

Commitment Brainstorming Worksheet

Use the Commitment Brainstorming Worksheet as the first step in developing your company's Seafood Commitment. Once completed, this information can be used in our Draft Commitment Template to test a variety of commitments that might be a good fit for your business.

Best practice for seafood commitments is that they address the environmental and social aspects of seafood. This specific worksheet will guide you through brainstorming about environmental issues.

Tips for Completing This Worksheet

When working through this document, try to involve as many relevant positions at your company as possible. Involving others, including those without a seafood background can help to ensure a thorough brainstorm and bring in new perspectives. Example positions/groups to include are:



**Procurement &
Sales Teams**



**Marketing &
Communications**



**IT Department &
Data Analysts**



**Human Resources &
Customer Service**

In addition to the examples given above, some organizations also have dedicated sustainability divisions which are a natural choice in helping to complete this worksheet.

Participants:

Date : / /

Step 1: The Basics

What categories of seafood do you sell? Note all combinations that apply to your business?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fresh, frozen, shelf-stable, deli/prepared, sushi, pet food, supplements, or other (specific contracts, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> One species or many? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wild or farmed? | <input type="checkbox"/> Private label, national brands, unbranded? |

What markets or segments do you sell in?

This may be one market or multiple markets in different geographies, programs, or banners/brands?

What questions about environmental sustainability have you received from:

Your customers, your suppliers, the public and end consumers, other departments within your company, others (such as shareholders, an NGO, a competitor, a journalist) etc.

Note: Don't worry if some of your responses feel outside the realm of sustainability, list them anyway. Sometimes other issues can tie in nicely to a sustainable seafood program like an emphasis on local sustainable seafood.

Step 1: The Basics

What are all the reasons you are interested in creating (or updating) your sustainable seafood commitment?

Are you looking to move into a new market or category that is sustainability-focused?	
Are you responding to requests from your customers or the public?	
Are you driven by a company commitment to environmentally-friendly practices or do you have staff championing environmental issues?	
Are you looking to stay competitive as the seafood industry focuses more and more on sustainability?	

Step 2: The Landscape

Do your competitors or peers have sustainability commitments? If so, what do they include?

Action: If you aren't aware of what commitments your competitors or peers have, take some time to search their websites to learn about any public-facing statements or commitments they have made.

If you are not selling directly to the end consumer, do your customers have sustainability commitments? If so, what do they include?

Action: If you aren't aware of what commitments your customers have, take some time to search their websites to learn about any public-facing statements or commitments they have made.

Step 2: The Landscape

What are the main sustainability topics that you would like to address in your program?

Action: Check all topics that apply.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The environmental impacts of farmed seafood | <input type="checkbox"/> Improvement projects for fisheries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The environmental impacts of wild seafood | <input type="checkbox"/> Improvement projects for aquaculture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability ratings | <input type="checkbox"/> Illegal fishing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability certifications | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (carbon footprint, local sources, organic, etc.) |

Are there other sustainability programs at your business that might serve as a learning opportunity or roadmap for a sustainable seafood program?

Does your business also sell other certified food products (organic, Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance Certified)? If so, what worked well in that program, and what were lessons that were learned?

Are there any lessons to be learned from other sustainability programs, such as a company-wide reduction in water use or electricity?

Step 2: The Landscape

Do you currently sell seafood products with sustainability claims?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do you receive sustainability information/claims from your suppliers? | <input type="checkbox"/> Do you share information with your customers about product sustainability? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do you receive product that has sustainability information or certification ecolabel on its packaging? | <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have your own rating or labeling system for any environmental elements? |

What additional components would you like to keep in mind?

Human health considerations like mercury, a local focus, fair trade promotion, etc.

What sustainability claims are of interest to your business?

- Certifications, ratings, improvement projects, legally harvested seafood?
- Business to business claims, ecolabels for the end consumer, etc.?

Step 2: The Landscape

How do you communicate product information with your customers?

Website, menu, ecolabels on package, print advertisement, newsletter, information on product packaging, inventory lists in spreadsheets, invoices in excel, product specifications, over the phone, in person at a storefront, social media?

How do you communicate with the end consumer, if at all?

Website, menu, ecolabels on package, information on product packaging, in person at a storefront, social media?

Step 3: The Details

Claims about sustainability are only as robust as the data associated with the product. What product information do you collect from your supplier(s)?

Examples of product information include:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Common and scientific name | <input type="checkbox"/> Farming location: Country of farming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volume of product purchased | <input type="checkbox"/> Wild-caught or farmed designation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Whether product is rated or certified | <input type="checkbox"/> Fishery Location (if within EEZ): FAO Major Fishing Area + Country EEZ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Name of Supplier | <input type="checkbox"/> Fishery Location (if outside of EEZ): FAO Major Fishing Area + flag of vessel + RFMO or high seas name |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing methods or aquaculture production methods used | |

****Additional types of information are listed in the Common Vision for Sustainable Seafood on page 7.**

Note: You have may heard the term Key Data Element (or KDE) used in the seafood industry. The above list are KDEs, or pieces of data that should be share along with product throughout the supply chain.

How do you store product information in-house? Do you share it with your customers or the public?

Step 3: The Details

How do you implement 'trust but verify' in your supply chains to ensure the product, and product information, you are provided with is correct?

You may conduct random audits, require your suppliers to be chain of custody certified, or spot check data against public databases. You may have a Code of Conduct or Supplier Expectations document that you and your supplier have signed.

Do you know if your products are fully traceable back to legal harvests? If so, how?

What types of product claims or public promotions would you like to make within your sustainability program – whether internal or external?

Is a third-party ecolabel important? Do you want to provide sustainability and origin information on your private label seafood?

Step 4: Building Your Program

What do you need in order to accomplish your program goals?

Do you need staff time, infrastructure, IT support, a marketing program, an additional budget?

Do you have the sustainable supply needed or ideas on how to improve the sustainability of your current supply?

Do you need outside expertise to accomplish this goal?

Do you need buy-in from key stakeholders (your customers, the management team)?

Having the necessary resources in place will be critical to the success of your program actually meeting your goal. While setting an ambitious commitment is commendable, you also want to make sure it is achievable and does not have negative unintended consequences.

Step 4: Building Your Program

Can any of these negative unintended consequences be mitigated or avoided? If so, how?

Example: If there is a significant risk that your sustainability assessment is incorrect because of poor quality data about the sources of seafood you sell, prioritize improving supply chain traceability and data first within your action plan.

Of the negative unintended consequences that remain, what is your company's risk tolerance to these possible consequences?

Example: If it is a significant risk that the cost of the program could jeopardize its success, the timeline for the program could be extended to allow for a slower implementation over time. If the program is not as expensive as anticipated the program can achieve its goals early.

Step 4: Building Your Program

Do you foresee any negative unintended consequences of your program goals?

Would you need to move away from a supplier that is working to improve sustainability but is not yet certified, impacting their ability to continue improvements?

Are your supply chains traceable and data-rich? If not, is there a risk your sustainability information may not be correct?

Will the cost of implementing a new sustainable seafood goal jeopardize its success?

Is there a risk that your commitment timeline is not ambitious enough, leaving the company to sell unsustainable species long after others have improved their practices?

Making a list of negative unintended consequences can be daunting, however it is important to acknowledge that any business decision will have some consequences. A good next step is to consider if any of those negative unintended consequences can be mitigated so that their impact can be reduced or avoided.