

## *The Co-operative Responsible Fish Sourcing Standard*



The **co-operative** food  
Here for you for life

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Page 1 of 7			
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## Contents

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1	Purpose	3
2	Key Principles	3
3	Sourcing Standards	3
3.1	Wild Caught	3
3.2	Farmed Fish	5
4	Risk Assessment	6
5	Management Actions	6
6	Additional Requirements	6
6.1	Tuna Policy	6
6.2	Freedom Food Salmon	6
6.3	Whaling Policy	6
6.4	Engagement with external partners	6
6.5	Communication	7
6.6	Seafish Responsible Fishing Scheme	7
6.7	Non-labelled Co-operative products – Branded policy	7
6.8	Quality	7
6.9	Ethical Trade	7
6.10	Verification	7

Document Owner	Mrs Ciara Gorst	Version Number	1
Location	Core- Document Library– Technical– Supplier Technical Manual– Supplier Technical Manual Appendices	Issue Date	14/7/14
Page 2 of 7			
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## 1 Purpose

### Aim:

- To provide a clear sourcing standard through which The Co-operative Food can ensure all own-brand fish has been responsibly sourced.
- To satisfy our members and customers expectations that own-brand fish, seafood products and ingredients are sourced in a way that ensures a viable future for the fishing and fish farming industries.

### Objectives:

- To provide a clear and defined sourcing standard for wild caught and farmed fish and seafood
- To define the process that suppliers must meet to fulfil this standard.
- To manage data on fisheries and farms and where appropriate put in place actions to improve sourcing standards.

### Scope:

- All own-brand fish and seafood, fish and seafood used as an ingredient in own brand products, and feed used in aquaculture operations that supply into own-brand products (excludes fish gelatine, fish stocks & bouillons used as ingredients within own brand products, pet food, pharmaceuticals).

## 2 Key Principles

1. Legal compliance to all current national and international regulations for all own-brand seafood sourced from both farms and wild capture fisheries.
2. The removal of all fish deemed to significantly endanger the source fishery if stocks are exploited.
3. No illegally captured fish to be used within our products, with an ongoing programme to include the fish used an ingredient within animal feed.
4. Fully traceable seafood supply chain back to the fishery or farm that can be tested by audit and a programme of analysis for high risk species.
5. Incorporation of independent evaluation and certification to internationally recognised standards to give assurance and transparency.
6. A commitment to continuous improvement for farms and fisheries to meet with future requirements and to be flexible to changes in scientific advice.

## 3 Sourcing Standards

### 3.1 Wild Caught

The following standards must be adhered to for the supply of wild caught fish:

<b>Preferred standard</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification</li> </ul>
<b>Minimum Standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No stocks of species classified as being over exploited, over fished, or illegally fished by international scientific organisations (e.g. ICES, NOAA.)</li> <li>• No species listed as Critically endangered or endangered fish as defined by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) or listed by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) unless the required permits are</li> <li>• No wild caught species caught using methods which are irresponsible as listed by the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries</li> <li>• Full traceability systems to prove the provenance of the seafood back to the</li> </ul>

## Commercial\Product Offer\Technical\Agriculture

	origin fishery, regularly challenged by Technical team, with all documentation uploaded onto CORE.
<b>Illegal, Unreported or Unregulated (IUU) Fish</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Co-operative will not accept product known or suspected as coming from an IUU fishing area. Countries and boats or fleets of boats supplying raw material destined to products for The Co-operative supply must not be listed on or associated to any “black list” internationally recognized by the appropriate Regional Fishery Management Organisation (RFMO).</li> <li>The Co-operative supports the use of supply chain traceability as a means of verifying the provenance and the legality of the seafood in our own-brand range.</li> </ul>
<b>Fishing Techniques</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Co-operative supports the use of selective fishing techniques designed to minimise their effect on habitats, non-target seafood species, marine mammals and birds.</li> </ul>
<b>Independent Certification Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where an independent seafood certification standard exists, this option is preferred to non-certified sources. Only certification schemes that offer full traceability and adhere to the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, FAO Guidelines for Eco-Labeling, and ISO Guide 65 and/or ISEAL accredited standards are accepted.</li> </ul> <p>Products that are independently certified to meet any of the above listed schemes should feature the appropriate logo on pack, in accordance with the labelling guidelines of the relevant certification body.</p>
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Co-operative’s risk assessment of fish supplies takes all of these criteria into account and is based on the best available scientific information and advice. This system examines in detail each product, by species, fishery and catching method so that we can clearly identify fish and seafood which must be avoided and those which should be selected.</li> <li>In line with the Sustainable Seafood Coalition sourcing guidelines, <i>high risk</i> (red) and <i>medium risk</i> (amber) seafood may only be stocked with appropriate management actions agreed with the Co-operative. See <i>Management Actions for Fisheries and Aquaculture Improvement</i></li> <li>Low risk (green). Will be stocked and subject to annual review .</li> </ul>

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<b>Page 4 of 7</b>			
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## 3.2 Farmed Fish

The following standards must be adhered to for the supply of farmed fish:

<b>Preferred standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global Aquaculture Alliance Best Aquaculture Practice(GAA/BAP) 4*</li> <li>• GlobalG.A.P. Aquaculture Standard;</li> <li>• Aquaculture Stewardship Council Standards</li> </ul>
<b>Minimum Standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognised External Farm Assurance Scheme eg. Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC), GlobalG.A.P. or Global Aquaculture Alliance Best Aquaculture Practice (GAA/BAP) - 2* or above. If no farm assurance scheme is available, the source is immediately rated as high risk and therefore gets referred to the Fish Decision Forum to be risk assessed based on all available scientific advice.</li> <li>• Suppliers should not use feed derived from vulnerable or endangered species, or which are illegally captured or farmed.</li> <li>• Farms must be managed to minimise negative impacts on the environment. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) must be conducted for farms supplying The Co-operative and the supplier must be able to demonstrate that environmental impacts are actively managed and fully considered as part of the location and planning process for new sites.</li> </ul>
<b>Feed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suppliers are required to work towards continuous improvement with regard to the sourcing of fishmeal and fish oil used to feed farmed species including land animals and aquatic species.</li> <li>• A range of alternative, non-marine feed ingredients are permitted in feed for aquaculture species.</li> <li>• Our preferred status for feed is International Fishmeal and Fish Oil Organisation global standard for the Responsible Supply of Fishmeal and Fish Oil (IFFO RS) approved, fish from a fishery certified to an approved third party standard or fish that can be proven to meet the Co-operative's Responsible Fish Sourcing Standards .</li> <li>• Where our preferred status feed is not available, the source will be referred to the Fish Decision Forum to be risk assessed based on all available scientific advice.</li> </ul>
<b>Slaughter</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fin fish should be slaughtered in accordance with the Humane Slaughter Association code of practice.</li> </ul>
<b>Independent Certification Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where an independent certification standard exists, this option should be sourced wherever possible.</li> </ul>
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Co-operative's risk assessment of fish supplies takes all of these issues into account and is based on the best available scientific information and advice.</li> <li>• High risk (red) and medium risk (amber) can be stocked with appropriate management actions agreed with The Co-operative</li> <li>• Low risk (green) will be stocked and subject to annual review</li> </ul>

## 4 Risk Assessment

In line with the Sustainable Seafood Coalition, The Co-operative Responsible Fish Sourcing Standard is based upon a concept of risk assessment. We also commit to work with suppliers in order to address and mitigate any risk, through agreeing and implementing specific management actions where a source is deemed anything other than low risk.

All fish, farmed or wild caught, supplied to the Co-operative must be risk assessed as part of the NPD process (See Technical Manual appendices – “Fish Sourcing Risk Assessment Forms” and “Fish Sourcing Decision Trees”).

Risk assessments must be completed by the supplier and it is the NPD Manager’s responsibility to ensure these are completed.

Risk assessment criteria are detailed in the risk assessment forms. Subject to review of the risk assessment, fish ingredients will be deemed low, medium or high risk.

## 5 Management Actions

Where a source is deemed medium or high risk under our risk assessment, it will only be considered to be allowed into Co-operative own-brand range if there are sufficient management actions in place to mitigate the risk factors.

It is the responsibility of the Fish Sourcing Decision Forum to agree what management actions are necessary to mitigate a risk from a medium or high risk source, and to monitor progress against the agree actions.

If we deem that progress against these actions is not sufficient, then the Fish Sourcing Decision Forum reserves the right to withdraw support of the medium or high risk source in question.

## 6 The Co-operative Additional Requirements

### 6.1 Tuna Policy

All of our own-brand Skipjack tuna, including Skipjack tuna used as an ingredient must come from fisheries employing pole and line or hand line fishing method. The Co-operative will not accept fish from protected areas or areas demonstrated to be overfished.

### 6.2 Freedom Food Salmon

All Co-operative own-brand farmed, fresh and smoked Atlantic salmon must from farms accredited to RSPCA Freedom Food higher welfare standards. This does not include salmon used as an ingredient.

### 6.3 Whaling Policy

Companies that supply our own-brand fish must not have direct involvement with the commercial whaling industry. We will regularly contact our fish suppliers from high risk waters to confirm that they are not sourcing from suppliers that have any direct involvement with the whaling industry.

### 6.4 Engagement with external partners

As part of an ongoing review of our policy and approach, The Co-operative regularly engages with relevant external stakeholders, including non-governmental organisations (NGO’s), scientific bodies and industry experts on issues related to seafood sustainability.

Document Owner	Mrs Ciara Gorst	Version Number	1
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Page 6 of 7			
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## 6.5 Communication

The Co-operative commits to make publically available relevant information regarding The Co-operative Responsible Fish Sourcing Standard and has signed up to the Sustainable Seafood Coalition Code of Conduct for both sourcing and labelling.

## 6.6 Seafish Responsible Fishing Scheme

The Responsible Fishing Scheme has been developed to raise standards in the catching sector, enabling those within the seafood supply chain to demonstrate their commitment to the responsible sourcing of seafood and fisherman welfare and safety. The Co-operative will actively encourage all UK fishermen to register and certify their vessel to the Seafish Responsible Fishing Scheme. Certification to this scheme demonstrates that a vessel operates to industry good practice guidelines. The scheme gives an assurance to the supply chain and consumers that fish from the vessel has been caught responsibly.

## 6.7 Non Labelled Co-operative products – Branded Policy

As per the Standard Terms of Supply of Groceries to The Co-operative all supplier branded products sold in our stores must adhere to relevant legislation. This means that all fish and seafood must be sourced in compliance with all relevant national and international legislation.

Furthermore The Co-operative will work with its branded stakeholders to ensure that they endorse the contents of this responsible sourcing standard.

## 6.8 Quality

All Co-operative Brand Fish products shall be prepared to the best quality available within the specified parameters laid down by Co-operative Retail.

## 6.9 Ethical Trade

The Co-operative Food is committed to ensuring that all workers who produce Co-operative Food brand products are treated fairly. The Co-operative Food expects suppliers to put in place appropriate due diligence to monitor compliance against the Ethical Trade Initiative Base Code and, where issues are identified, put in place appropriate action plans. Full details of these requirements can be found in 'The Co-operative Food Suppliers' Guide to Ethical Trade' in the CORE Document Library. The Co-operative Food expects suppliers to engage in collaborative programmes to improve working conditions along the supply chain with organisations such as Ethical Trade Initiative (ETI), International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Seafish Responsible Fishing Scheme.

## 6.10 Verification

All suppliers will be required to verify compliance with the Co-operative Fish standard regular assurance scheme audits in addition to visits and audits undertaken by and behalf of The Co-operative.

All farms and processing sites supplying the Co-operative are open to announced and unannounced audits by The Co-operative or an appointed audit body at any time.

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Page 7 of 7			
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