the principles set out by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to all the workers in our supply chain, regardless of their status (seasonal, casual, part-time, full-time; local or migrant). The expectations for our suppliers are clearly laid out in our Code of Conduct which is verified annually.

Objectives

Objectives are the concrete deliverables that fulfill the commitment. They must be time bound to help measure improvements and indicate whether the objectives have been achieved or are outstanding. A best practice commitment should state numbered objectives that are in direct relation to the reference framework.
Example:

Objective #1: Achieve our commitment to procure 100% of our fresh, frozen and shelf stable seafood products by volume from sources that are environmentally sustainable, socially responsible and traceable to the source.

Due date: July 2022

**Strategies**

A strategy defines a general approach to achieving your stated objectives.

Example (to achieve Objective #1):

Strategy #1: Identify which products and suppliers are not currently meeting our commitment.

**Tactics**

Tactics are specific activities that will be implemented to meet your objectives and execute your strategies.

Example: (To execute Strategy #1)

Tactic #1: Engage with all suppliers of non-compliant products to communicate our expectations for them to meet our time bound commitment.

Tactic #2: Determine which suppliers will not meet our time bound commitment and explore alternative sources for those products.
Monitoring and Reporting

This section should specify a plan for monitoring the implementation and success of the policy and reporting your results to the public annually (including the platform or publication through which the results will be shared). For example, you may wish to share the results in your annual Environmental and Corporate Social Responsibility report.

When reporting on progress, the status of each objective must be addressed. For past due objectives, a clear explanation of how the target was met or why it was not met, as well as next steps, should be provided. Note: It is expected that retailers report annually on the percentage of seafood that meets its commitment (by volume or value).

Example of Public Reporting:

Objective #1: To achieve our commitment to procure 100% of our fresh, frozen and shelf stable seafood products by volume from sources that are environmentally sustainable, socially responsible and traceable to the source.

Due date: July 2022

Status: As of June 2021, 85% of our fresh, frozen and shelf stable seafood products by volume were in line with our stated commitment.

Schedule for Review

Finally, the policy should include the schedule for review and potential revisions. Revisions should include changes to reflect new information or best practices and to improve the ambition and effectiveness of the policy.