

Blue Food Partnership Concept Note

Context

Food from aquatic sources (blue food)¹ is a fundamental part of the food system, food security, and nutrition. Both coastal and inland waters provide billions of people with nutritious food, often with a much smaller environmental footprint than land-based food production. Blue food provides over 3 billion people with nearly 20% of their animal protein. It is also a main source of other essential nutrients for many vulnerable communities with no access to substitutes.

The economic role that blue food plays is crucial not only as a critical food source but in providing livelihoods. Approximately 120 million full-time and part-time workers directly depend on commercial capture fisheries value chains. Combined with aquaculture workers and their dependents, it is estimated that 10-12% of the world's population rely on fish for their livelihoods. With a growing world population, blue food faces

increased demand and the challenges that go with realising that increase. Global consumption of seafood has doubled in the last 50 years and the impact on marine ecosystems is high. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) states that 34.2% of fish stocks are already overfished, while a further 59.6% are being fished at maximum sustainable levels. Meanwhile between 30 to 35% of the fish harvested is either lost or wasted, which is both unsustainable and inefficient, but also contributes to the 8% of total man-made GHG emissions arising from food loss and waste.

Yet there are ways to meet the demand for seafood in more sustainable ways and therein lies great opportunity. Better governance and management structures can be set in place to expand sustainable aquaculture and to reform capture fisheries while processes can be adopted to ensure more efficient use of the fish harvested. Change needs to happen all along the value chain.



¹ Ocean Panel definition: All edible aquatic organisms, including fish, shellfish and algae from marine and freshwater production systems (aquaculture and fisheries)

Concept

The Blue Food Partnership is led by [Friends of Ocean Action](#)² (FOA), a platform of the World Economic Forum, in collaboration with the World Resources Institute. The World Resources Institute also acts as Secretariat for the [High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy](#)³ (Ocean Panel).

The Partnership brings together stakeholders from the private sector, non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, scientists, and governments. Connecting to policy and science, the partnership is informed by the Ocean Panel's 2030 ocean food priority areas (as outlined in the [Transformations for a Sustainable Ocean Economy](#) report on pages 6-8) and the [Blue Food Assessment](#), which seeks to better understand the role of blue food in global food systems and propel policies and practices accordingly.

The Blue Food Partnership aims to catalyse science-based action towards healthy and

sustainable blue food value chains through two key objectives:

- Integrating the critical role of blue food in sustainability narratives at a policy level in international fora
- Identifying and scaling pre-competitive initiatives on priority blue food topics

Pre-competitive initiatives

Under the objective of pre-competitive initiatives, the Blue Food Partnership will focus on building the momentum on aquaculture through the following working group:

- Sustainable Aquaculture Working Group
 - The goal of this Working Group is to produce a science-based global roadmap that will guide the sustainable growth of aquaculture. Please find more details [here](#).

Further initiatives may be developed based on the interests of Blue Food Partnership members and the opportunities identified.



² A high level group of over 70 ocean leaders who are fast-tracking solutions to the most pressing challenges facing the ocean. Its members – the Friends – come from business, civil society, international organizations, science and technology. <https://www.weforum.org/friends-of-ocean-action>

³ An initiative by 15 world leaders who are building momentum for a sustainable ocean economy in which effective protection, sustainable production and equitable prosperity go hand in hand. <https://www.oceanpanel.org>

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