



# Codes of conduct

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The Sustainable Seafood Coalition (SSC) is a progressive partnership of businesses cooperating to address important issues in fish and seafood sustainability.

# Part 1

## Voluntary Code of Conduct on Environmentally Responsible Fish and Seafood Sourcing

### 1. Objective

The Sustainable Seafood Coalition (SSC) is a progressive partnership of businesses co-operating to address important issues in fish and seafood sustainability. This Sourcing Code outlines general good practice in fish and seafood sourcing which will be used by SSC members to inform their own policies for fish and seafood procurement.

This Code applies equally to all members irrespective of size or sector. It is accompanied by the SSC guidance document which helps members to implement the Code.

### 2. Scope

This Code covers the sourcing of all fish and seafood (hereafter 'fish'). It is not a certification standard. It focuses on environmental concerns relating directly to fisheries and aquaculture.

- SSC Members recognise that social responsibility is another critical pillar of sustainability in the global seafood supply chain.
- Members comply with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 where applicable.
- Members have policies that consider social and ethical challenges in seafood sourcing in their supply chains.

This Code relates to sourcing processes and behaviours regarding members' fish buying practices for own brand fish. It underpins the SSC Voluntary Code of Conduct on Environmental Claims.

### 3. Members' commitments

Members commit to the responsible sourcing of all own-brand fish by following good practice as outlined in this Code. This includes use of risk assessments to make purchasing decisions based on the outcome.

SSC members commit to having:

- Traceability: Sufficient measures in place to trace fish to origin;
- A risk assessment or audit: Conducted and regularly reviewed;
- Sourcing decisions: Based on the outcome of the risk assessment or audit;
- Appropriate responses: Engaging with and/or monitoring improvements where required; and
- Transparency: Ongoing openness and sufficient communication.

### 4. Sourcing policies

Members will have a sourcing policy that describes how responsible sourcing decisions are made in line with this Code. Policies will be reviewed on a regular basis and, where appropriate, communicated to the public. Policies will include the following elements:

#### 4.1 Traceability

Members will have sufficient measures in place to trace fish from the

point of sale back to its source fishery or aquaculture source through all subsequent stages of handling, processing and distribution.

#### 4.2 Transparency

Members will, where appropriate, sufficiently communicate their general sourcing policies and credentials to the public and ensure openness regarding sourcing decisions, assessment outcomes and appropriate responses.

#### 4.3 Risk Assessment/Audit

Members will assess the status of the fishery or aquaculture source by conducting a risk assessment or audit on an annual basis.

**For wild capture fisheries**, members can choose to use a risk assessment created by another body or one that is developed on their own. Endorsement by an independent competent party is best practice.

Audits and risk assessments will include a review of:

- Legality of fishing operations;
- The biological status of a particular fish stock;
- Fishery management practices and compliance; and
- Wider environmental impacts of the fishing activity.

**For farmed fish (aquaculture)**, members need to ensure that the source is certified to an environmental third party responsibility standard or has been audited to a good aquaculture standard or code of practice.

This will include an assessment of:

- Legality: regulatory controls and compliance;
- Farm site management practices;
- Wider environmental impacts of farming activity; and
- Marine feed ingredient sources.

#### 4.4 Sourcing decision and appropriate responses, as outlined in the decision trees

**For aquaculture** (Figure 1, page 10)

Members will ensure that sources are either certified to a third party responsibility standard or audited as compliant to a good aquaculture standard or code of practice. All required actions identified to correct non-compliances are communicated and the timescale for this is agreed. If either of these cannot be ensured then the member will not source.

**For wild capture fisheries** (Figure 2, page 12)

Members will ensure that wild sources are either certified to an environmental third party standard, or they will use the risk assessment

to identify fisheries as low, medium or high risk. Members will prioritise their engagement in improvement of the fisheries appropriate to their influence and resources.

Members will identify a fisheries source risk outcome as follows:

**Low risk:** The fishery has a healthy stock status, adequate management, low environmental impact and/or is certified. Member can source with no further action.

**Medium risk:** The fishery requires improvements to mitigate its environmental impact and/or to manage stock. It may be data poor but has a stable/improving stock status with adequate management. Member can source with appropriate engagement and/or monitoring.

**High risk:** The fishery has one or more of the following:

- Proven poor stock status;
- High risk of decline to poor status without appropriate management;
- Unacceptable environmental impact; or
- Complete data deficiency.

Members will only source with appropriate engagement and monitoring of progress.

Figure 1: Decision tree for aquaculture sourcing.  
(The numbers in parentheses point to the relevant section of the guidance.)

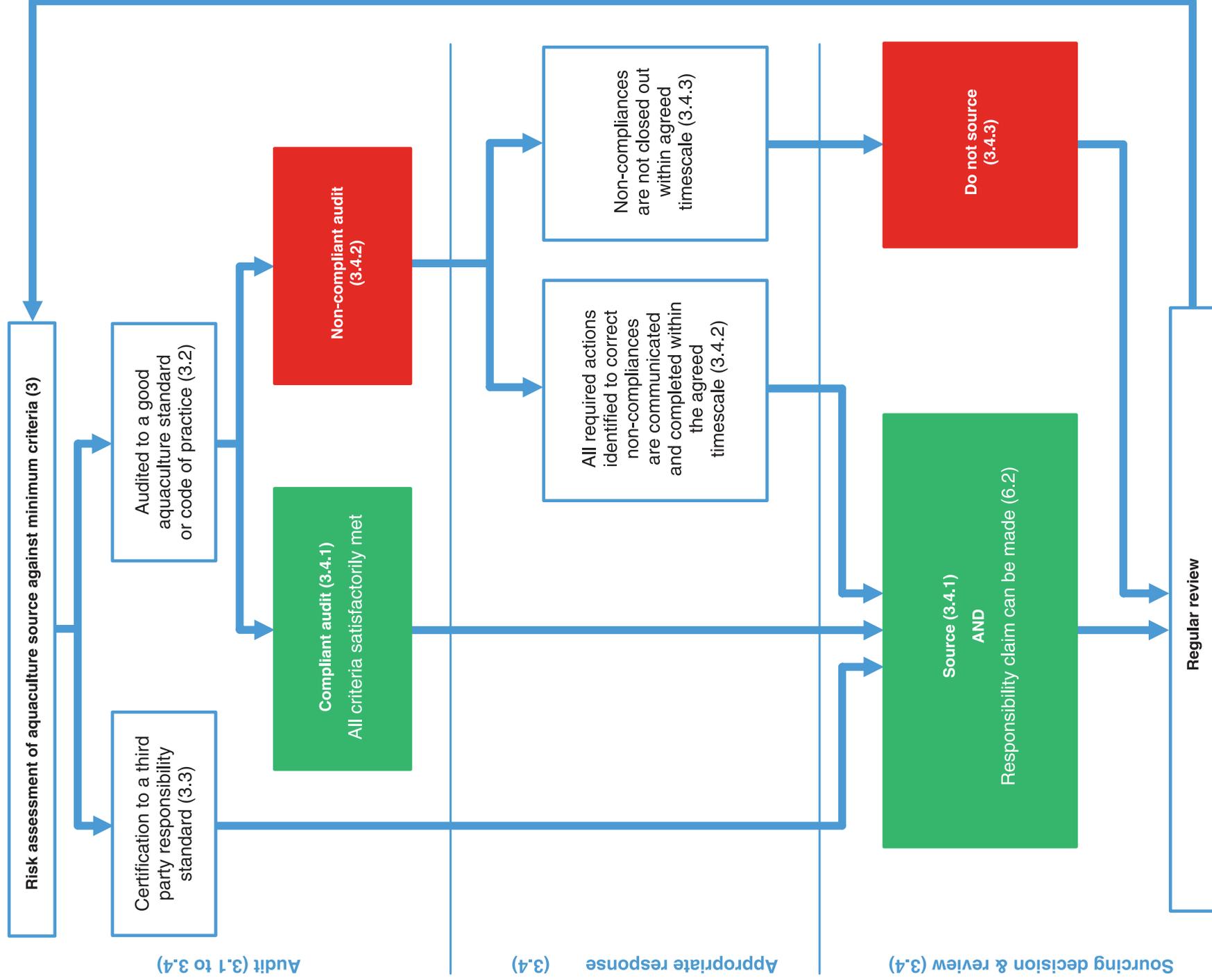
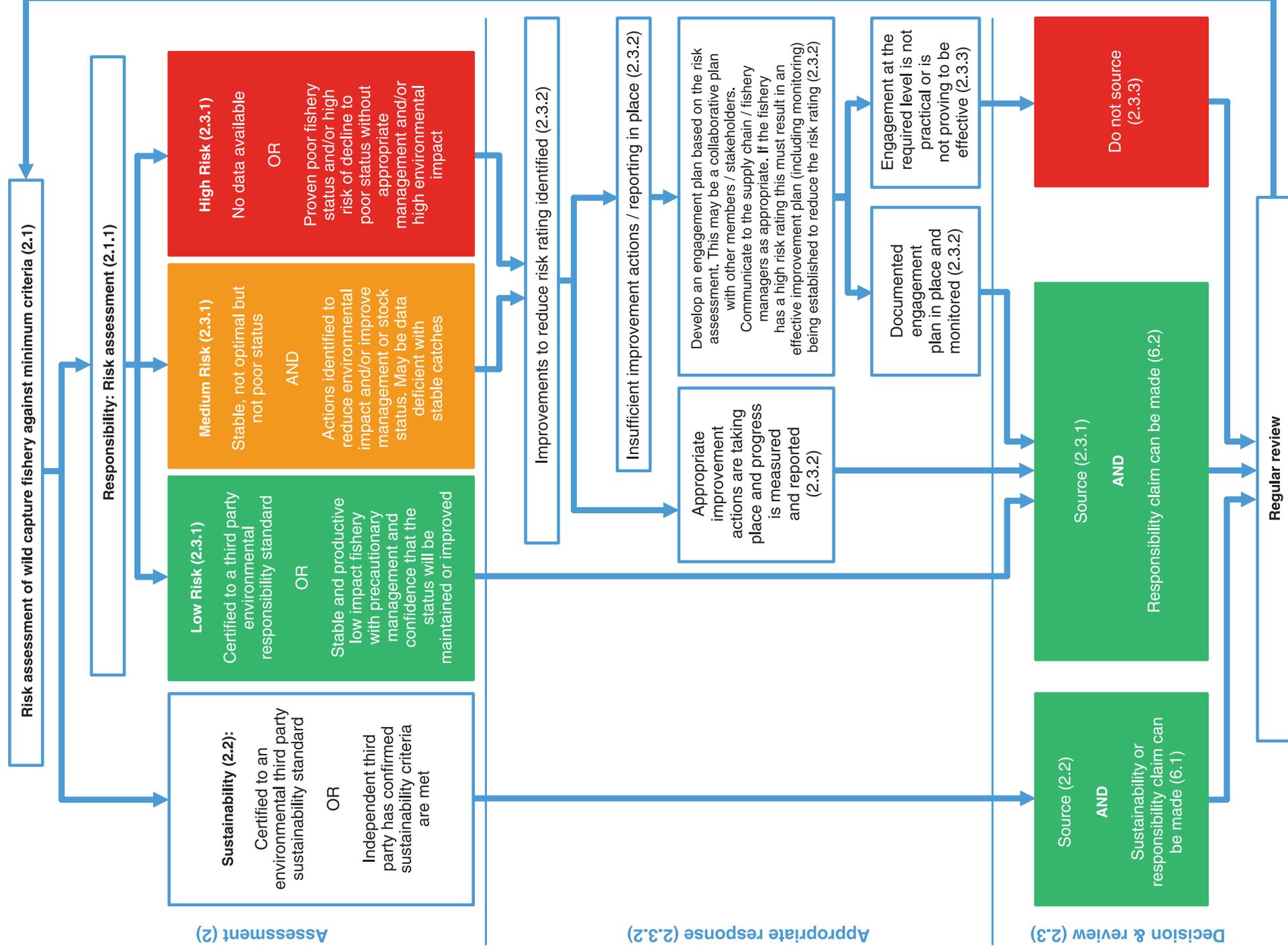


Figure 2: Decision tree for sourcing wild capture fish. (The numbers in parentheses point to the relevant section of the guidance.)



## Part 2

# Voluntary Code of Conduct on Environmental Claims

### 1. Objective

The Sustainable Seafood Coalition (SSC) is a progressive partnership of businesses co-operating to address important issues in fish and seafood sustainability. By agreeing to follow this Labelling Code, members commit to assure consumers that all voluntary environmental claims made in relation to their own-brand fish and seafood are consistent, clear and accurate.

### 2. Scope

This Code covers all voluntary environmental claims made by SSC members in relation to own-brand fish products. Environmental claims include the use of sustainability and responsibility claims as communicated on product labels, websites, in-store messaging et cetera, as well as additional factual environmental information provided.

The Code sets out what claims can be made by SSC members and the minimum criteria that must be satisfied to make such claims. The Code is not a certification standard and members will adhere to the terms and conditions of third party certification schemes.

### 3. Members' commitments

SSC members commit to only using environmental claims that are in accordance with these minimum criteria:

- The single terms 'sustainable' or 'responsible' will not be used in isolation. For example, 'responsibly farmed' or 'sustainably sourced' could be used;
- Any images will reflect the claims or processes they are intended to depict (for example the fishing method);
- Sufficient assurance will be made available on request to support any claim; and
- Where possible, sufficient explanation of the claim will either be provided at the point of sale, or via a link to where an explanation can be found.

### 4. Environmental claims

SSC members can use two categories of environmental claims: sustainability and responsibility.

At least 95% (by weight) of the component fish in the product or dish must satisfy the criteria for claims regarding sustainability or responsibility.

### 4.1 Sustainability

This relates to the current environmental and management status of the fish. Members will only make sustainability claims if they are satisfied the following minimum criteria are met:

- The source fishery or aquaculture source(s) is/are consistent with the principles of relevant key international standards and codes of conduct; and
- An independently audited chain of custody is in place to trace the fish to its (fishery or aquaculture) source.

Members will demonstrate that these criteria have been met by at least one of the following:

- Certification to a third party sustainability standard; or
- Independent third party audit.

### 4.2 Responsibility

Fish sourced in alignment with the SSC Code of Conduct on Environmentally Responsible Fish and Seafood Sourcing may carry claims of responsibility.

Further information and examples are available in the guidance document and at [www.sustainableseafoodcoalition.org](http://www.sustainableseafoodcoalition.org) or by contacting [ssc@clientearth.org](mailto:ssc@clientearth.org)

