

Terms of Reference

Name

The Sustainable Seafood Coalition (SSC).

Voluntary Codes of Conduct

The SSC has developed two voluntary [Codes of Conduct](#), which apply to all own-brand fish and seafood:

1. Voluntary Code of Conduct on Environmentally Responsible Fish and Seafood Sourcing (the “Sourcing Code”)
2. Voluntary Code of Conduct on Environmental Claims (the “Labelling Code”)

The SSC has produced a document to help members implement these two codes (the [“Guidance”](#)). This will be reviewed regularly and where necessary amended.

Membership requirements

- Written commitment to the SSC Terms of Reference.
- Written permission to use company logos on the SSC website and press releases (see [Confidentiality and communications](#)).
- Written commitment to implement and adhere to the SSC Sourcing and Labelling Codes. The SSC Codes are voluntary. They represent a move towards best practice and are not legally binding. However, members are expected to implement and adhere to the Codes as a condition of membership.
- Annual payment of SSC membership fees, according to the turnover bands in Table 1.

Table 1: Annual SSC membership fees based on turnover

Band	Turnover	SSC membership fee
1	>£1bn	£3,000
2	£100m - £1bn	£2,000
3	£50m - <£100m	£1,000
4	£5m - <£50m	£500
5	<£5m	£150

Participation commitment

- Coalition meetings will be held in the UK, most often in London. They may also be held in other locations and virtually using online platforms, in response to members' requests. The SSC members will meet at a minimum on an annual basis to review the Codes and Guidance. Working and/or steering groups may meet more regularly, as required.
- Members may be invited to attend other meetings to represent the Coalition.

Membership

- The founding members of the SSC were ClientEarth, Icelandic UK, Waitrose, Marks and Spencer, Young's, BirdsEye, Fish4Ever and FishFight.
- As one of the eight founding members, ClientEarth is the only non-business member of the SSC. Other than ClientEarth, membership is only open to businesses associated with seafood and fish (once they have satisfied the relevant membership conditions), or organisations that represent these businesses. This is because only fish and seafood businesses can actively implement the SSC voluntary industry Codes.
- The SSC welcomes all seafood businesses willing to commit to the above 'Membership Requirements'. The SSC was founded in the UK, and in November 2021 it extended its membership to EU and international fish and seafood businesses. In future, the SSC may support similar coalitions in the EU and internationally establish themselves.
- The secretariat will maintain and regularly update a list of members on the SSC website.

Vision and aims

The SSC **vision** is that 'all fish and seafood sold in the UK is from sustainable sources'.

The SSC has four **aims** to help achieve this:

1. To encourage business commitments to the SSC Codes of Conduct.
2. To continually review and update the SSC Codes of Conduct to reflect developments in sourcing and labelling practices.
3. To support members to effectively implement their commitments to the SSC Codes of Conduct.
4. To influence changes in policy relevant to seafood sustainability.

Secretariat

ClientEarth is the secretariat and will conduct at least the following:

- General administration and coordination of the SSC members, meetings and communications;
- Facilitation of the SSC meetings when no other facilitator is appointed;
- Main contact point for media, without prejudice to confidentiality and communications points agreed in these Terms of Reference;

- Maintaining the SSC website and publishing SSC Codes and other SSC materials; and
- Managing operational funds and reporting to members on financial status.

Where possible, ClientEarth will also provide relevant legal and environmental expertise.

Governance structure

- As a general rule members will make decisions jointly by consensus. The exceptions to this are decisions the secretariat has been authorised to make independently (see [Confidentiality and communications](#)) and decisions or proposals in working groups where consensus should be achieved amongst all the participants, not just the members.
- The SSC Steering Group (SSC SG), which has its own [Terms of Reference](#), supports members with projects that make progress towards the SSC vision. It makes decisions on the prioritisation of these projects and simplifies final decision-making processes by making recommendations to the wider membership.
- An oversight committee will be invited to help resolve issues that cannot be dealt with by individual members and/or the secretariat. This group will consist of SSC members that are representative bodies, and two external participants (one industry and one NGO).
- The governance structure may be reviewed and amended by members in the future.

Competition law requirements

All members of the SSC will comply with relevant requirements of competition law.

Working groups and non-member advisors

- Working groups are formed to develop member and SSC SG proposals addressing the relevant SSC aims separately. Each working group includes any interested SSC members, as well as relevant non-member advisors as decided by SSC members.
- Non-member experts may be invited to contribute to discussions and share their expertise. Where appropriate, the secretariat will provide the SSC members with an analysis of the relevance of those experts, and in the absence of sustained opposition, will invite those indicated in an advisory capacity.
- Non-member participants of working groups only have the capacity to contribute to reports or proposals made within the relevant working group meetings.
- Working groups will be overseen by the secretariat who will be the facilitator of each meeting, unless otherwise agreed by the SSC members.
- The results of each working group will be reported by the facilitator of the working group or the secretariat, as appropriate.

Procedure at SSC meetings

- If appropriate, an independent person will be appointed by the secretariat as a facilitator whose role is neutral and who enables objective facilitation of effective dialogue between members. In all other cases, the secretariat will facilitate at meetings, or

members attending the meeting can volunteer to facilitate or nominate a facilitator (e.g. another member).

- The secretariat will provide a staff member to take minutes and carry out other relevant secretarial functions in working group and members' meetings, and will also provide at least one staff member to contribute to discussions during meetings.
- Decision-making will be by consensus, i.e. "[g]eneral agreement, characterised by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests...by a process seeking to take into account the views of interested parties...and to reconcile any conflicting arguments".¹

Confidentiality and communications

- SSC meetings will be managed according to principles of transparency and subject to Chatham House rules. This means participants are free to use any information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed. Meeting minutes, with the exception of any confidential information, will be published on the SSC website.
- Members can also communicate or meet with the secretariat individually on an ad-hoc basis to discuss issues relevant to goals of the Coalition, including those that may be commercially sensitive.
- The SSC's aims and achievements will be communicated to the public through the website (www.sustainableseafoodcoalition.org) and a dedicated SSC Twitter account (@SSC_seafood). The website includes information about SSC members, goals, achievements, codes and any other content agreed by relevant members. Twitter activity will be limited to factual, non-promotional information which supports the aims of the SSC, and contributes to raising the SSC profile. This includes publication of SSC minutes and news articles, new member announcements, factual updates on members' sustainability-related activities or other relevant news stories. Tweets or retweets of a promotional nature (of either a product or member) that does not relate to the SSC vision and aims will not be authorised. Use of the @SSC_seafood handle by members on their business or personal accounts is authorised, providing the above guidelines are strictly followed. Members are encouraged to share ideas for website or twitter content with the secretariat.
- The secretariat is authorised to use a high resolution copy of each member's company logo for immediate use on the SSC website and in relation to any communications containing statements of fact. Any other use of members' own logos is subject to agreement from the relevant member.
- Statements of fact, for example responses to media enquiries on the SSC Codes, may be delegated to the secretariat, providing they do not relate to a specific current member

¹ International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling (ISEAL), (2010). *Code of Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards*, p. 4. The following definitions are amended to account for differences in the SSC: **Sustained opposition** - means that an important part of concerned interests has indicated, despite meaningful discussion of an issue that the position or solution put forward continues to be unacceptable to that interest. **Substantial issues** - those that materially affect the standards or decision being taken as appropriate. **Important part of concerned interests** - clearly recognized representative of a segment of concerned interests that have been engaged in the discussions as a member of the decision-making body, such as all SSC members. **Interested parties** - any party that has participated substantively in the discussion process, including those outside SSC membership.

and they are unlikely to impact on a member's reputation. In the latter cases, any affected member will be consulted first.

- All media interaction on behalf of the SSC will be undertaken by the secretariat, subject to any competition law requirements and unless it relates to a specific member. In this case, the secretariat will contact that member to discuss the issue and agree how and by whom the issue is to be handled.

SSC Advocacy

- Collective SSC advocacy is any public or private letter, consultation response, press release or other output which aims to influence policy which is formally associated with the SSC. These interventions must be consistent with the vision, aims and principles of the SSC and SSC Codes of Conduct.
- Steering Group approval is necessary for the use of the SSC logo in advocacy activities. Any SSC member can develop an advocacy position to share with the SSC SG. SSC members will be provided with sufficient policy context to understand the implications of any advocacy. Where relevant, members will also be invited to provide input during the development of advocacy positions.
- The use of specific members' logos in SSC advocacy activity will need to be explicitly authorised by that member.

Members' use of the SSC logo

SSC members may use the SSC logo under the following conditions (further detail in the Guidance):

1. The logo should never be displayed on its own, and should be used with a qualifying statement (such as 'we are a member of the [SSC logo]').
2. In relation to any communications containing a statement of fact about the SSC, e.g. regarding being a member of the SSC. The logo could be used on members' websites, via in-store/ in-restaurant communications, and in business-to-business communications. Further detail is in the Guidance.
3. A web-link must be provided in conjunction with each SSC logo use to enable the reader to find out more about the SSC (e.g. to the SSC website).
4. To avoid compromising the integrity of the SSC, members must ensure that the SSC logo is not displayed:
 - On seafood products or as a retail label, to avoid it being construed as an eco-label;
 - In any way that suggests the SSC is an eco-label or certification scheme; or
 - In front of a product (such as on the window of fridges and freezers) or on shelves or units that display fish products for sale (e.g. for canned fish).
5. Other uses of the SSC logo and supporting statements are subject to agreement by the secretariat.