

Seafood Progress

Grocer's Commitment to Sustainable and Socially Responsible Seafood

67

2023 score

Seafood Progress Average
📊: 68

↓ Score Trend
Decreased Since Last Year

Parent Company
Empire Company Ltd.

NGO Partner(s)
Ocean Wise



[Stores owned by Sobeys](#)



Sustainable Commitment
[click here](#)



Progress Reports
[2022, 2021, 2020](#)



Location
Across Canada

OVERVIEW

Which products does this grocer's sustainable seafood commitment cover?

	Fresh	Frozen	Shelf
Store brand ?	✓	✓	✗
Seafood brand ?	✗	✗	✗
No brand ?	✓	✓	✗

SUMMARY



95.3%

of products sold in 2023 met commitment.

Sustainability Commitment. Sobeys informed SeaChoice that, by 2025, a minimum of 95% of the volume of its fresh and frozen private label products will be third-party certified. For wild products, this means MSC certified. For farmed products, this means ASC certified, or BAP certified when ASC certified products are not available. Where certified sources are not available, Sobeys will source products that are Ocean Wise Recommended. Furthermore, the company aims to obtain Ocean Wise Recommendation on as many products as possible, whether certified or not. All other products will be involved in a Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) or Aquaculture Improvement Project (AIP). Sobeys requires all private label canned tuna suppliers to be sourced from packers that are ISSA members. All of Sobeys' suppliers will be reporting the scientific name, geographic origin, wild/farmed and harvest method through the Seafood Metrics program by the end of 2023 and will continue to do so on a quarterly basis (personal communication, D. Reid, 20/04/2023).

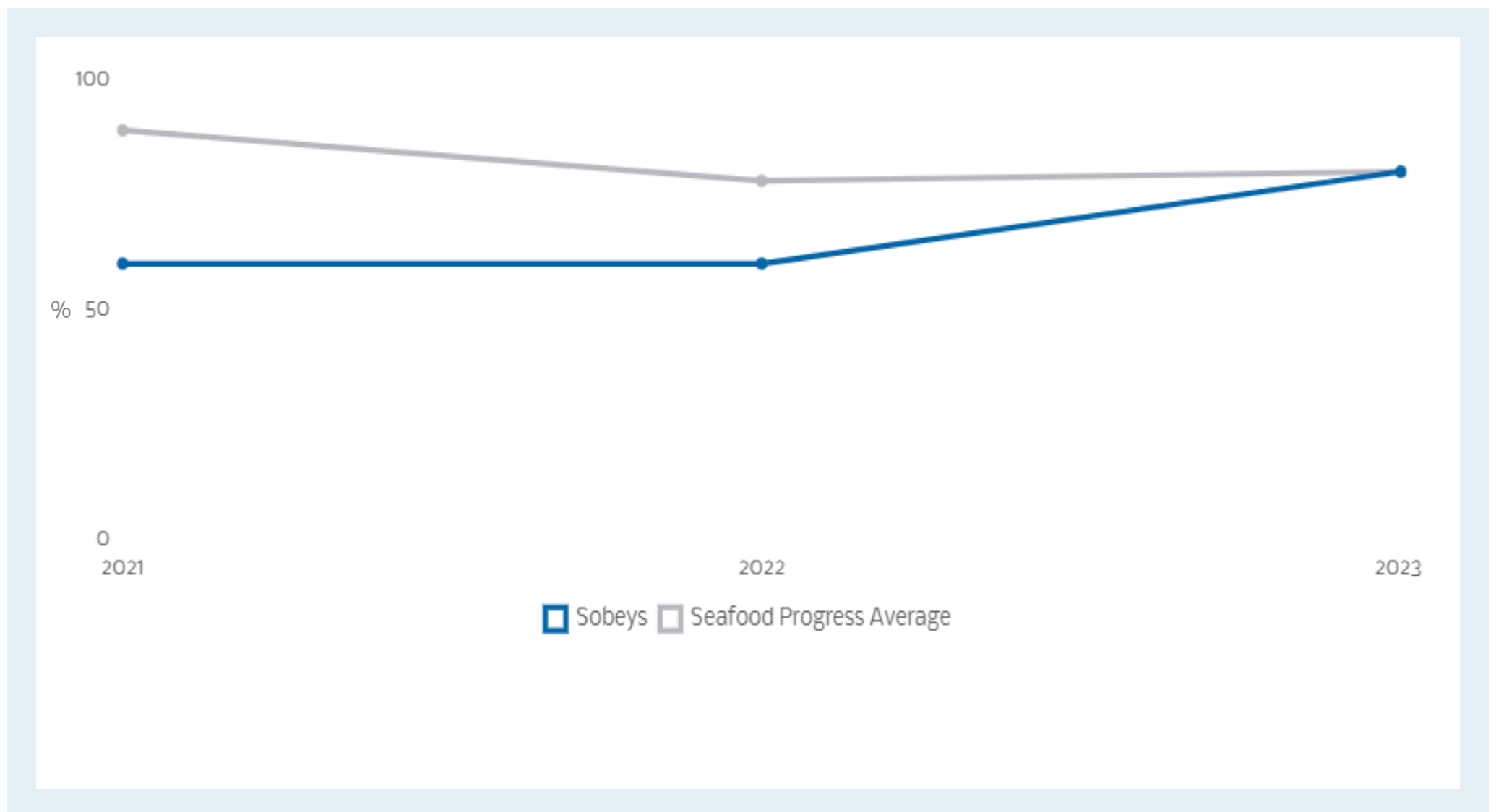
Clear Objectives	✓
Supplier Expectations	✓
Traceability Policy	✗
Reporting on Activities	✗

Social Responsibility Commitment. Sobeys' sustainable seafood policy states that "all vendors supplying products from high risk countries to Sobeys Inc.'s Private Label Programs are required to ensure the producers maintain acceptable Social Compliance Audit standards. Sobeys Inc. recognizes the following social compliance audit standards: GSCP Reference Code, SA 8000, BSCI Code of Conduct and Fair Working Conditions (FWC)." Sobeys reported to SeaChoice that it continues to work on an analysis of human rights practices and labour conditions in its supply chains to inform the future of its governance perspective and due diligence program. As its ethical sourcing program grows, Sobeys will look for opportunities to collect data related to freedom of association (personal communication, D. Reid, 20/04/2023).

STEP 1: COMMITMENT



1.1 The grocer has a publicly available commitment on environmentally sustainable seafood.



Sobeys informed SeaChoice that, by 2025, a minimum of 95% of the volume of its fresh and frozen private label products will be third-party certified. For wild products, this means MSC certified. For farmed products, this means ASC certified, or BAP certified when ASC certified products are not available. Where certified sources are not available, Sobeys will source products that are Ocean Wise Recommended. Furthermore, the company aims to obtain Ocean Wise Recommendation on as many products as possible, whether certified or not. All other products will be involved in a Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) or Aquaculture Improvement Project (AIP). Sobeys requires all private label canned tuna suppliers to be sourced from packers that are ISSA members. All of Sobeys' suppliers will be reporting the scientific name, geographic origin, wild/farmed and harvest method through the Seafood Metrics program by the end of 2023 and will continue to do so on a quarterly basis (personal communication, D. Reid, 20/04/2023).

Scoring

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

80% Commitment to environmental sustainability that includes clear objectives that are supported by references to credible standards and a full chain traceability policy in place (or a timeline set for implementation) that traces at least the product scientific name, geographic origin, farmed/wild and harvest method.

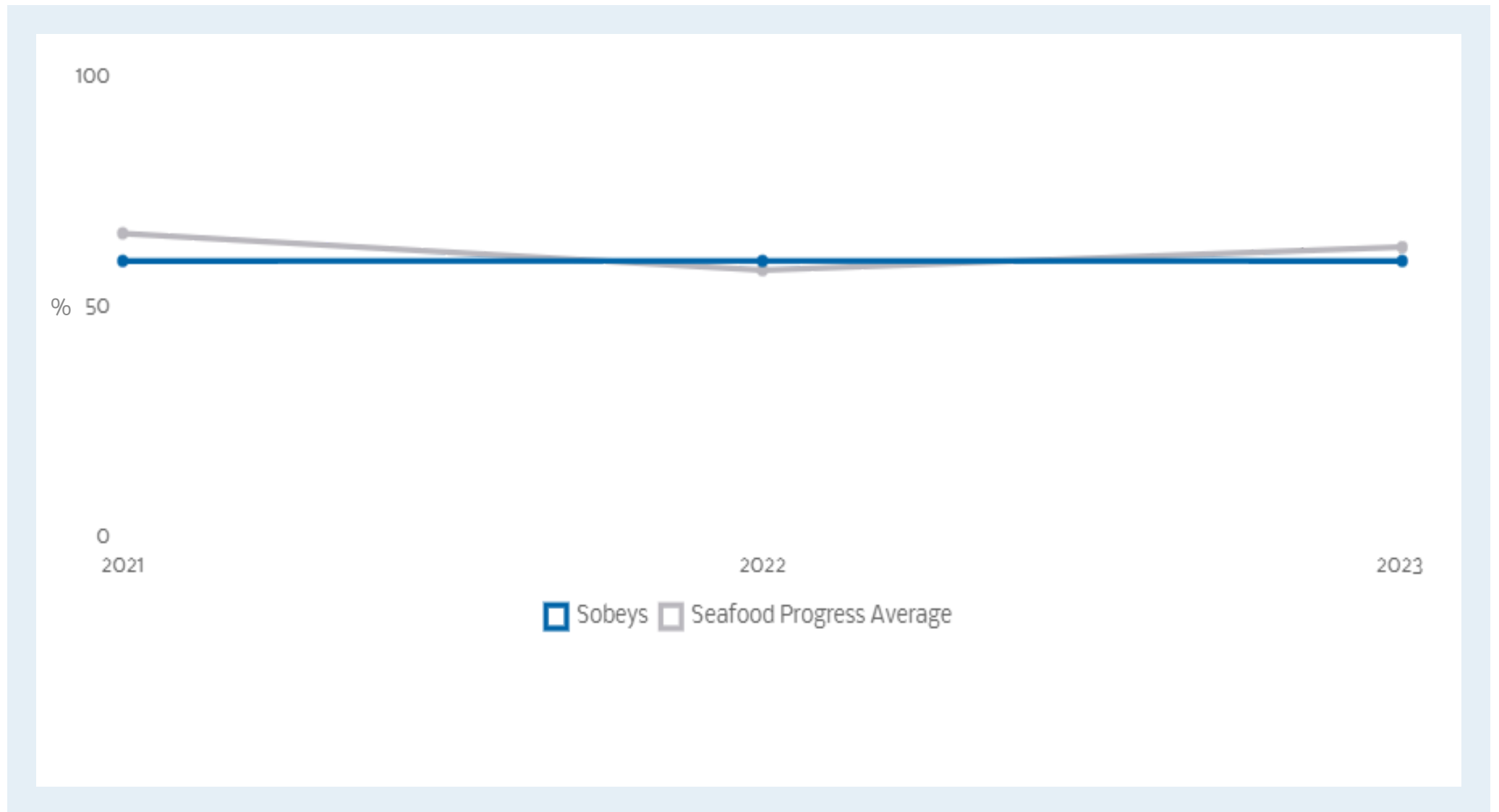
60% Commitment to environmental sustainability that includes clear objectives that are supported by references to credible standards (such as Seafood Watch or Ocean Wise ratings, eco-certifications, etc.).

40% Commitment to environmental sustainability that includes clear objectives for sustainable procurement.

20% General commitment to environmentally sustainable seafood.

0% No publicly available environmental sustainability commitment.

1.2 The grocer has a publicly available commitment on socially responsible seafood.



Sobeys' sustainable seafood policy states that "all vendors supplying products from high risk countries to Sobeys Inc.'s Private Label Programs are required to ensure the producers maintain acceptable Social Compliance Audit standards. Sobeys Inc. recognizes the following social compliance audit standards: GSCP Reference Code, SA 8000, BSCI Code of Conduct and Fair Working Conditions (FWC)." Sobeys reported to SeaChoice that it continues to work on an analysis of human rights practices and labour conditions in its supply chains to inform the future of its governance perspective and due diligence program. As its ethical sourcing program grows, Sobeys will look for opportunities to collect data related to freedom of association (personal communication, D. Reid, 20/04/2023).

Scoring

100% Commitment to social responsibility includes clear objectives, actions or expectations for seafood suppliers, a clear and effective traceability policy, and the grocer reports publicly on activities to support social responsibility on at least an annual basis.

80% Commitment to social responsibility includes clear objectives, actions or expectations for seafood suppliers, and a clear and effective traceability policy that at least involves tracing data on the existence of an independent trade union or representative worker organization.

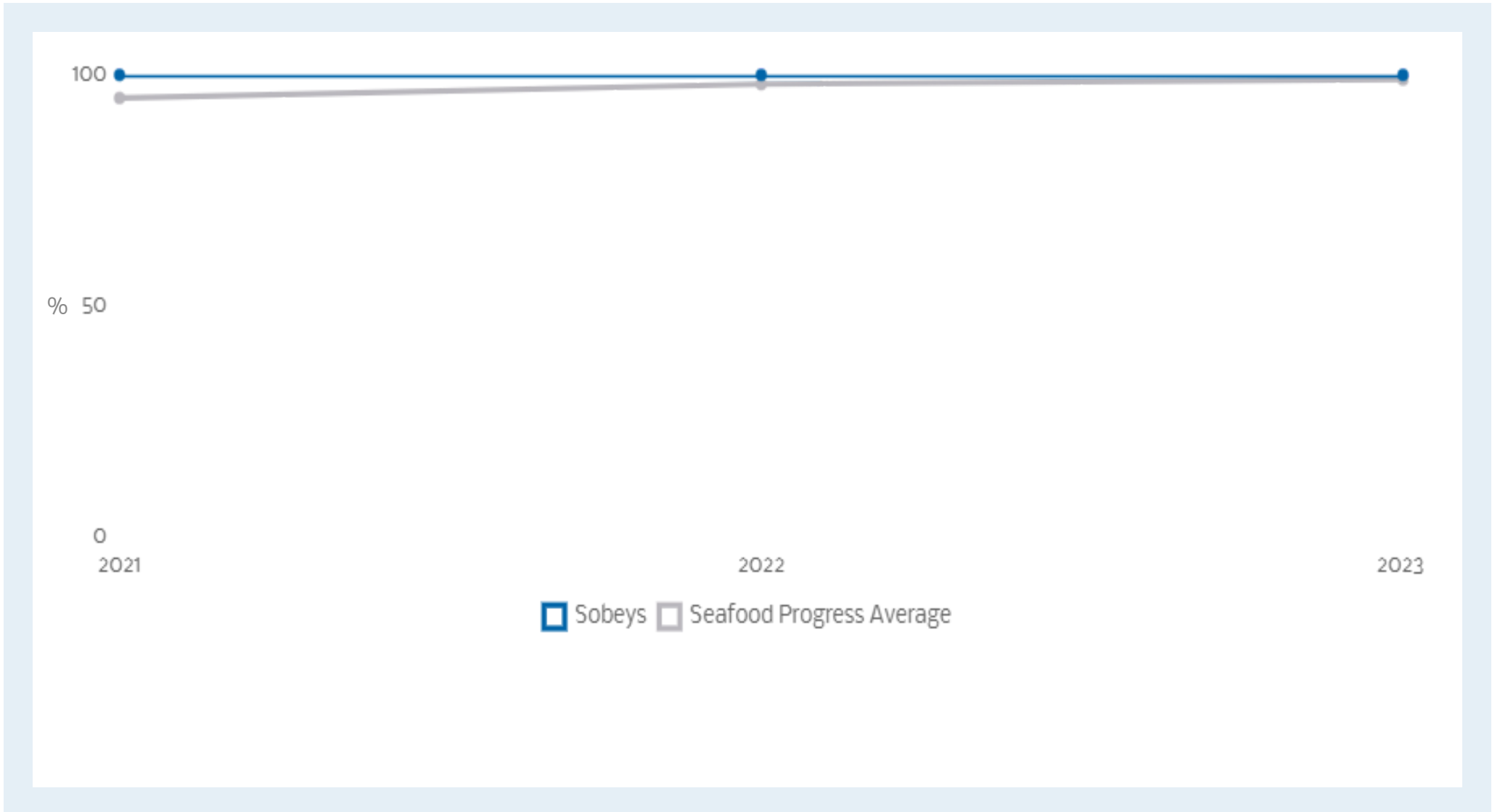
60% Commitment to social responsibility includes clear objectives and actions or expectations for seafood suppliers.

40% Commitment to social responsibility includes with worker driven objectives that are based on credible international standards (The UN's Guiding Principles, The WBA's Seafood Stewardship Index, ILO and the UN Declaration).

20% General commitment to socially responsible seafood.

0% No publicly available social responsibility commitment.

1.3 The grocer includes all banners that sell seafood in its sustainable seafood commitment.



Sobeys includes all store banners that carry its private label seafood brands in its sustainable seafood commitment (personal communication, D. Reid, 14/02/2023).

Scoring

100% The grocer includes 100% of its banners in its sustainable seafood commitment.

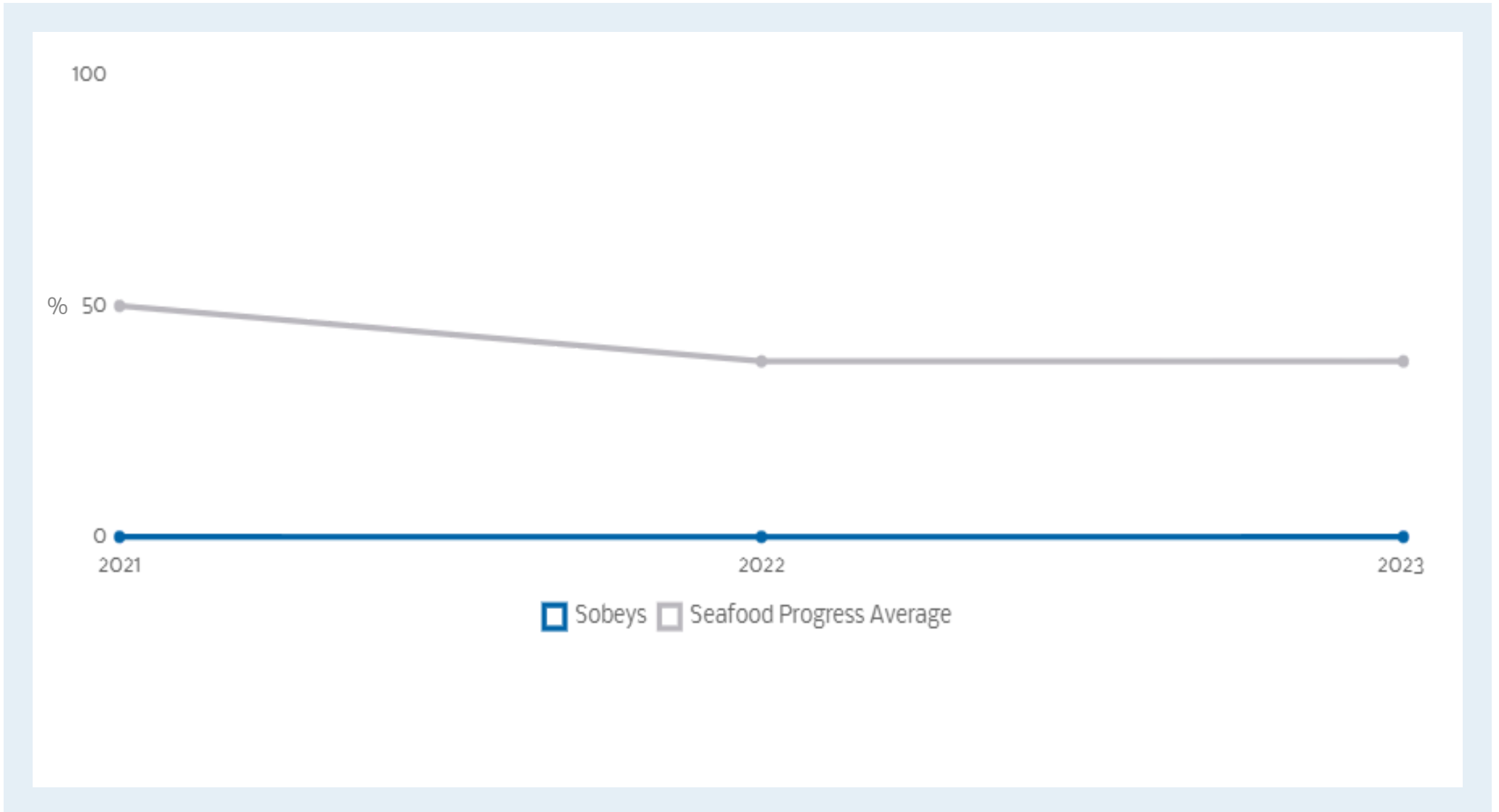
75% The grocer includes 75% or more of its banners in its sustainable seafood commitment.

50% The grocer includes 50% or more of its banners in its sustainable seafood commitment.

25% The grocer includes 25% or more of its banners in its sustainable seafood commitment.

0% The grocer does not include any banners in its sustainable seafood commitment.

1.4 The grocer includes all shelf stable and national brand products in its sustainable seafood commitment.



Sobeys' sustainable seafood commitment does not include any of its shelf stable or national brand products. However, Sobeys shared with SeaChoice that it plans to assess the data that all suppliers will be providing through Seafood Metrics over the coming months to inform a goal and timeline for bringing these products under the scope of its commitment (personal communication, D. Reid, 14/02/2023).

Scoring

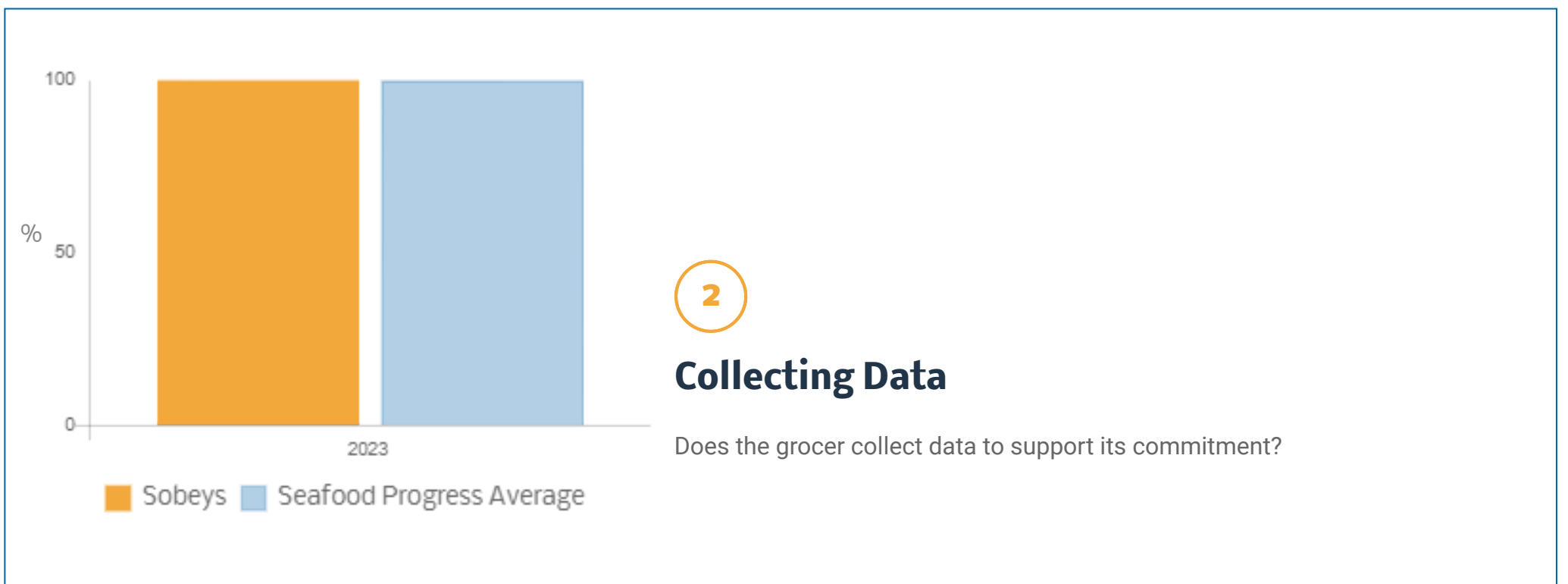


100% The grocer's commitment includes all of its shelf stable AND national brand products.

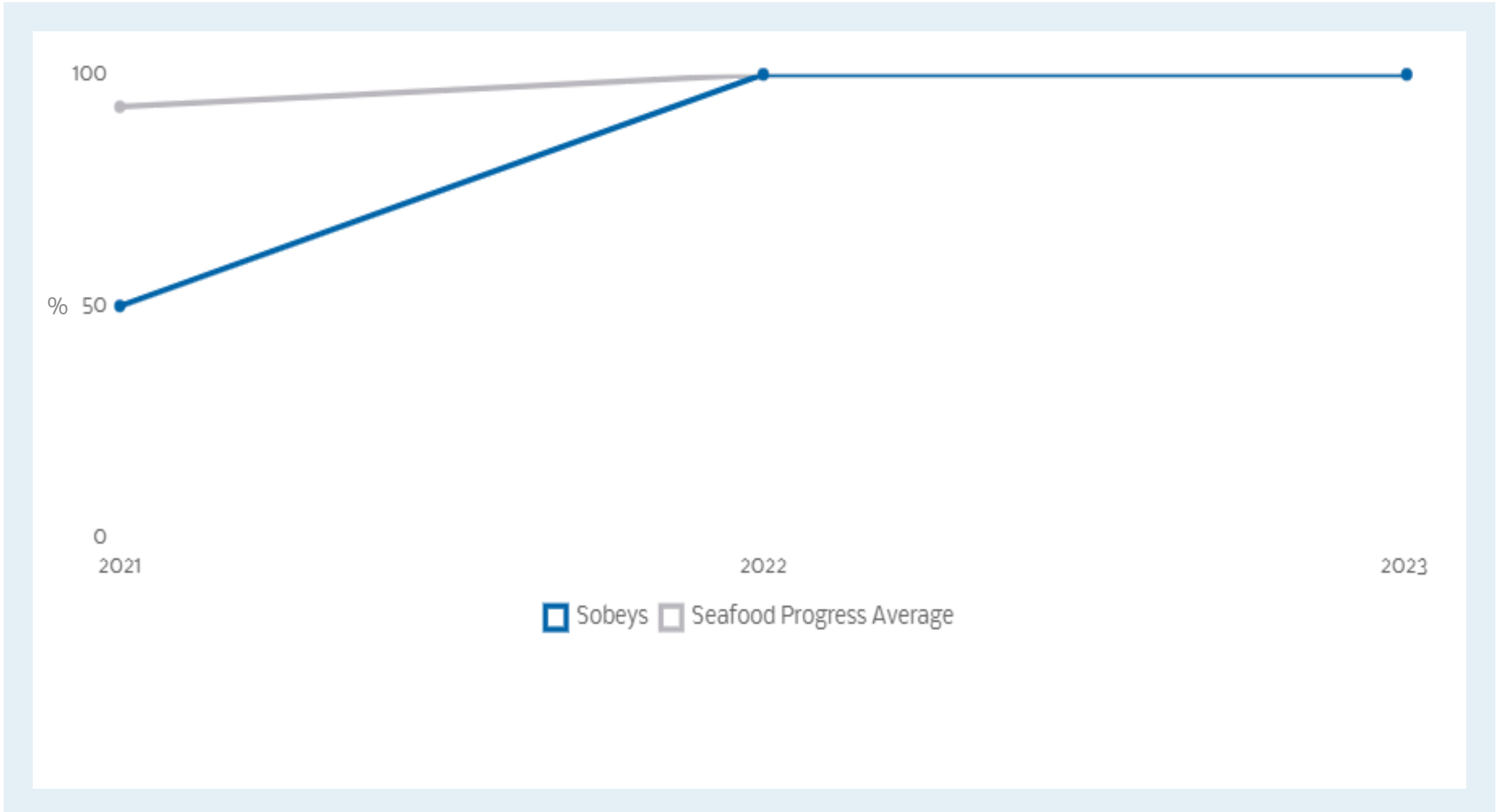
50% The grocer's commitment includes all of its shelf stable or national brand products.

0% The grocer's commitment includes neither all of its shelf stable or national brand products.

STEP 2: COLLECTING DATA



2.1 The grocer collects data on scientific name.



Sobeys reported to SeaChoice that it is in the process of collecting the first round of data on scientific name for all its private label and national brand seafood products through Seafood Metrics. Going forward, this information will be collected on a quarterly basis (personal communication, D. Reid, 14/02/2023).

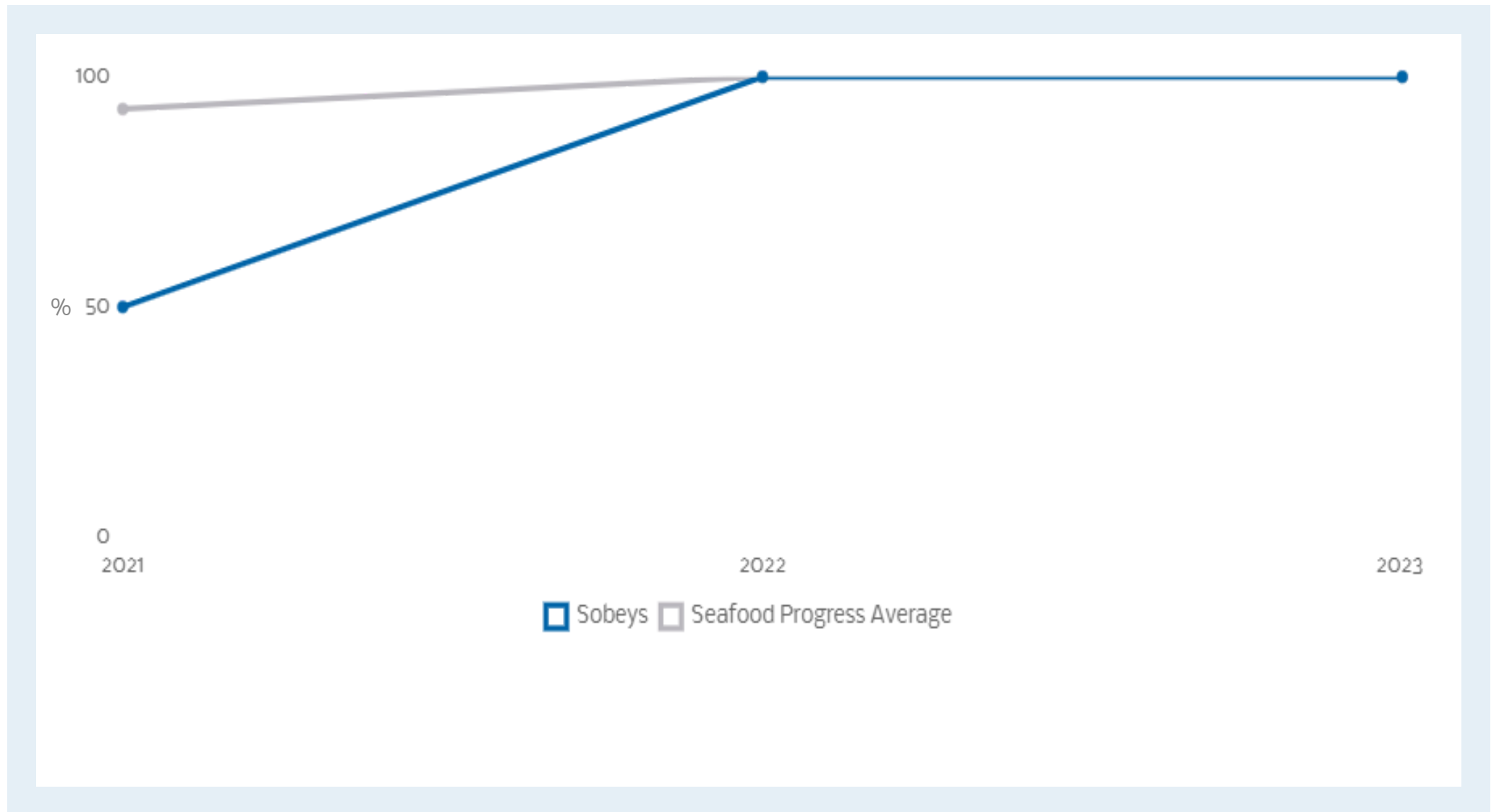
Scoring

100% Collects data for all products included in the grocer's commitment.

50% Collects data for some products included in the grocer's commitment.

0% Does not collect data (or no information available).

2.2 The grocer collects data on geographic origin.



Sobeys reported to SeaChoice that it is in the process of collecting the first round of data on geographic origin for all its private label and national brand seafood products through Seafood Metrics. Going forward, this information will be collected on a quarterly basis (personal communication, D. Reid, 14/02/2023).

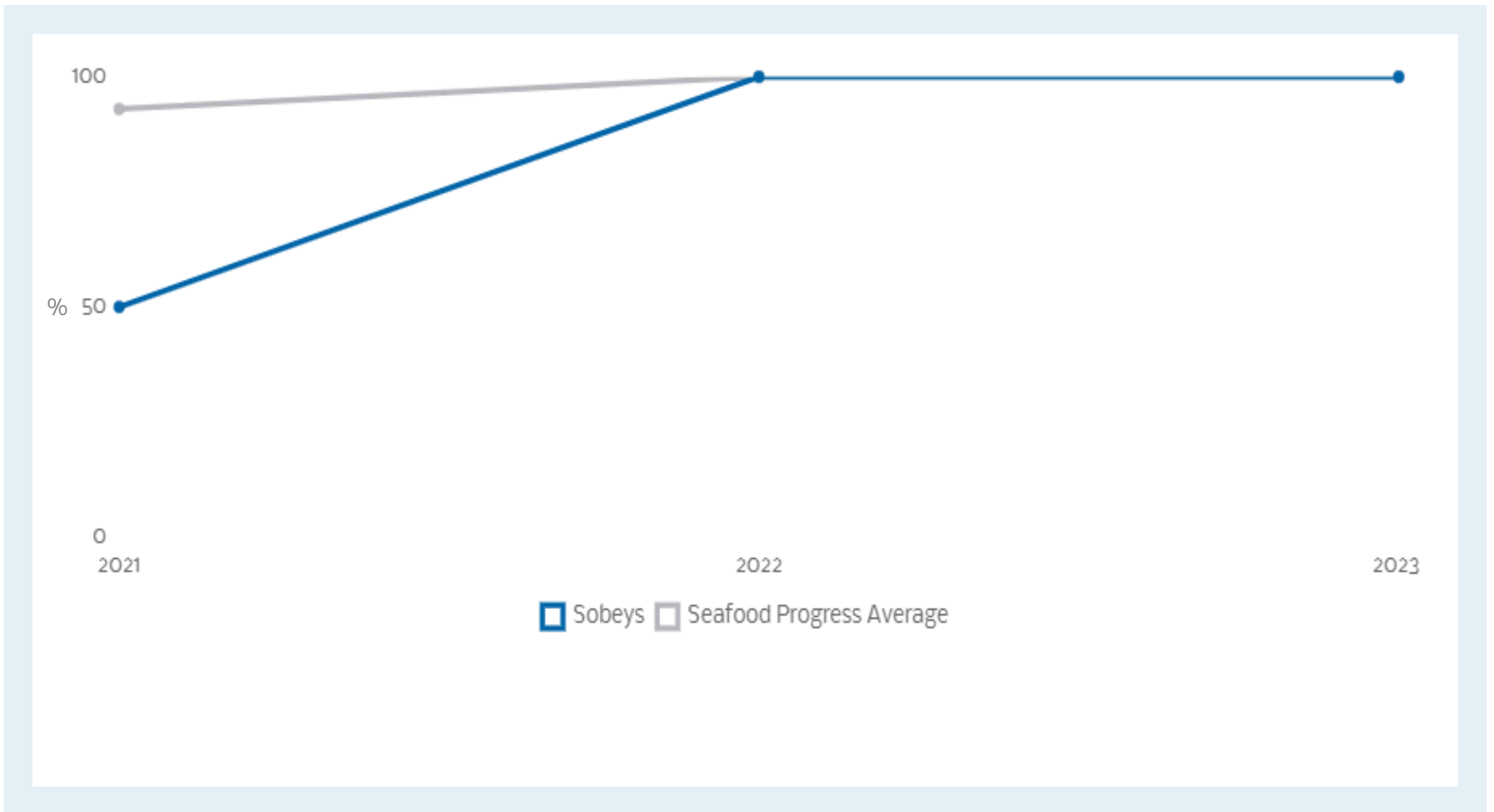
Scoring

100% Collects data for all products included in the grocer's commitment.

50% Collects data for some products included in the grocer's commitment.

0% Does not collect data (or no information available).

2.3 The grocer collects data on whether wild or farmed.



Sobeys reported to SeaChoice that it is in the process of collecting the first round of data for all its private label and national brand seafood products through Seafood Metrics. Going forward, this information will be collected on a quarterly basis (personal communication, D. Reid, 14/02/2023).

Scoring

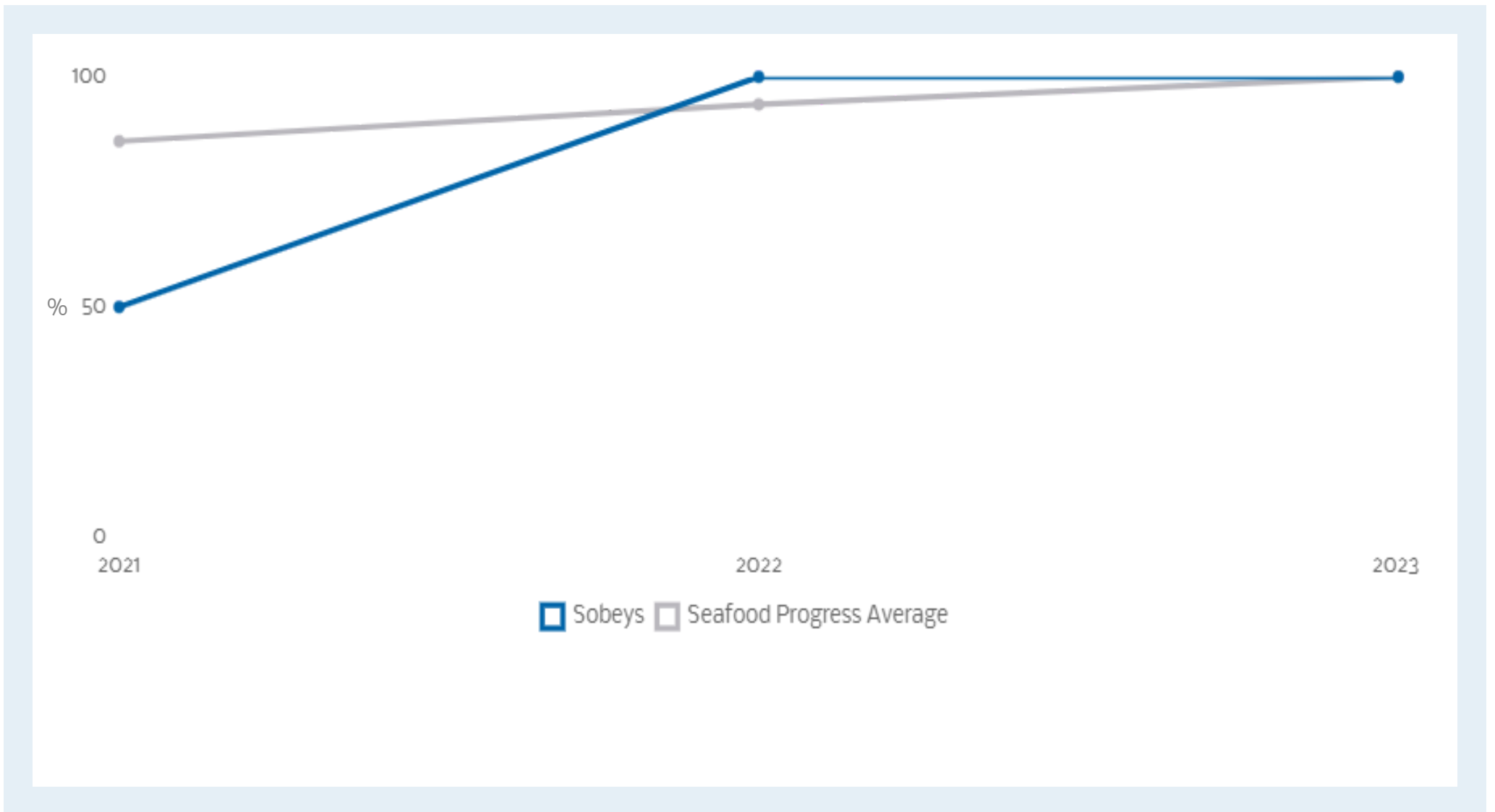


100% Collects data for all products included in the grocer's commitment.

50% Collects data for some products included in the grocer's commitment.

0% Does not collect data (or no information available).

2.4 The grocer collects data on gear type or farming methods.



Sobeys reported to SeaChoice that it is in the process of collecting the first round of data on gear type or farming method for all its private label and national brand seafood products through Seafood Metrics. Going forward, this information will be collected on a quarterly basis (personal communication, D. Reid, 14/02/2023).

Scoring

100% Collects data for all products included in the grocer's commitment.

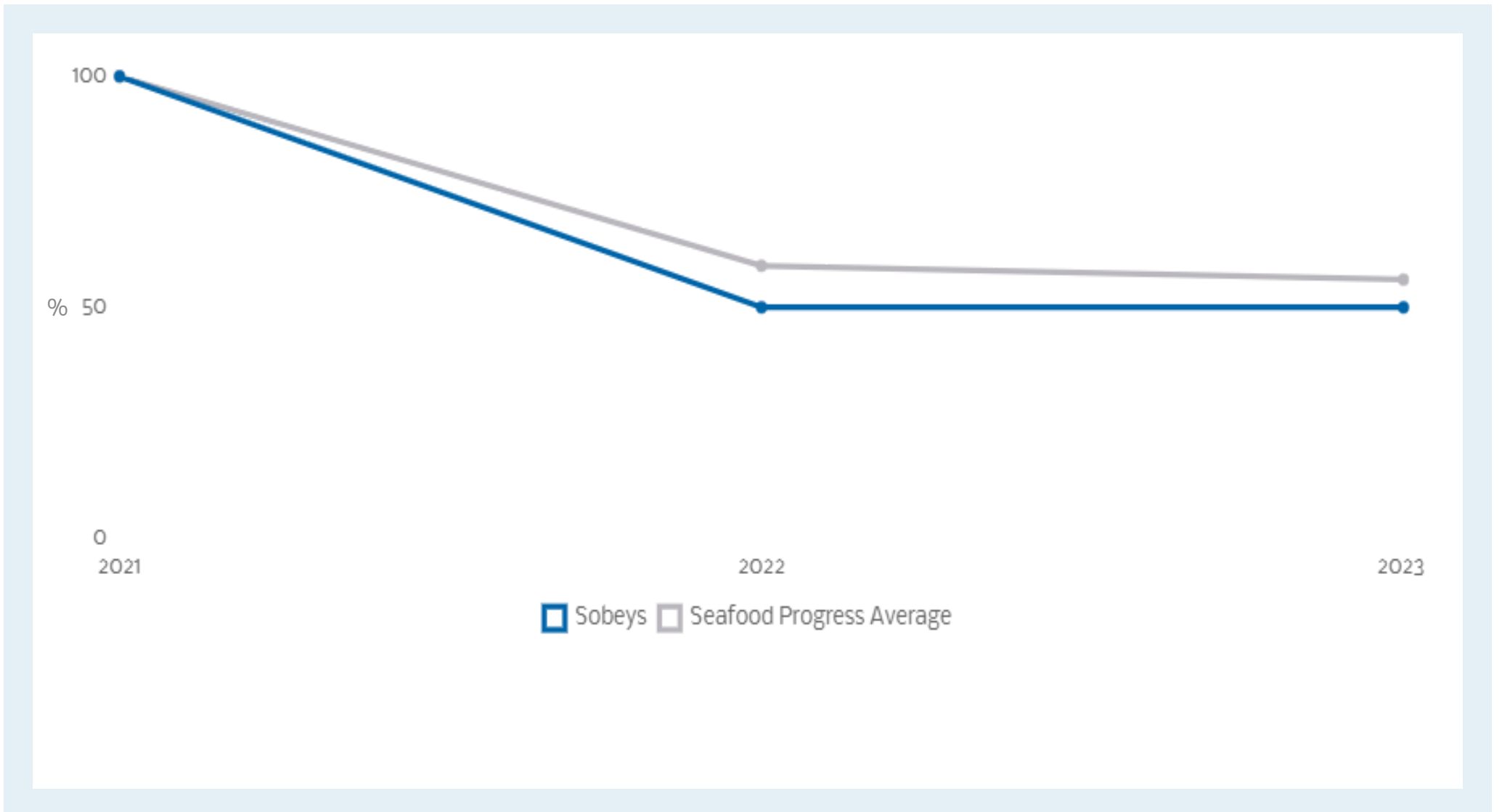
50% Collects data for some products included in the grocer's commitment.

0% Does not collect data (or no information available).

STEP 3: SOURCING



3.1 The grocer publishes a clear hierarchy demonstrating its sourcing priorities.



Sobeys publishes a clear hierarchy of sourcing standards for its fresh and frozen private label products, but doesn't identify the standards it uses to inform its purchasing decisions for any of its shelf stable or national brand products.

Scoring



100% Publishes a clear hierarchy of sustainability standards demonstrating its sourcing priorities for all products it sells.

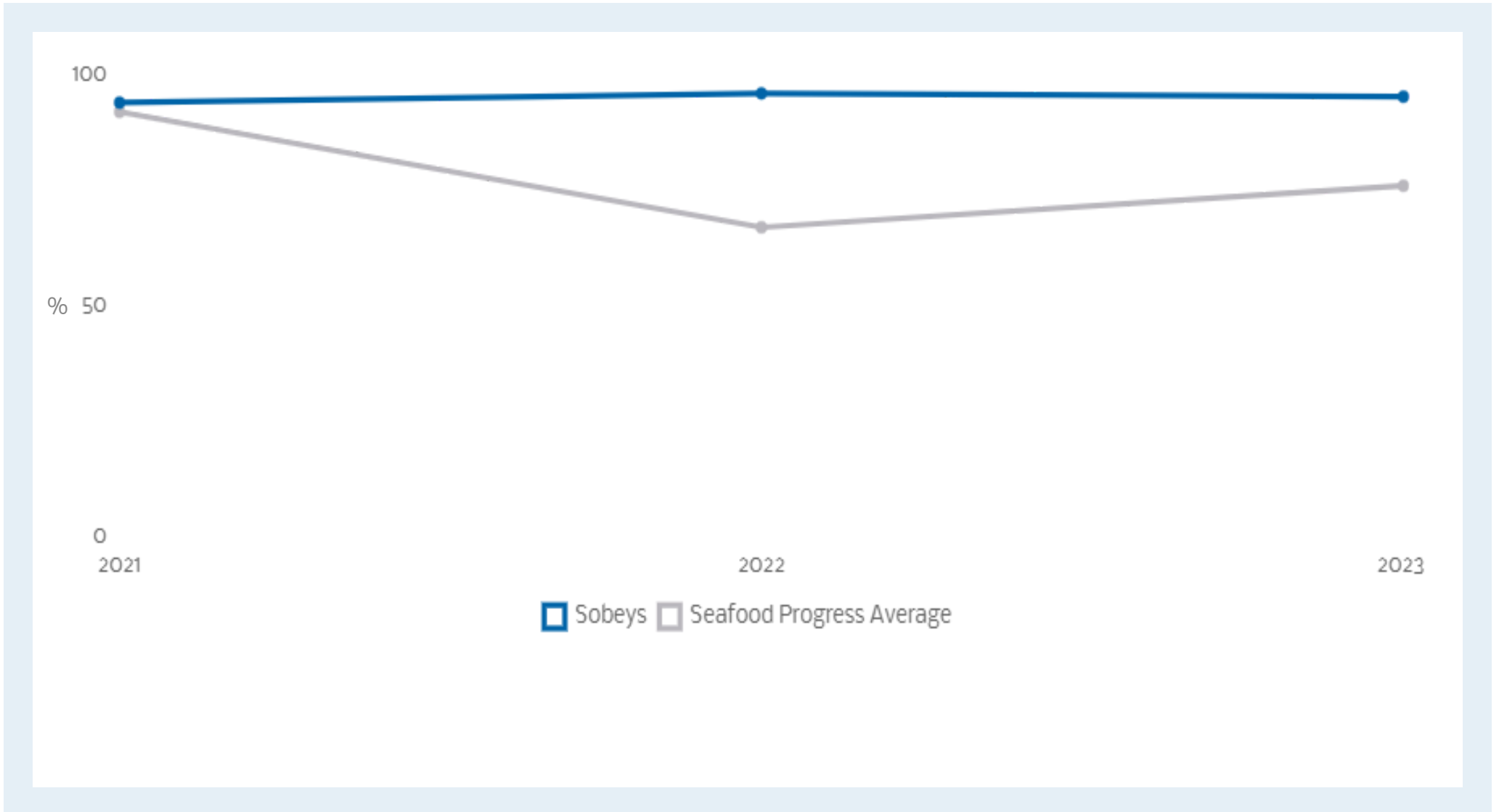
75% Publishes a clear hierarchy of sustainability standards used for sourcing some products, and identifies a general list of sustainability standards that it uses to inform its purchasing decisions for other products.

50% Publishes a clear hierarchy of sustainability standards used for sourcing some products, but doesn't identify the standards it uses to inform its purchasing decisions for other products.

25% Publishes a general list of sustainability standards that it uses to inform its purchasing decisions.

0% Does not publish the sustainability standards that it uses to inform its purchasing decisions.

3.2 The grocer has reported on the percentage of its seafood sold in the last year that met its sustainability commitment by volume or value.



Sobeys reported to SeaChoice that 95.3% of its private label fresh and frozen products by volume were in line with its commitment in fiscal 2022 (personal communications, D. Reid, 14/02/2023).

Scoring

100% Grocer has reported that 100% of its seafood sold meets its sustainability commitment.

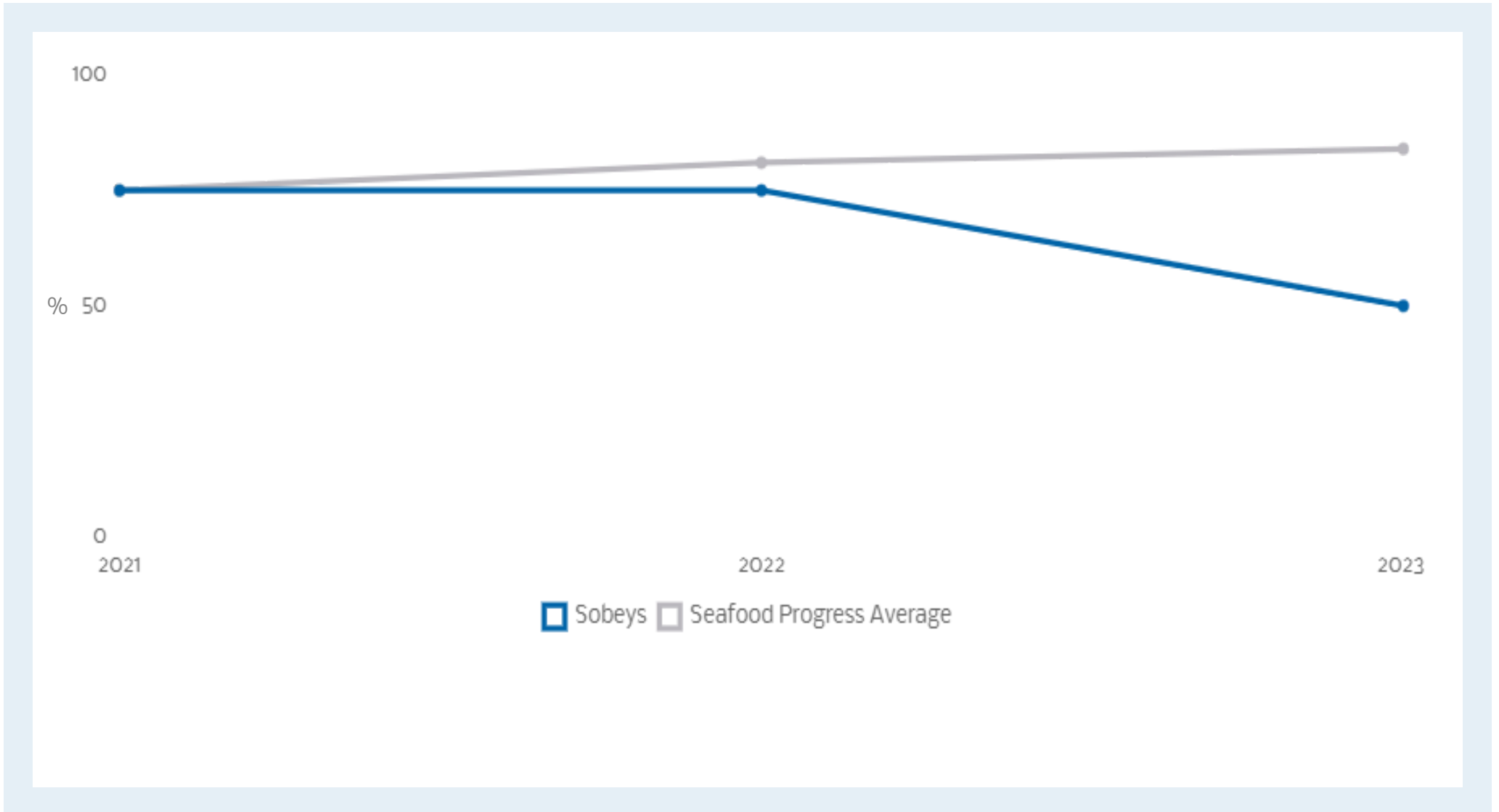
75% Grocer has reported that 75% or more of its seafood sold meets its sustainability commitment.

50% Grocer has reported that 50% or more of its seafood sold meets its sustainability commitment.

25% Grocer has reported that 25% or more of its seafood sold meets its sustainability commitment.

0% The grocer has not reported on the percentage of seafood sold that met its sustainability commitment (or no information available).

3.3 Suppliers are required to agree in writing to uphold the grocer's commitment to sustainable seafood.



Sobeys encourages all its seafood suppliers to become Ocean Wise partners, but they do not require suppliers to sign Ocean Wise's Code of Conduct. Sobeys is working on adding language to its supplier agreements so that suppliers are agreeing in writing to uphold Sobeys' sustainability commitment and all related policies (personal communication, D. Reid, 20/04/2023).

Scoring

100% All suppliers are required to agree in writing to uphold all of the terms of the grocer's environmental sustainability commitment and the grocer actively verifies that this commitment is being upheld on at least an annual basis.

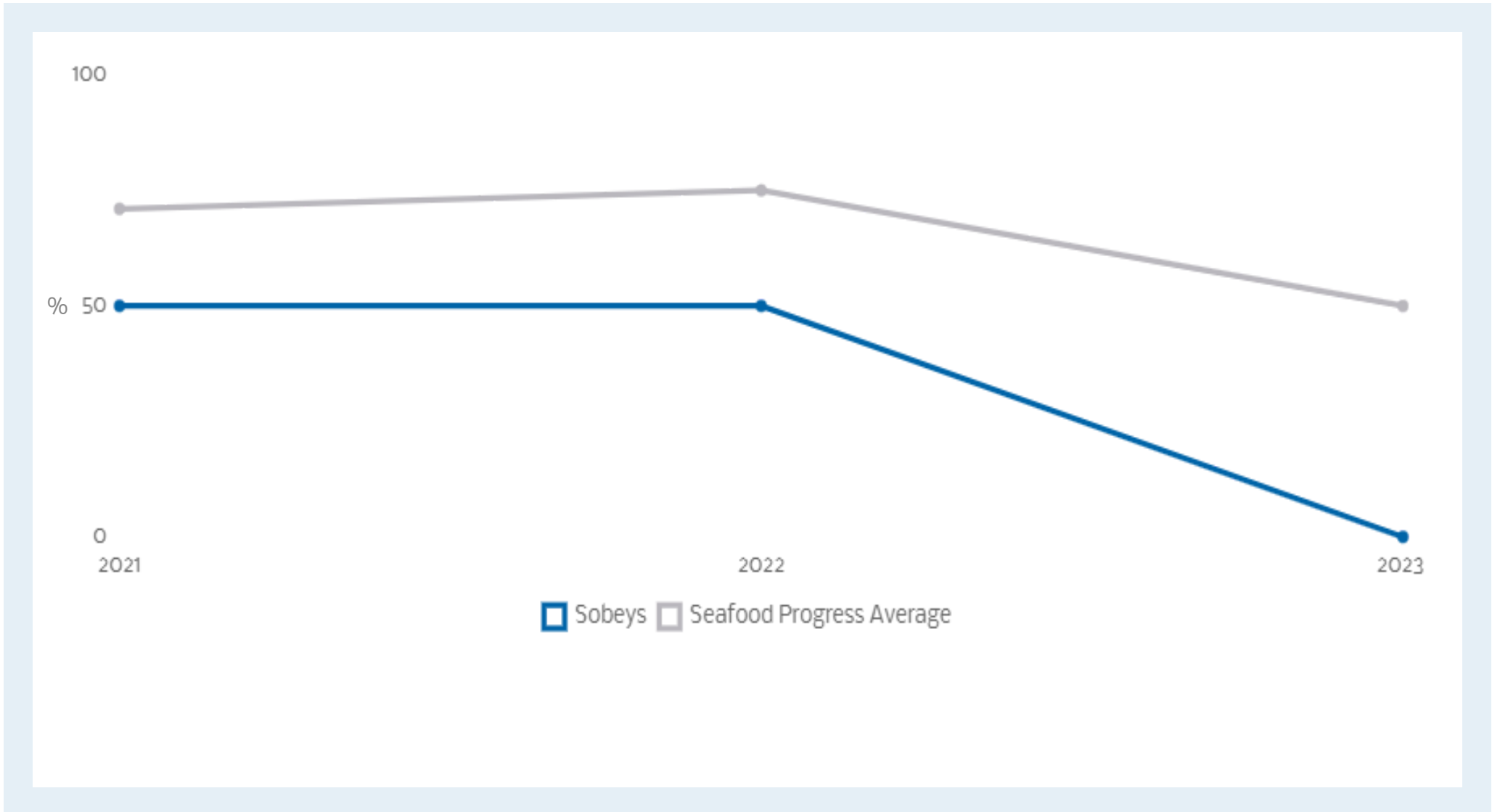
75% All suppliers are required to agree in writing to uphold all of the terms of the grocer's environmental sustainability commitment on at least an annual basis.

50% All suppliers are required to agree in writing to uphold some of the terms of the grocer's environmental sustainability commitment.

25% Some suppliers are required to agree in writing to uphold some of the terms of the grocer's environmental sustainability commitment.

0% Suppliers are not required to agree in writing to uphold the terms of the grocer's commitment.

3.4 Suppliers are required to sign a code of conduct to uphold the grocer's commitment to socially responsible seafood.



Sobeys is working on adding language to its supplier agreements so that suppliers are agreeing in writing to uphold Sobeys' sustainability commitment and all related policies. Sobeys continues to work on an analysis of human rights practices and labour conditions in its supply chains to inform the future of its governance perspective and due diligence program (personal communication, D. Reid, 20/04/2023).

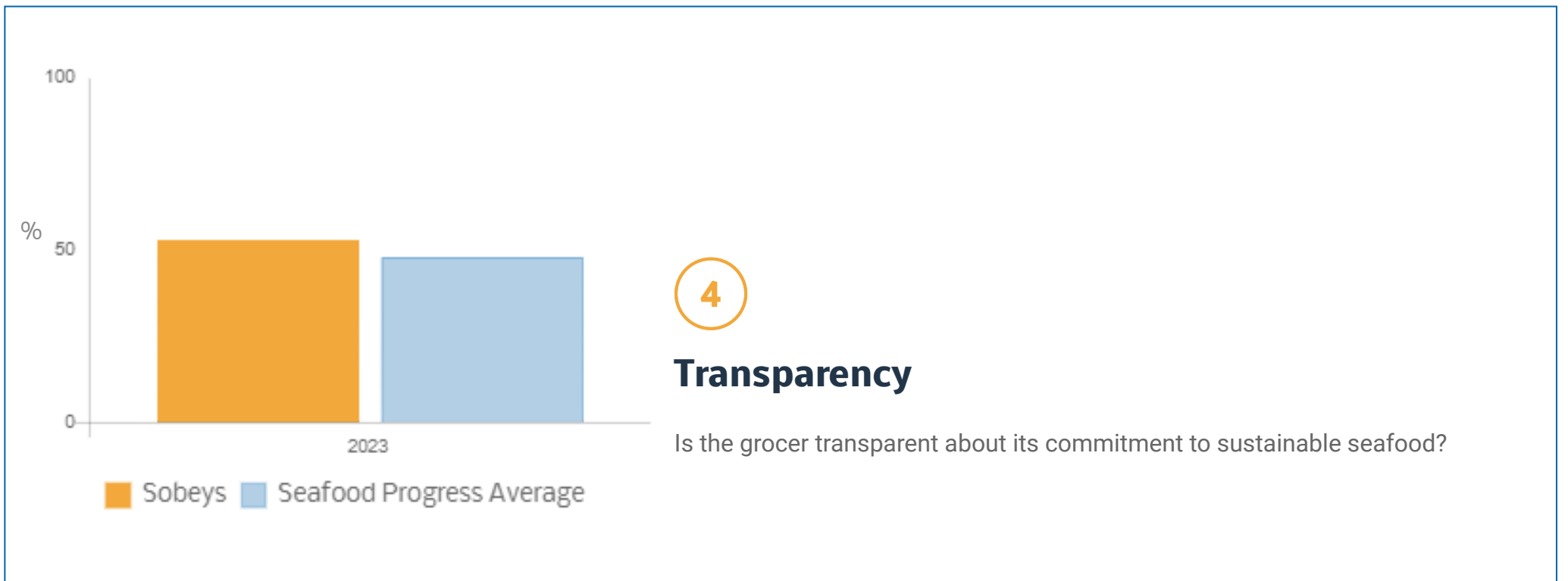
Scoring

100% All suppliers are required to sign a code of conduct that covers all of the grocer's social responsibility commitment and the grocer actively verifies that this commitment is being upheld by suppliers of high risk products.

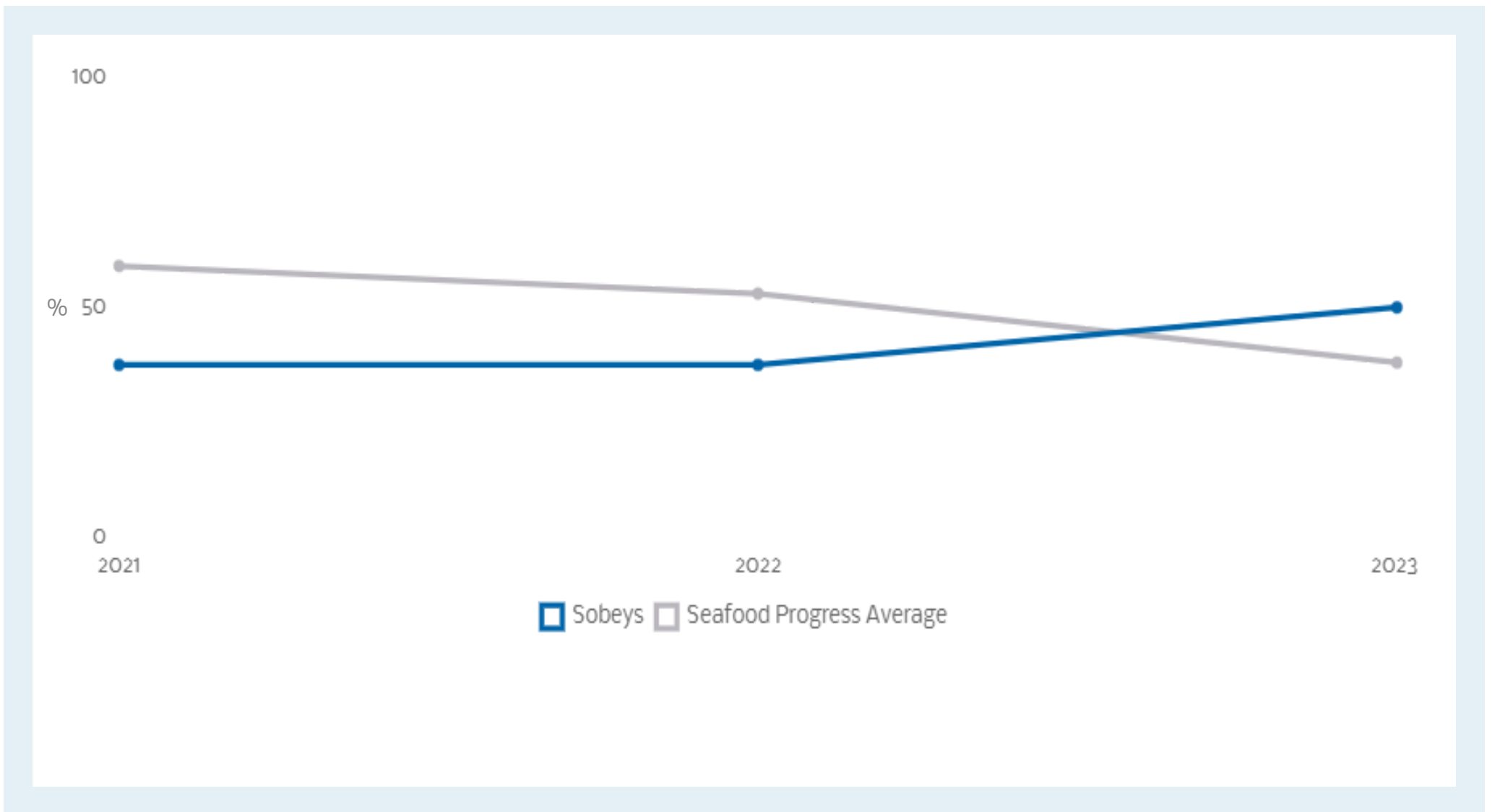
50% All suppliers are required to sign a code of conduct that covers all of the grocer's social responsibility commitment on at least an annual basis.

0% Suppliers are not required to sign a code of conduct (or no information).

STEP 4: TRANSPARENCY



4.1 The grocer labels products with the information that allows consumers to make informed decisions.



Sobeys is currently updating some of its private brand products to include scientific name, wild or farmed, geographic origin and harvest method on the label. These revised labels will appear in-store by September, 2023 (personal communication, D. Reid, 20/04/2023).

Scoring

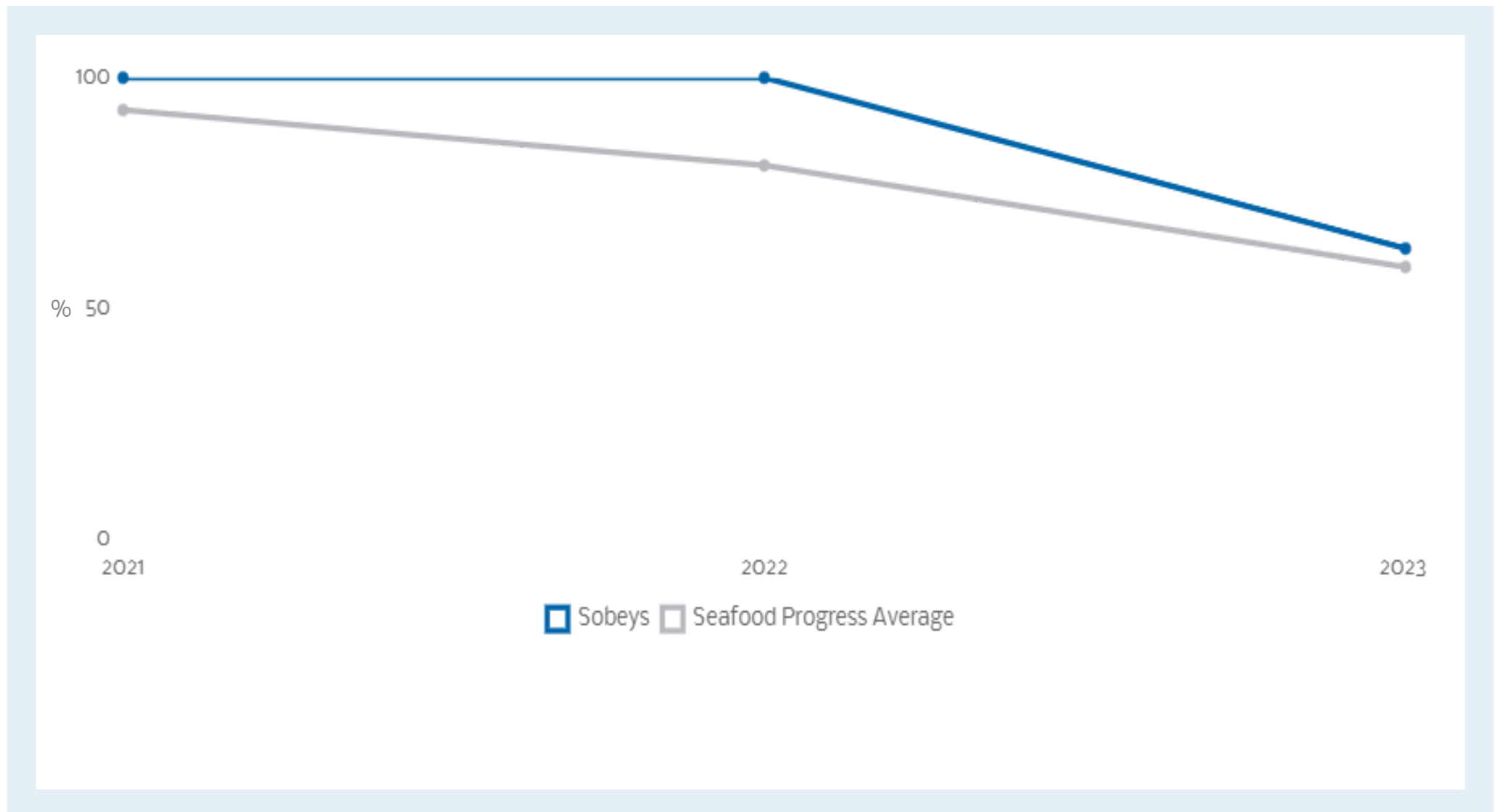
100% The grocer labels all products with the information.

75% The grocer labels most products with the information.

50% The grocer labels some products with the information.

0% The grocer does not label products with the information (or no information available).

4.2 The grocer follows best practice guidelines for making environmental claims on its products.



Sobeys applies the Ocean Wise endorsement claim to applicable products but does not make evidence to back up either claim publicly available. Sobeys also applies the MSC, ASC and BAP certification claims as applicable which includes a chain-of-custody identifier with publicly available evidence to back up these claims (personal communication, D. Reid, 14/02/2023).

Scoring

100% The grocer only uses credible certification claims on product labels and includes a chain-of-custody identifier with publicly available evidence to back up its claim(s).

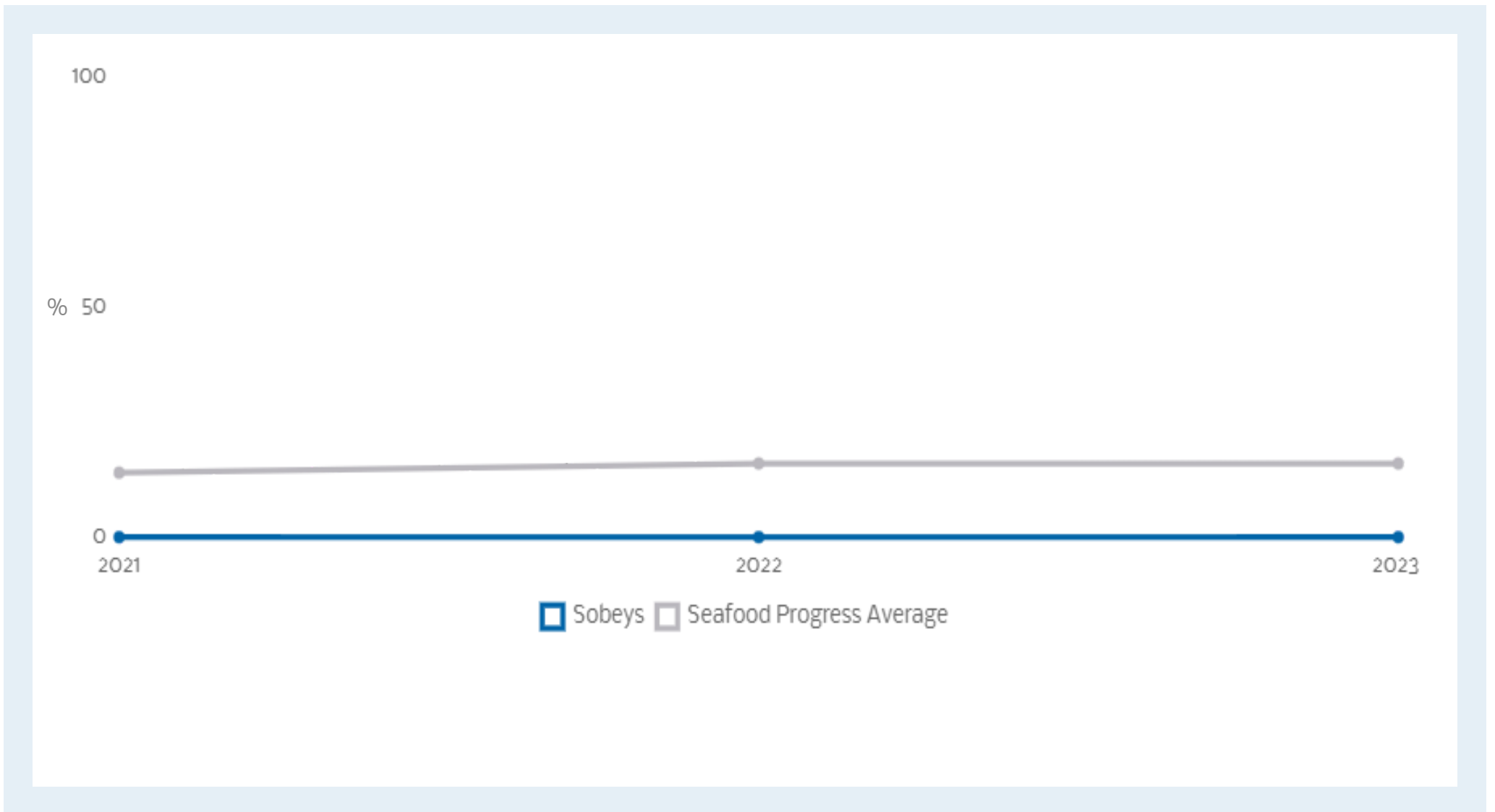
75% The grocer uses certification claims as well as endorsement claims and/or self-declared claims that 1) adhere to ISO 14021 Type II guidance and proof of third-party verification on product labels and 2) makes evidence to back up its claim(s) publicly available.

50% The grocer uses endorsement claims on product labels but does not make the evidence to back up its claim(s) publicly available - - OR - - The grocer uses self-declared claims on product labels that adhere to ISO 14021 Type II guidance and makes evidence to back up the claim(s) publicly available.

25% The grocer uses self-declared claims on product labels and makes evidence to back up the claim(s) publicly available.

0% The grocer uses self-declared claims on product labels and does not make evidence to back up its claim(s) publicly available.

4.3 Key information regarding the grocer's products has been made publicly available.



Sobeys is not currently disclosing this information, but are planning to do so once its new data collection program has been fully implemented (personal communication, D. Reid, 14/02/2023).

Scoring



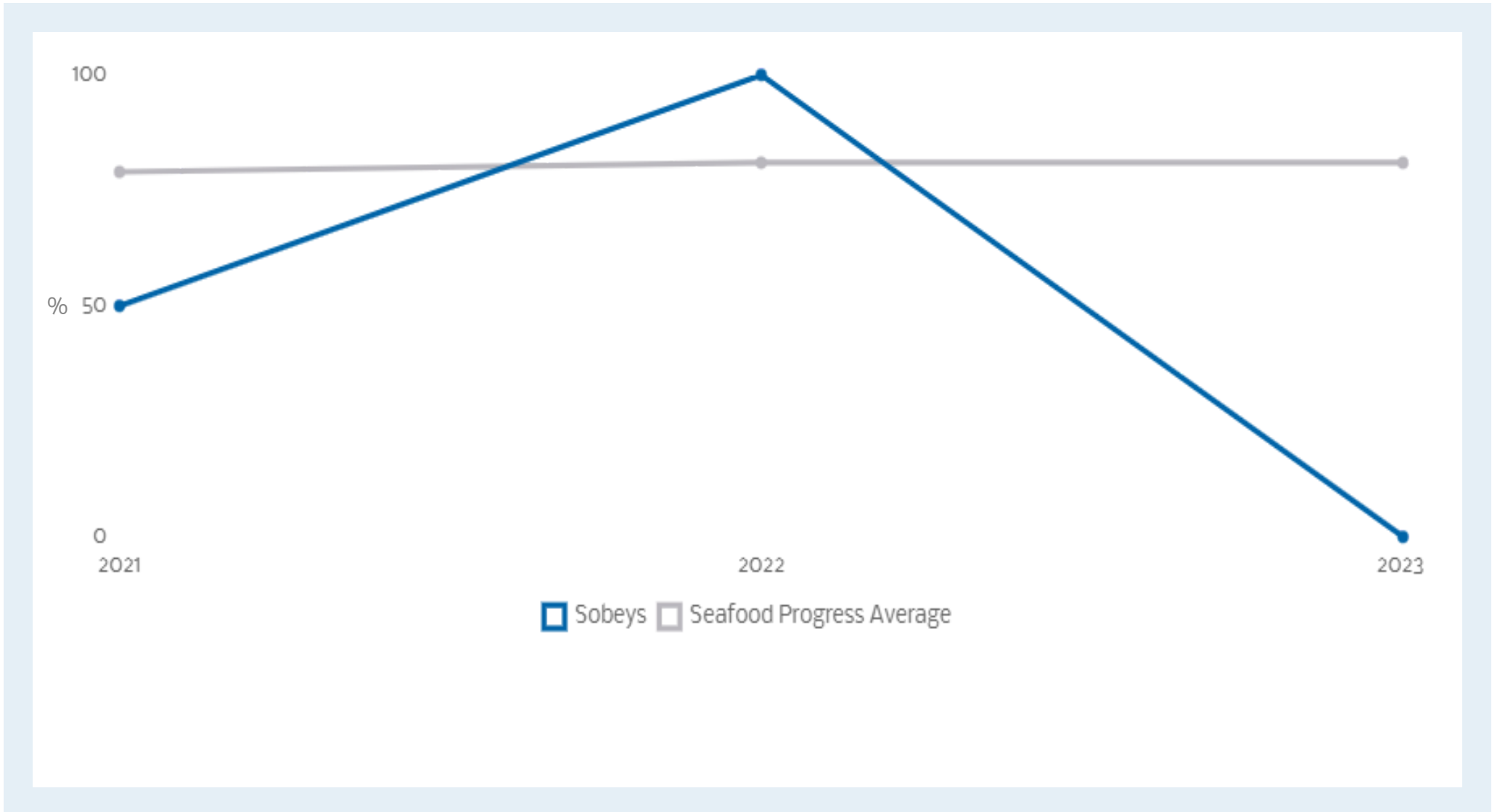
100% Scientific name, geographic origin, gear type AND farming method has been made publicly available for all products.

75% Scientific name, geographic origin, gear type OR farming method has been made publicly available for all products.

50% Scientific name, geographic origin, gear type or farming method has been made publicly available for some products.

0% No information has been made publicly available.

4.4 The grocer reports how much of its seafood meets its sustainability criteria by volume or value of sales on an annual basis.



Sobeys reported to SeaChoice how much of its private label fresh and frozen seafood was in line with its commitment by volume in 2022 and again in 2023.

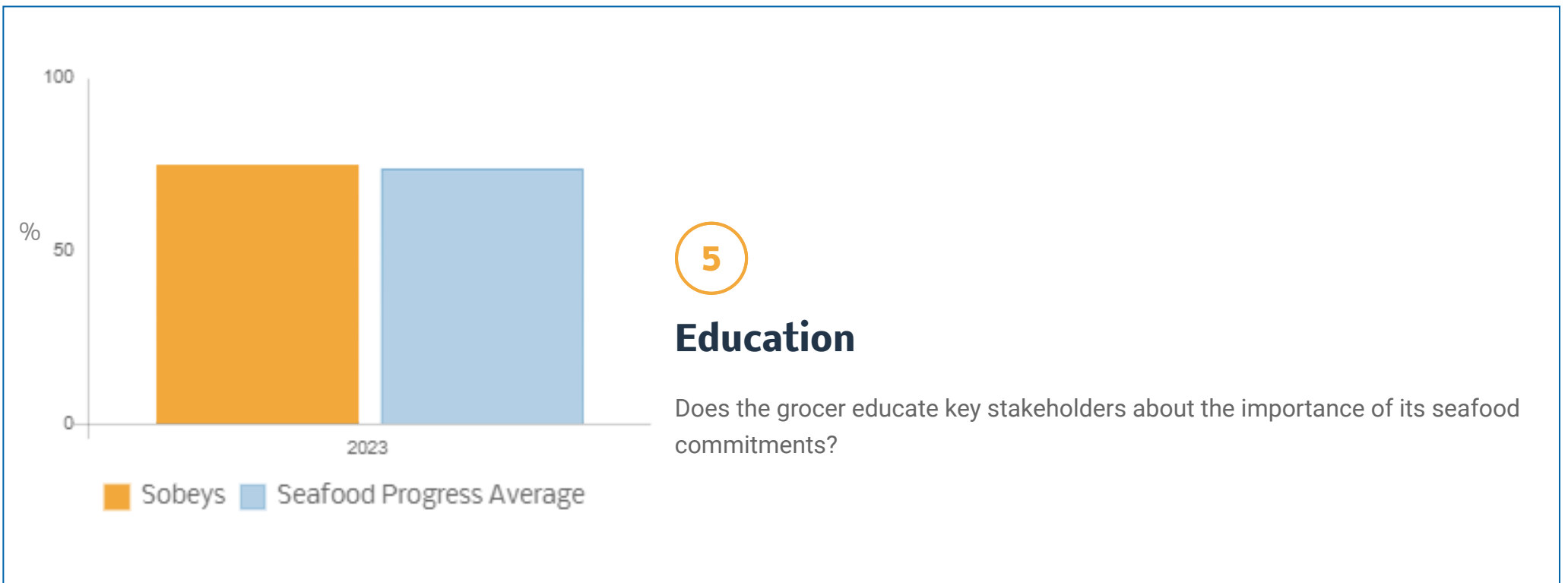
Scoring

100% The grocer regularly reports publicly how much of its seafood sold meets its commitment by volume or value of sales every year.

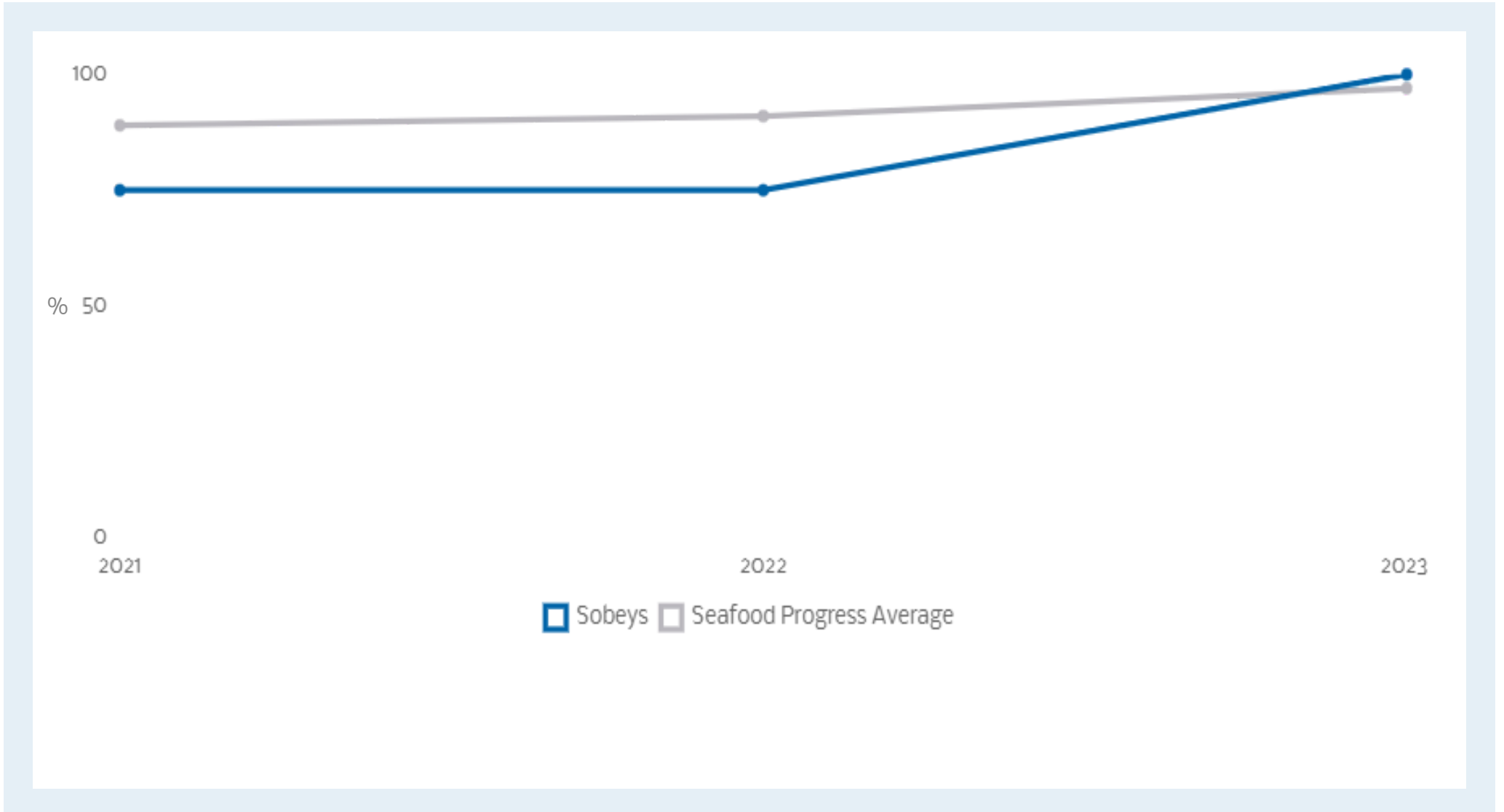
50% The grocer has at one point reported publicly how much of its seafood sold meets its commitment.

0% No public information on how the grocer is doing to meet its commitment.

STEP 5: EDUCATION



5.1 Training programs are conducted for seafood staff.



Sobeys requires all seafood staff to complete an online training program as part of their onboarding training. Sobeys also educates employees on the qualifications of Ocean Wise products and species-specific information around special annual events such as World Oceans Day and the Ocean Wise Festival. Finally, in collaboration with Ocean Wise, Sobeys will be sharing the first of a series of training modules on key species for all seafood staff this May (personal communication, D. Reid, 14/02/2023).

Scoring

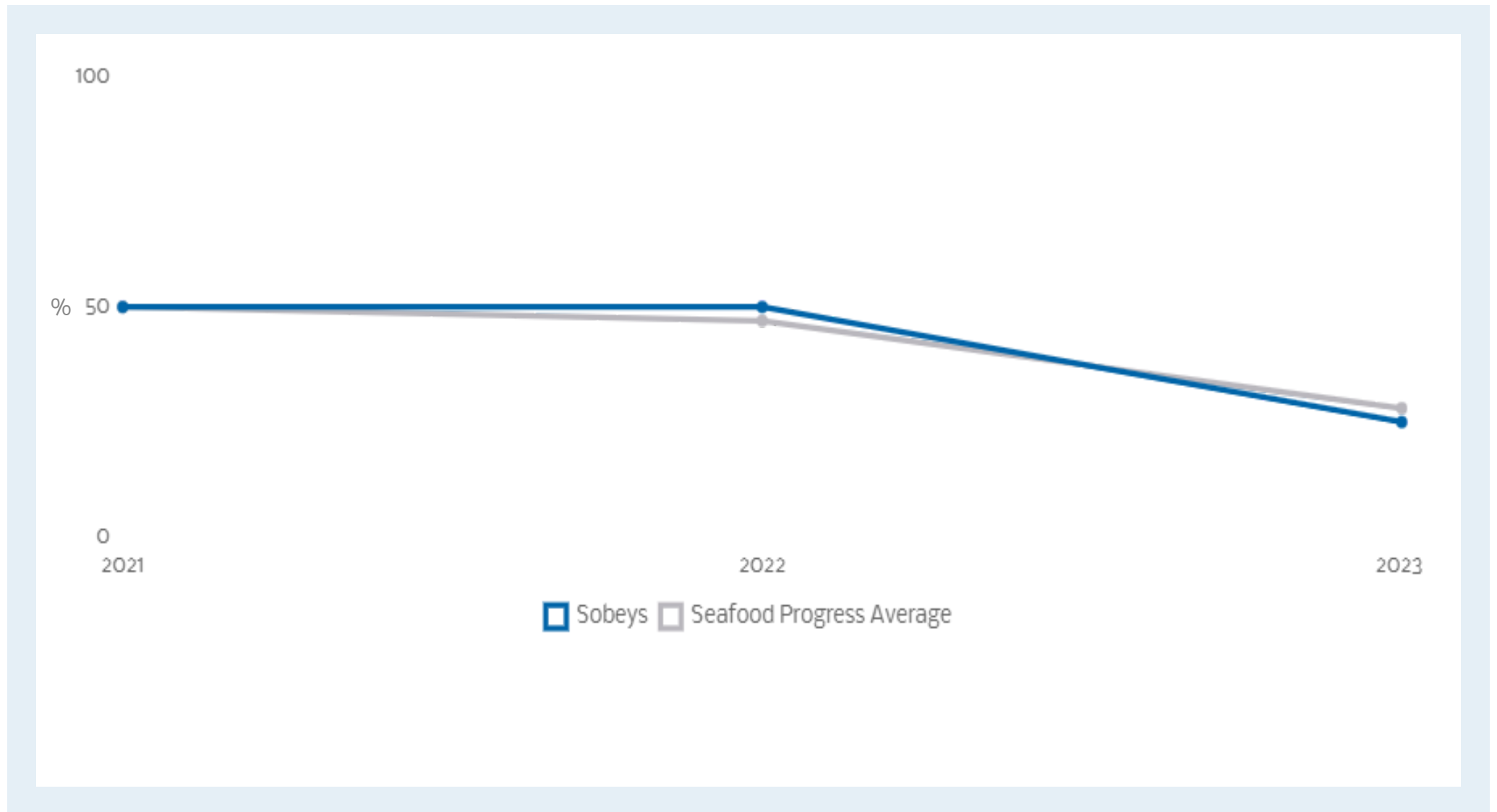
100% Training programs regularly conducted for all seafood staff.

75% Training programs conducted for all seafood staff, but only once.

50% Training programs sometimes conducted or for only some seafood staff.

0% Training programs not conducted for seafood staff (or no information available).

5.2 There is a description of the grocer's seafood commitments in store.



Sobeys currently displays signage promoting its partnership with Ocean Wise in its Sobeys, Thrifty Foods, Safeway and IGA (Quebec) store banners. This involves descriptions of multiple species, including sustainability implications, as part of Ocean Wise's Catch of the Month program (personal communication, D. Reid, 20/04/2023).

Scoring

100% There is a comprehensive description of the grocer's commitments to sustainability AND socially responsibility in store.

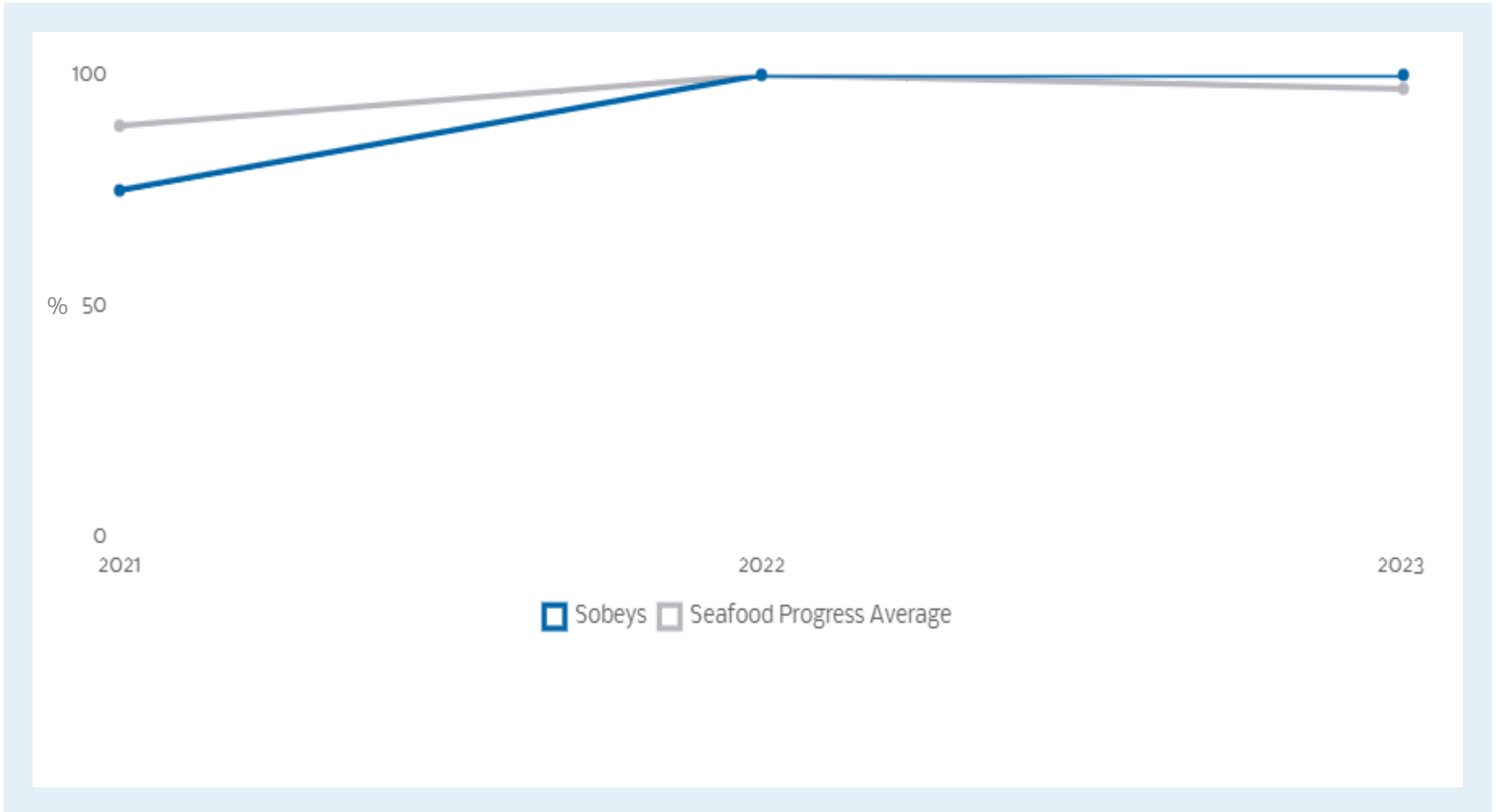
75% There is a comprehensive description of the grocer's commitments to sustainability OR social responsibility in store.

50% There is some description of the grocer's commitment to sustainability AND social responsibility in store.

25% There is some description of the grocer's commitment to sustainability OR social responsibility in store.

0% There is no description of the grocer's commitments in store.

5.3 The grocer has taken actions to ensure its suppliers are aware of its sustainable seafood commitment.



Sobeys sends its suppliers and vendors a copy of its sustainable seafood policy after every revision. In March 2023, Sobeys will be hosting training sessions for its suppliers to help with onboarding and reporting through the Seafood Metrics platform. Sobeys is also working on a package to share with new suppliers to guide them on how to use Seafood Metrics. Finally, the company provides ongoing support to suppliers as needed to ensure their products are in line with Sobeys policies (personal communication, D. Reid, 14/02/2023).

Scoring

100% The grocer shares its sustainable seafood commitment and any updates made to its commitment, has a clear strategy to engage with its suppliers and provides direct support (e.g. training, resources) to help ensure all seafood products are procured in line with its policies.

75% The grocer shares its sustainable seafood commitment and any updates made to its commitment and regularly engages with its suppliers to help ensure the products they supply meet its expectations.

50% The grocer shares its sustainable seafood commitment and any updates made to its commitment and sometimes engages with its suppliers to help ensure the products they supply meet its expectations.

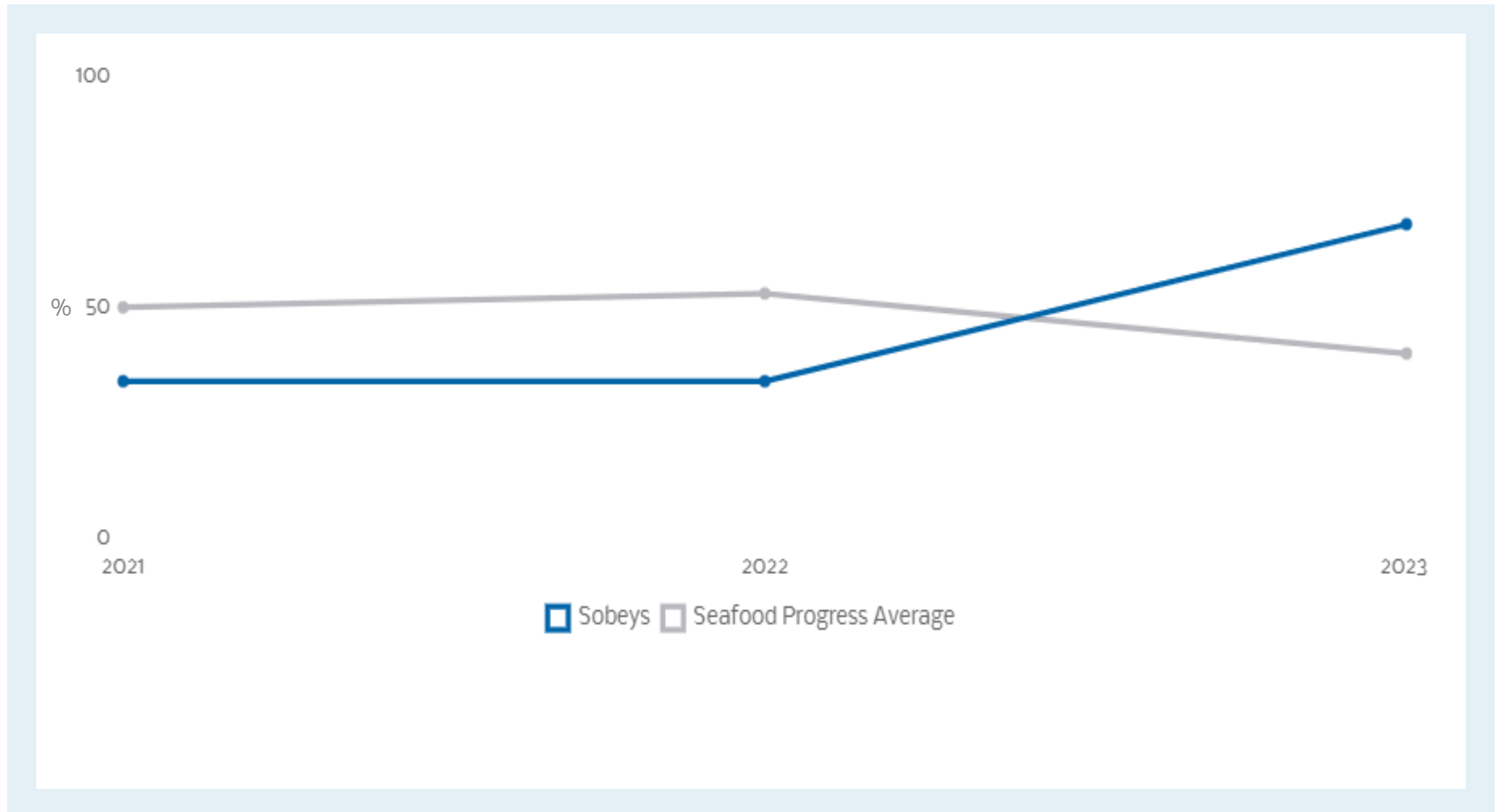
25% The grocer sends its suppliers a copy of its sustainable seafood commitment.

0% The grocer has taken no actions OR no information is available.

STEP 6: TAKING INITIATIVE



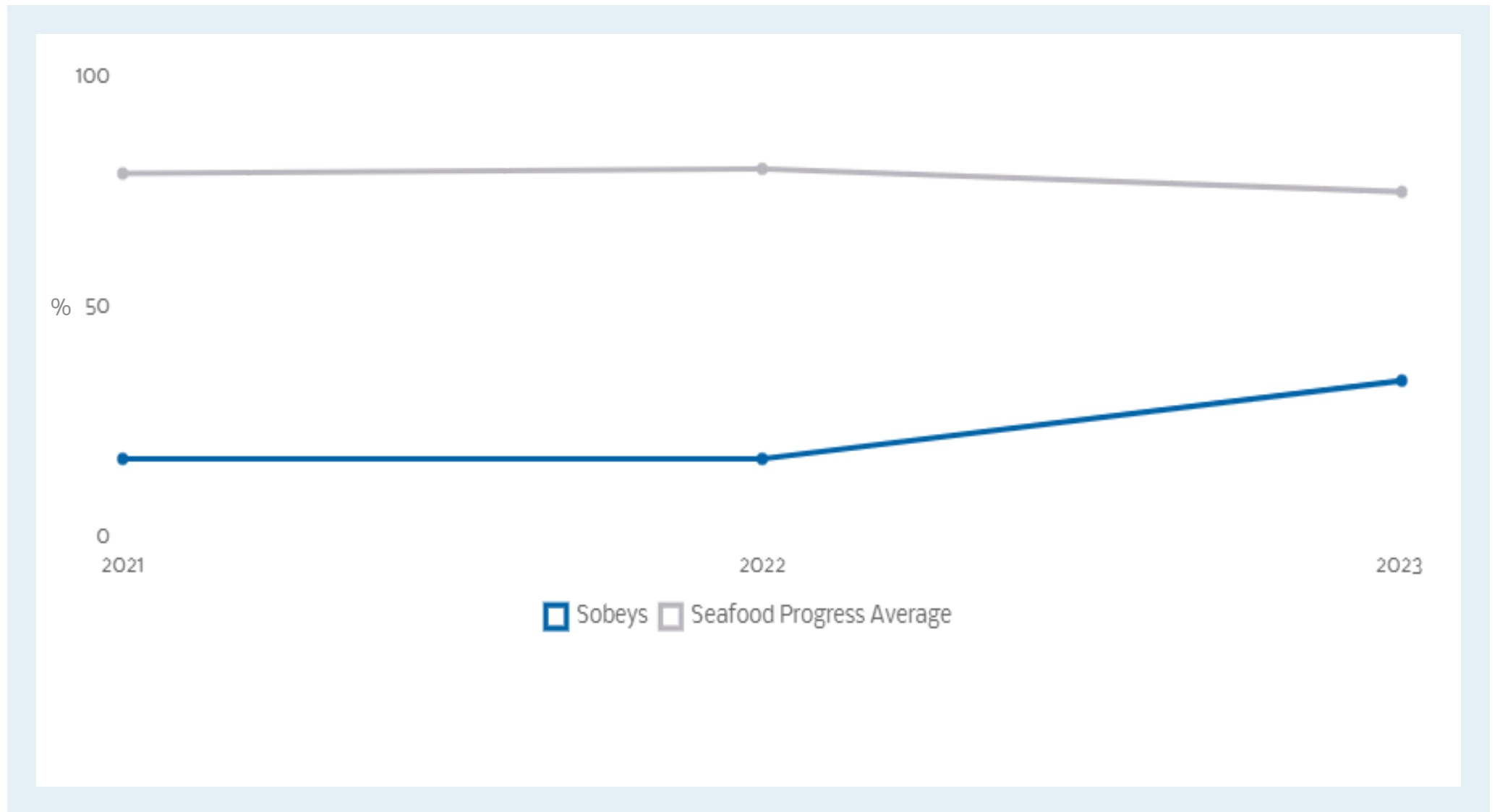
6.1 Farmed Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*)



Sobeys preferentially sources closed containment farmed Atlantic salmon, primarily from Sustainable Blue, Kuterra and Atlantic Sapphire. The company promotes these products in store by identifying the production method on labels and advertising the benefits of land-based aquaculture. Sobeys communicated to SeaChoice that it is committed to not selling any genetically engineered or modified farmed Atlantic salmon. Finally, following SeaChoice's guidance, Sobeys sent a letter directly to BAP in 2021 advocating for critical improvements to its standards (personal communication, D. Reid, 20/04/2023).

- ✘ Only sells farmed salmon products that meet the highest bars for sustainability, i.e. are produced in a closed containment facility, Recommended by Ocean Wise and/or rated Best Choice by Seafood Watch (100 pts).
- ✔ Conducts outreach to policymakers and/or certifying bodies to advocate for salmon farming management to be more environmentally sustainable (17 pts).
- ✔ Promotes farmed salmon products from closed containment producers through marketing efforts and/or distinguishes these products from open-net pen products at points of sale (17 pts).
- ✘ Works with suppliers or producers directly to improve salmon farming practices and/or to support their transition from open-net systems to closed containment systems (17 pts).
- ✘ Refrains from advertising versions of this product that are Not Recommended by Ocean Wise and/or rated Avoid by Seafood Watch (17 pts).
- ✔ Preferentially procures farmed salmon from closed containment producers and/or sources that are Recommended by Ocean Wise or rated Best Choice by Seafood Watch (17 pts).
- ✔ Does not sell genetically engineered (GE) or genetically modified (GM) farmed salmon (17 pts).

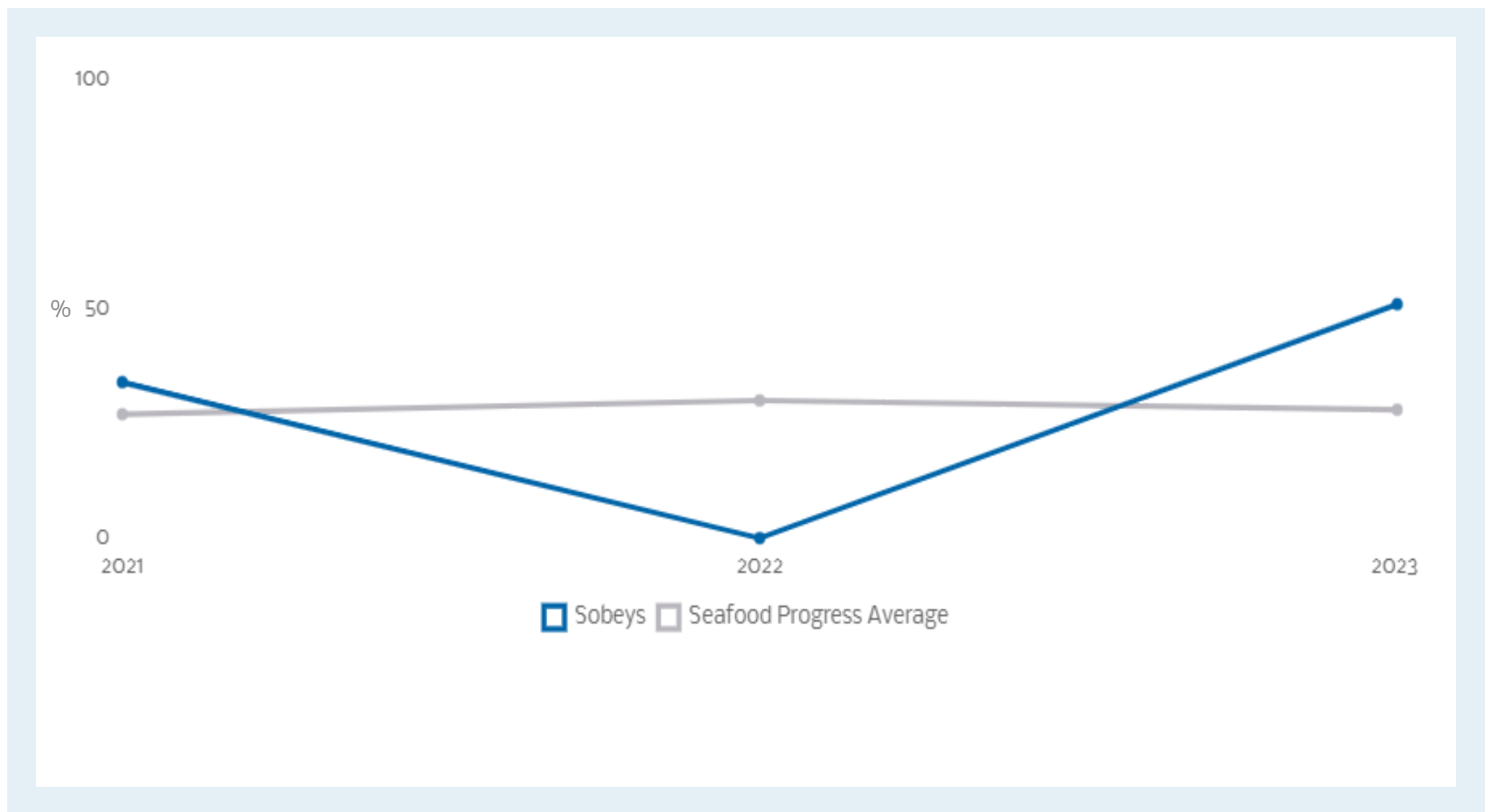
6.2 Farmed shrimp and prawns (Multiple spp).



Sobeys preferentially sources BAP 2 star certified shrimp and Ocean Wise Recommended versions of its private label products. Additionally, Sobeys requires all suppliers to commit to full chain traceability as evidenced by the reporting requirements of the Seafood Metrics reporting program (personal communication, D. Reid, 20/04/2023).

- ✘ Only sells farmed shrimp and prawn products that meet the highest bars for sustainability, i.e. are certified by ASC, BAP 2 star plus, Recommended by Ocean Wise and/or rated Best Choice by Seafood Watch (100 pts).
- ✘ Conducts outreach to policymakers and/or certifying bodies to advocate for shrimp and prawn farming management to be more environmentally sustainable (17 pts).
- ✘ Collaborates with other companies pre-competitively to improve shrimp and prawn farming practices (17 pts).
- ✘ Works with suppliers or producers directly to improve shrimp and prawn farming practices (17 pts).
- ✘ Refrains from advertising versions of this product that are not ASC or BAP 2 star plus certified, Not Recommended by Ocean Wise and/or rated Avoid by Seafood Watch
- ✔ Preferentially procures shrimp and prawns from sources that are ASC or BAP 2 star plus certified, Recommended by Ocean Wise or Best Choice by Seafood Watch (17 pts).
- ✔ Prioritizes sourcing from suppliers committed to full chain traceability and/or making social responsibility improvements (17 pts).

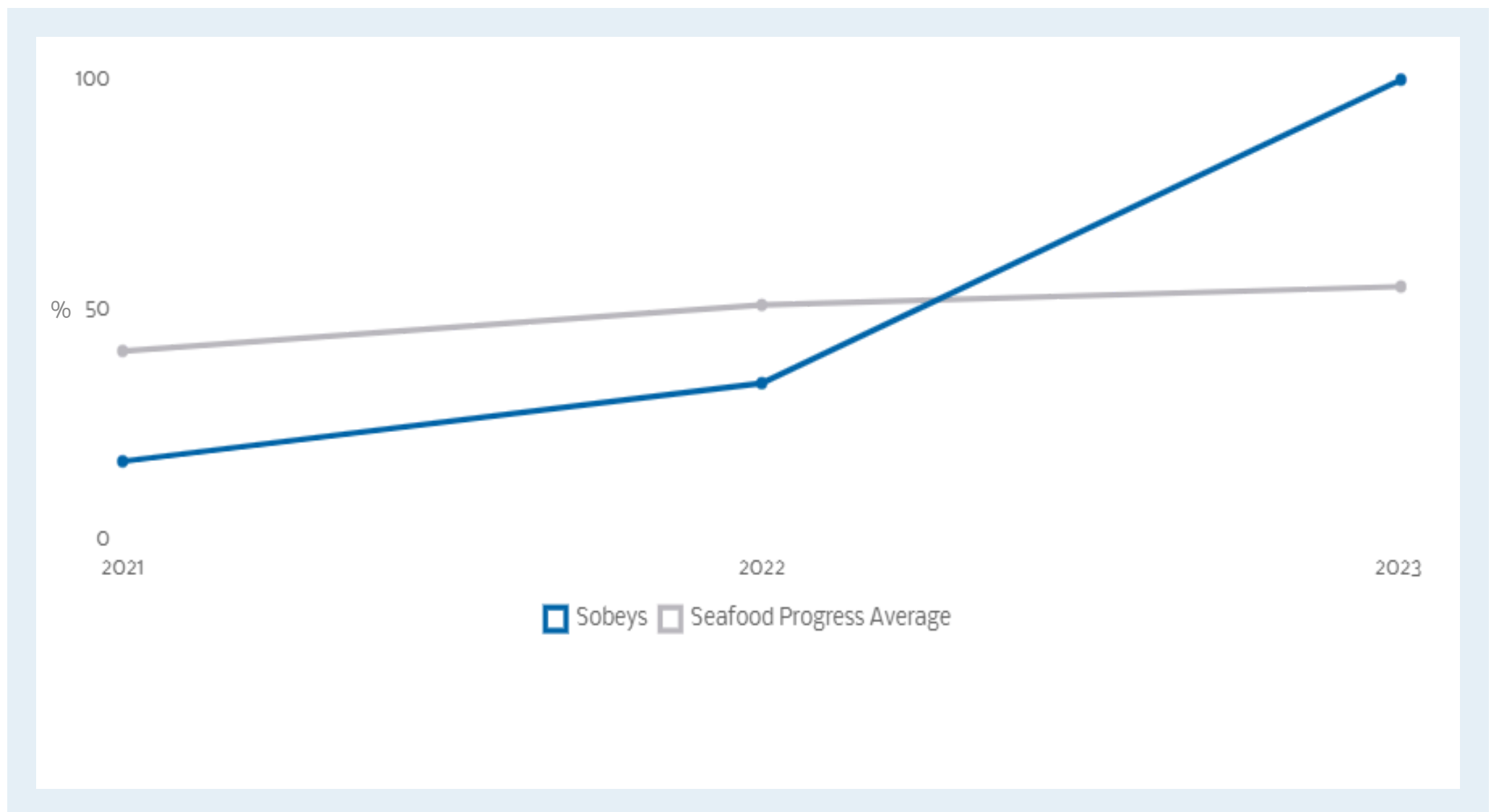
6.3 Skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*)



In November 2022, Sobeys signed on to a letter coordinated by the Western Pacific and Central Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) advocating for the implementation of harvest control rules. Additionally, Sobeys requires all suppliers to commit to full chain traceability as evidenced by the reporting requirements of the Seafood Metrics reporting program (personal communication, D. Reid, 20/04/2023).

- ✘ Only sells pole and line caught skipjack tuna products that meet the highest bars for sustainability, i.e. are MSC certified, Recommended by Ocean Wise and/or rated Best Choice by Seafood Watch (100 pts).
- ✔ Conducts outreach to policymakers and/or certifying bodies to advocate for skipjack fishing methods and management to be more environmentally sustainable (17 pts).
- ✘ Collaborates with other companies pre-competitively to improve skipjack fishery management practices (17 pts).
- ✘ Works with suppliers or producers directly to improve skipjack fishing practices (17 pts).
- ✘ Only advertises pole and line caught skipjack tuna products that meet the highest bars for sustainability, i.e. are MSC certified, Recommended by Ocean Wise and/or rated Best Choice by Seafood Watch (17 pts).
- ✔ Preferentially sources pole and line caught skipjack tuna products that meet the highest bars for sustainability, i.e. are MSC certified, Recommended by Ocean Wise and/or rated Best Choice by Seafood Watch (17 pts).
- ✔ Prioritizes sourcing from suppliers committed to full chain traceability and/or making social responsibility improvements (17 pts).

6.4 Other species



Sobeys is committed to only selling Ocean Wise recommended versions of its sockeye salmon products. Furthermore, Sobeys preferentially sources Ocean Wise recommended versions of its private label and unbranded seafood. Following SeaChoice's guidance, in January 2023, Sobeys completed a survey issued by FishWise regarding supply chain practices to help inform the guidance it provides through its RISE tool. Finally, Sobeys requires all suppliers to commit to full chain traceability as evidenced by the reporting requirements of the Seafood Metrics reporting program (personal communication, D. Reid, 20/04/2023).

- ✓ Only sells versions of a certain species that meet the highest bars for sustainability, i.e. are certified by MSC/ASC, Recommended by Ocean Wise and/or rated Best Choice by Seafood Watch (100 pts).
- ✗ Conducts outreach to policymakers and/or certifying bodies to advocate for harvest or farming method and management to be more environmentally sustainable (17 pts).
- ✗ Collaborates with other companies pre-competitively to improve fishing or aquaculture practices (17 pts).
- ✗ Works with suppliers or producers directly to improve fishing or farming practices (17 pts).
- ✗ Refrains from advertising versions of a certain species that are not MSC/ASC certified, Not Recommended by Ocean Wise and/or rated Avoid by Seafood Watch (17 pts).
- ✗ Preferentially sources from more sustainable sources that are MSC/ASC certified, Recommended by Ocean Wise or Best Choice by Seafood Watch (17 pts).
- ✗ Prioritizes sourcing from suppliers committed to full chain traceability and/or making social responsibility improvements (17 pts).