

# Roadmap Steps -- Suppliers

Suppliers represent a complex and pivotal part of the seafood supply chain through their activities sourcing from and selling to multiple companies. Given their unique access to operations throughout the supply chain, suppliers can have a critical influence on the implementation of best practices and have the power to improve conditions and sourcing options across the industry.

What is a supplier?

A supplier is a company that purchases seafood and sells it to end buyers (e.g., retailers or wholesalers). These companies source, store, process, package, and transport seafood to a variety of buyers. Often, companies will describe those they source from as suppliers, with “tiers” denoting the degree of difference between the companies:

- “Tier 1” supplier = sells directly to an end buyer
- “Tier 2” supplier = sells to a Tier 1 supplier

Compared to vertically integrated suppliers, suppliers that source seafood from importers often have additional links in their supply chains. Because of this, these suppliers should review the <guidance provided to brands and retailers> [link Retail page] to determine what is most relevant to their operations.



## COMMIT

Set time-bound commitments that meet or exceed the commitments of buyers. Be transparent about progress and challenges.

- Align commitments and improvements with those of key buyers (i.e., high volume, long-term buyers).
- Act in good faith to meet commitments and, when challenges arise, clearly and proactively communicate those challenges to key buyers.
- Provide suppliers (including producers and processors) with adequate time to meet the requirements outlined in the commitment.



## LEARN

Continuously learn, educate, and get buy-in from staff and stakeholders on the value of social responsibility at your company and in your supply chains.

- Use RISE to learn how to take a human rights due diligence approach to improving supply chains <link RISE learning modules>.
- Participate in pre-competitive efforts and multi-stakeholder initiatives that support industry-wide adoption of aligned goals and practices, reducing the likelihood of divergent human rights objectives.
- Consider hiring third-party experts to conduct training or identify due diligence improvements.
- Join a growing community to support industry-wide adoption of improved social responsibility practices.



## ASSESS

Identifying the many business operations that contribute to your company's sourcing is the first step in assessing and managing risks.

- Maintain an accurate and centralized list of all products purchased and the companies from which they are purchased.
- If sourcing from importers, collect additional data to understand the requirements importers have with their own sourcing companies.
  - Ask importers to share sourcing practices of vessels, farms, other producers, and processors from which they source to establish transparency and traceability.
- If your company sources and sells multiple commodities, understand the risks unique to seafood (e.g., [at-sea work](#)).
- Develop systems to store and easily access data so that information can be readily taken in from sourcing companies and conveyed to buyers.



## BUILD CAPACITY

Support supply chains to implement commitments and other best practices.

- Establish frequent, transparent, and supportive dialogue with supply chains regarding social responsibility progress, corrective actions, and other improvements.
  - Engage with suppliers to implement improvements before cutting business ties.
- Require suppliers to uphold seafood workers' rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining.
- Leverage market power to advocate for policies that support freedom of association and collective bargaining for seafood workers.
  - Join multi-stakeholder initiatives to maximize leverage.
- Invest in high-risk or high-volume sourcing regions through pilots.
- Implement long-term sourcing agreements or other sourcing strategies to reinforce and strengthen supply chains.



## COLLABORATE

Work with other suppliers through precompetitive collaboration to maximize impact.

- Undertake collective advocacy with other suppliers to strengthen leverage and engagement with governments to promote the adoption of regulations, conventions, and other legal frameworks that protect human and labor rights.
- Partner with organizations supporting and advocating for labor rights, ensuring that workers' voices are centered in policy-making, advocacy, and other decision-making.
  - Support civil society organizations that protect and advocate for seafood workers' rights at local and international levels.



## REMEDIATE

Help other companies understand and work towards supply chains that reflect the true costs of producing goods that remediate worker grievances.

- Require that companies within your supply chain document and promptly respond to human and labor rights grievances raised by seafood workers.
- Work collaboratively with suppliers to develop corrective action plans, addressing immediate issues and root causes. Establish a timeline and process to verify improvements. See [Build Capacity Action 4].
- Commit funding to support improvements and provide remedy to seafood workers for verified claims.
- Contribute to the development of processes that remediate worker grievances regardless of whether your company owns the facilities.
  - Collaborate with corporate peers sourcing from similar regions or suppliers.
  - Support suppliers, processors, and producers to implement grievance mechanisms and consider developing joint mechanisms.
  - Develop processes to verify grievance claims.
  - Ensure mechanisms for remedy are included.



## ITERATE

Regularly review progress and make continuous improvements over time.

- Continue to review, understand, and improve the efficacy of current policies, commitments, and practices, including:
  - A need to reassess salient human rights risks, taking into consideration newly available public or supply chain data, legislation on human rights, or global initiatives.
  - Any additional actions your company might take given its size and resources.
  - Any ineffective measures your company can cease to implement.
  - Actions that your company may undertake alone versus with other stakeholders, especially if new collaborations have formed.
- Create a schedule and cycles for review to ensure consistency and progress.
- Use RISE to explore resources and guidance and implement best practice.



## COMMUNICATE

Share information and progress with all stakeholders, particularly buyers.

- Communicate regularly regarding efforts with buyers, such as retailers, brands, food service, or restaurants.
- Report on progress towards company commitments and goals annually.
- Share learnings and challenges along the way.