

EU CODE OF CONDUCT ON RESPONSIBLE FOOD BUSINESS AND MARKETING PRACTICES

A common aspirational path towards achieving sustainable food systems

EFFOP Annual report 2023

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Step of the food chain represented:	Processing sector
Who do you represent?	EFFOP represents 13 national Associations and producers in 10 EU Member States as well as in the UK, Norway, Iceland and Faroe Islands. Alongside the 36 producers represented by the trade association, 14 companies involved in the fishmeal industry contribute to EFFOP's missions as associated members.

EFFOP pledges to:

- **endorse the aspirational objectives set out in this Code**

Yes

- **promote and disseminate this Code with(in) its constituency**

Before signing the Code, EFFOP's Secretariat had informed the members of the Board about its scope and content. As an industry, fishmeal and fish oil is all about maximising the value of aquatic resources and providing food and feed chains with high quality ingredients derived from responsibly harvested marine resources. For years now, our industry has been committed to improving its sustainable performance to limit its environmental footprint.

Signing the Code of Conduct was therefore a logical step in implementing EFFOP's strategy. In order to disclose EFFOP's pledge to its members, associated members and interested parties, EFFOP has published a [statement](#) on its website.

Since then, EFFOP's general assemblies and communication channels such as its website and LinkedIn page have been the main vehicles for disseminating the Code.

- **encourage its members to align their sustainability actions and/or business practices to the aspirational objectives and targets of the Code and invite them, on a voluntary basis, to adhere to this Code, as appropriate**

Sustainability in fishmeal and fish oil production is crucial for maintaining the health of marine ecosystems and ensuring the long-term viability of the industry. By aligning with the EU Code of Conduct, EFFOP members can demonstrate their commitment to reducing their environmental footprint, fostering a culture of responsibility, and contributing to a more sustainable future. Marine ingredients are in competition with other alternative protein sources. However, the growing preference for sustainable, low-carbon, traced-origin feed ingredients could favour fishmeal and fish oil.

EFFOP is therefore communicating to its members that they have a key role to play in the development of sustainable and resilient European food systems, by bringing blue solutions to market.

EFFOP has taken proactive steps to ensure that its members are well-positioned to align their business practices with the EU Code of Conduct's aspirational objectives. These aspirational objectives are an integral part of EFFOP's strategy.

Sustainability and circularity have been the key focus of the last two EFFOP Conferences ([June 2022 in Denmark](#), [June 2024 in Estonia](#)), reflecting the organisation's commitment to these principles.

Another significant initiative is EFFOP's work to remove regulatory barriers that hinder the use of trimmings from the fish processing industry to produce fishmeal and fish oil. A significant portion of our raw materials, approximately 40%, comes from recycled trimmings generated during the processing of fish intended for human consumption. This effort not only promotes resource efficiency but also supports the circular economy by reducing waste and making better use of available resources.

In collaboration with the International Fishmeal and Fish Oil Organisation (IFFO), EFFOP is also working to enhance the Global Feed LCA Institute (GLFI) database with accurate Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) profiles for fishmeal and fish oil. This project aims to provide more precise and reliable data that can be used to measure and improve the sustainability of marine ingredients. Thanks to EFFOP members' commitment to cleaner industrial processes, the reduction in the carbon footprint of these products can already be measured.

Although EFFOP members do not voluntarily adhere to this Code, many are certified to the [MarinTrust Standard](#), the latest version of which has emphasized objectives similar to those of this Code.

Additionally, recognising the importance of credibility, traceability, accountability, and sustainability, the European producers have collaborated to establish the [first European industry standard for draining and](#)

[weighing unsorted pelagic landings intended for fishmeal and fish oil production](#). This industry standard supplements existing national legislation and international agreements. It was developed based on the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the associated post-harvest practices for responsible fish utilisation.

Finally, although many EFFOP members have adopted comprehensive sustainability objectives for their companies, it does not seem easy to co-sign the Code, mainly because of its B2C focus.

- **explore the possibility of developing sector-specific tools and resources in support of this Code**

Our association is also a forum for sharing knowledge and expertise between our members. Every two years EFFOP organises a conference dedicated to its members. During 2 or 3 days, combining factory visit, thematic and technical presentations by experts, the managers of our European industry exchange best practices and advice, allowing everyone to improve their overall skills. Other formats led by EFFOP Secretariat, such as workshops, webinars and working groups, enable good practice on a specific subject to be shared in greater detail.

EFFOP is involved in environmental footprint for several years. The collaboration with IFFO to update the PEF profiles for fishmeal and fish oil, as explained above, is a sector-specific tool directly linked to the [aspirational objective 3. “A climate neutral food chain in Europe by 2050”](#).

EFFOP is constantly emphasising the need to promote the circularity of feed and food systems. Good management of fish stocks is essential to the survival of our industry, which is why using all parts of aquatic resources must be a priority. Although the primary destination for our members' products is the feed market, EFFOP is working to make it possible for fish oil from its members' factories to be placed on the EU food market. Fish oil produced from fish and trimmings from the filleting industry certainly deserves a place in the healthy, sustainable diets of European consumers. By working on an industry guide, EFFOP fully supports [aspirational objectives 1. “Healthy, balanced and sustainable diets for all European consumers”](#), [2. “Prevention and reduction of food loss and waste”](#), [4. “An optimised circular and resource-efficient food chain in Europe”](#) and [6. “Sustainable value creation in the European food supply chain through partnership”](#).

EFFOP was also a pioneer in the construction of MarinTrust, a programme dedicated to marine ingredient production factories and advancing best practices in the responsible sourcing, traceability and production of these products. The EFFOP Secretariat is making human and financial resources available to support its members in the certification process, thereby supporting the [aspirational objective 7. “Sustainable sourcing in food supply chains”](#).

Finally, it must be remembered that EFFOP is committed to working in collaboration with the scientific community, whose opinion is central to determining fishing quotas. We advocate that the management of fish stocks should follow scientific advice, which is entirely in line with this aspirational objective.

- **continue to engage in dialogue with other food chain/systems actors and EU and international policymakers to forge (new) relationships, exchange good practices and discuss challenges encountered, learn from each other (studies, projects) and create better mutual understanding, and identify opportunities for collaboration and potential partnership**

As a representative for the European fishmeal and fish oil industry, EFFOP maintains a regular dialogue with European stakeholders and policymakers.

In 2023, EFFOP has had several meetings with representatives of DG SANTE and DG MARE to discuss issues of key importance to its members.

EFFOP has regular exchanges with representatives of the fishing and seafood industries.

During a visit to Brussels, the EFFOP Board met with FEAC, an organisation that is also a signatory to this Code, with which EFFOP has had relations for several years.

EFFOP also participates in exchange platforms with European representatives of the feed industry. The purpose of these forums is to work in partnership on projects linked to improving the sustainability of food systems.

Moreover, EFFOP is a member of several Advisory Councils (ACs), including the Market Advisory Council (MAC) and the Aquaculture Advisory Council (AAC), which work on responsible food production, sales and marketing practices. Pursuant to the Common Fisheries Policy, the ACs advise the European Commission and EU Member States on matters relating to aquaculture production and the market of fishery and aquaculture products. They bring together stakeholders from across the seafood value chain and other interest groups. EFFOP has contributed to several advices released in 2023 dealing with subjects closely related to the objectives set out in this Code, such as: [MAC advice on the substantiation of Green Claims](#), [AAC Recommendations for Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation in Aquaculture](#), [AAC Recommendation on the circularity of fish feed](#).

On 16 June 2023, the EFFOP Secretariat participated in the launch of the Energy Transition Partnership (ETP) and EFFOP is since then, member of the ETP.

At the international level, EFFOP naturally works closely with IFFO, MarinTrust, Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) but also with the Global Organization for EPA and DHA Omega-3s (GOED). EFFOP is also a member of the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI), which is a partnership of public and private sector organizations that are working to improve the sustainability of seafood supply chains.