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# Guidelines for Developing Jurisdictional Initiatives for the Seafood Sector



Conservation International  
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## Glossary

**Blended Financing:** Blending can be broadly defined as the combination of public concessional official development assistance with private or public resources, generally with the aim of ‘mobilizing’ or ‘leveraging’ development finance from other actors (Oxfam 2017).

**Contextual analysis:** identifies key systemic environmental and socio-economic challenges in the seafood production system of the jurisdictional initiative site, and against which improvements and performance claims will be measured, as well as provide insights into whether key enabling conditions are in place, or could be created, to support the successful co-design of jurisdictional initiative This analysis is completed during the co-design phase.

**Credible:** Having rigor and a strong likelihood of success; worthy of belief and confidence.

**Market partners:** Seafood businesses, including end buyers, mid supply chain suppliers, and local exporters.

**Scoping assessment:** an assessment conducted in the Scoping phase to evaluate whether the key enabling conditions are in place, or could be created, to support the successful co-design of a jurisdictional initiative.

**Seascape:** Large, multiple-use marine areas, defined scientifically and strategically, in which government authorities, private organizations, and other stakeholders cooperate to conserve the diversity and abundance of marine life and promote human well-being (Murphy et al. 2021).

**Site:** the specific location/area of the jurisdictional initiative

**Triple bottom line:** improvement of a fishery/farm’s environmental, social, and economic performance.

## List of Acronyms

AIP: Aquaculture Improvement Project  
ASC: Aquaculture Stewardship Council  
CBD: Convention on Biological Diversity  
CI: Conservation International  
CoC: Chain of Custody  
CRI: Certification, Ratings, and Improvement Models  
EBM: Ecosystem based management  
EAFM: Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management  
EAA: Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture  
eCDT: Electronic Catch Documentation and Traceability  
EFT: Ecological based Fiscal Transfer (EFT) mechanism

FFIA: Fiji Fishing Industry Association (FFIA)  
FIP: Fishery Improvement Project  
FMPs: Fishery Management Plans  
FPIs: Fishery Performance Indicators  
GDST: Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability  
IMT: Implementation Monitoring Tool  
IPs: Indigenous Peoples  
IUU: Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated  
JA: Jurisdictional Approach  
JI: Jurisdictional Initiative  
KDE: Key Data Element  
LCs: Local Communities  
MSC: Marine Stewardship Council  
MOU: Memorandum of Understanding  
NGO: Non-governmental organization  
PNA: Parties to the Nauru Agreement  
RAT: Rapid Assessment Tool  
RFMOs: Regional Fishery Management Organizations  
SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals  
SIMP: Seafood Import Monitoring Program  
SRA: Social Risk Assessment Tool  
UN: United Nations  
UNCLOS: United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea  
WCPO: Western Central Pacific Ocean  
WWF: World Wildlife Fund/World Wild Fund for Nature

## **About the Handbook**

These guidelines were developed by Conservation International (CI) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in consultation with NGOs, governments, and seafood supply chain members. In the following pages, we present what a jurisdictional initiative for the seafood sector entails, guidance for when and how to develop such an initiative, and best practices to help producers, local communities, governments, the private sector, and civil society establish credible jurisdictional initiatives to address systemic drivers of decline of global biodiversity and increase the resilience of marine and freshwater ecosystems. The application of these initiatives is still nascent, especially in the seafood sector. As such, this guide will be updated as experience in the field warrants. The goal of this document is to provide useful guidance to build an approach that is more likely to address systemic and policy level changes that improve social and environmental conditions; however, some jurisdictional initiatives may not require the implementation of all elements outlined in this guide.

## Executive Summary

Over the past 25 years, seafood certification, ratings, and improvement (CRI) efforts have been effective at bringing awareness to environmental and social issues in seafood production (i.e., wild-capture fisheries and aquaculture) and helping to improve their sustainability performance in many parts of the world. While CRI approaches are impactful and critical to continue, their current framework of working with individual fisheries or farms is not designed to achieve the scale of improvement needed in global seafood production, nor do they effectively engage many of the world's small-scale fisheries and farms who are not incentivized by export market demand or cannot afford the costs associated with certification. In addition, CRI efforts often do not fully address critical systemic issues that can be barriers to long-term environmental sustainability and social responsibility, such as cumulative environmental impacts, labor rights, climate change impacts, and biodiversity loss. Therefore, there is an opportunity for new approaches that aim to address systemic barriers at scale while engaging seafood sector stakeholders broadly in improvement efforts, as complementary to CRI approaches.

Frameworks for jurisdictional initiatives have been developed by the NGO community in recent years to drive improvements at scale for environmental challenges in terrestrial commodities such as soy, palm oil, and timber (often called jurisdictional approaches). These initiatives have provided added value to credible certification efforts by addressing not only environmental, but also additional social and economic barriers to sustainability at a jurisdictional level, or within the boundaries of a management system.

The jurisdictional initiative concept is still nascent for fisheries and aquaculture, and there is a need for greater clarity around the key elements of successful jurisdictional initiatives for seafood. Guidance for practitioners or companies is also needed to clarify what makes these initiatives for fisheries and aquaculture impactful and credible and how to measure progress. For these initiatives to become more mainstream, it is critical to define what a credible jurisdictional initiative for seafood should encompass to help ensure greatest impact. This guide aims to provide some clarity on the rationale and importance, the process and key elements, and the engagement of key stakeholders for the establishment of a seafood jurisdictional initiative.

We define a seafood jurisdictional initiative as a commodity-focused, multi-stakeholder, stepwise framework to achieve positive environmental, social, and economic outcomes. **Specifically, jurisdictional initiatives aim to improve sustainable seafood production, as well as reduce biodiversity loss (including maintenance and/or restoration of critical ecosystems and threatened species), increase climate resilience, address cumulative impacts, enhance the economic profitability of those involved, and ensure safe and decent working conditions and inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.**

These initiatives are designed to be long-term engagements that drive systemic changes at ecologically and politically relevant scales, and rely on long-term efforts such as policy reform,

public-private partnerships, and trust-based community engagement. Jurisdictional initiatives can be particularly effective at driving alignment and collective action by government, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, private sector, and civil society groups toward a shared vision and agenda for seafood production across a seascape. Locally driven and locally defined through a multi-stakeholder forum, jurisdictional initiatives provide an opportunity to improve inclusivity and democratize planning and management. This allows for engagement of smallholders who might not participate in certification due to cost and capacity constraints.

We recommend developing a jurisdictional initiative if stakeholders desire to increase the resilience of the ecosystem or tackle more systemic social and environmental drivers rather than focusing solely on the sustainability of a single fishery, or farm/ group of related farms. This would mean tackling issues that are not often or fully addressed in traditional CRI efforts, such as ecosystem-level biodiversity, climate resilience, regional social issues, and industry/cross-industry cumulative impacts. Seafood jurisdictional initiatives are complementary to CRI efforts and may occur before or after application of other mature and credible market-based tools, depending on political will and economic conditions. A jurisdictional initiative could help address risks around the continued effectiveness of traditional CRI efforts, such as lack of government engagement at all levels.

Elements that help ensure success of a jurisdictional initiative include strong engagement and commitment from the government at relevant levels (e.g., national, regional, or local), strong commitment from other critical stakeholders (e.g., local communities, producers, producer groups, and supply chain companies) and a viable pathway for financing the initiative.

Jurisdictional initiatives have the capacity to benefit many stakeholders throughout a region. Participation may benefit producers by addressing risk to their livelihoods (e.g., decline in fish populations and poor water quality), reducing reputational risks by demonstrating industry-wide progress in an ecosystem, obtaining equitable distribution of benefits, and obtaining a market incentive from market partners who are investing in these initiatives. The major benefits that these initiatives are meant to create for local communities and Indigenous Peoples are platforms to engage and eventually achieve improved socio-economic security, continued dialogue with policymakers and private actors (democratizing planning and management of resources), and potential access to financing through public-private partnerships. Governments can address risks from climate change, biodiversity loss, environmental degradation, and unethical human rights and labor practices that threaten the long-term health of marine and aquatic resources and thus increase stability of nationally important food products for domestic consumption or export. Governments can also meet their national and international commitments and increase their reputation as one that manages its ocean and aquatic resources in ways that improve biodiversity, increase climate resilience, and protect the rights of fishers, farmers, and local communities. Similarly, market partners can reduce potential local community risks, operation risks and supply chain volatility. When supported by robust monitoring and evaluation systems, jurisdictional

initiatives may also provide companies a way to credibly claim positive impacts as part of larger-scale improvements.

All credible seafood jurisdictional initiatives seeking to drive change need to have a strong monitoring framework in place, with metrics relevant to the jurisdiction that will enable stakeholders to assess progress against the initiative's targets and milestones. The most effective metrics will be tied directly to performance against environmental, social, and economic outcomes at the jurisdictional level. However, given a jurisdictional initiative can span 20-30 years, some pathway indicators that are not direct conservation outcomes but capture important initial steps believed to lead to a measurable outcome over time can be included. The appropriate metrics for each specific initiative will depend on the local context but should be tied to overall biodiversity, climate, and social goals of the effort.

There are a variety of claims that participants can utilize to communicate with internal and external stakeholders, including claims about process, objectives of the initiative, risk management, investment, actions being implemented, current performance status and trends over time. Stakeholders making claims should make the information publicly and easily accessible, (e.g., on their website, in sustainability reports, or through public reporting by the jurisdictional initiative itself). No single stakeholder group should make attribution claims (i.e., we are responsible for a specific performance outcome), as it is often difficult to show a direct cause and effect relationship, and it disregards the influence of others in achieving the outcomes. It is important to note that seafood buyers and other stakeholders participating in a jurisdictional initiative should not claim premature or augmented successes. These initiatives span a significant timeline, and associated claims should appropriately reflect the improvement journey over time.

Verification of any jurisdictional claim is critical, as it ensures the integrity of the claim itself. Different levels of verification are required depending on the type of claim. The degree and level of independence of verification needed will depend on the claims made, track record of the jurisdictional initiative, level of transparency of the data, and trustworthiness of the data providers. A credible monitoring framework is key, one that specifies the indicators being monitored, guidance for measuring accurately and consistently against the indicators, the quality and relevance of data required, and how well the data is collected and managed.

Learnings from relatively early-stage jurisdictional initiatives (primarily terrestrial) show that:

- Geographic boundaries need to align with the scope of environmental degradation and decision-making authority, capacity, and local frameworks.
- A coordinating backbone organization is necessary.
- A strong common vision and balanced objectives matter.
- Strong community engagement and stakeholder participation is critical.
- Meaningful engagement with Indigenous populations and local communities is important.
- Government must be the driving force.

- Private sector actors are crucial for success.
- Strong partnerships with producer cooperatives or associations can boost success.
- Robust, transparent, and collaborative multi-stakeholder development processes and decision-making platforms are needed.
- Technical partners are needed to support blended finance.





## **Section 1. Jurisdictional Initiatives for the Seafood Sector**

### **1.1 What is a Jurisdictional Initiative for the Seafood Sector?**

#### **Background**

Aquatic ecosystems across the world are in peril. The collapse of key commercial fisheries within the last 50 years has made clear the precarious position of the world's fish stocks. Decades of overfishing and coastal habitat conversions for fish farming have taken a significant toll on the health of aquatic ecosystems, human livelihoods and global food security, and demand for seafood continues to increase. Over a third of the world's commercial fish stocks are overfished, and the global fishing fleet is 2-3 times larger than the oceans can sustainably support. Unregulated growth of aquaculture has, in many places, led to conversion of marine and terrestrial habitats, water quality degradation, and biodiversity loss. Approximately 600 million livelihoods rely on fishing, aquaculture, and related activities, and more than four billion people around the world rely on seafood as an important source of animal protein.

The historic and current realities of inconsistent and inadequate regulation and enforcement across regions have led many actors to turn towards voluntary and market-based mechanisms to drive or achieve better environmental and social practices in seafood production. Certification and eco-labeling schemes (including the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC)), emerged in the 1990s/2010's to harness the purchasing power of seafood businesses to incentivize fishers and aquaculture producers to improve their fishing and farming practices. Certifications are usually granted to a single/group of related farms and fisheries and do not cover the entire areas of production/whole fisheries. An eco-certification label on a product indicates that it has been grown and harvested in a manner that meets the associated sustainability standard. Consumers and retailers who value seafood sustainability can preference seafood products with a certification eco-label, rewarding better performance, which in theory can rise over time.

Some conservation-based NGOs also provide seafood ratings based on their own methodology that reviews the status and environmental impacts of fisheries and aquaculture (e.g., Seafood Watch, WWF seafood guides). These ratings are then shared with consumers through wallet guides, mobile apps, and on menus and seafood counters.

Over the past decade, Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) and Aquaculture Improvement Projects (AIPs) have been developed to provide a credible improvement pathway for fisheries and farms (especially those in the supply chains of retail, food service, broad line, and multi-national companies with sustainable seafood commitments) that cannot immediately meet the certification standards (e.g., MSC and ASC). Like certifications, these improvement projects are primarily implemented at an individual fishery and farm level.

Together, these certification, ratings, and improvement (CRI) efforts have been effective at bringing awareness to environmental and social issues in fisheries and aquaculture and moving the needle towards improved fishing and aquaculture practices in many parts of the world. Indeed, there are numerous examples of improved performance in fisheries and aquaculture farms, large and small, around the world due to engagement in CRI efforts that provide the basis for seafood company commitments and related improvement efforts for specific fisheries or farms, particularly those that contribute to international trade.

While CRI approaches are impactful and critical to continue, their current framework of working with individual fisheries or farms basis is not designed to achieve the scale of improvement needed in global seafood production, nor do they effectively engage many of the world's small-scale fisheries and farms who are not always incentivized by export market demand or cannot afford the costs associated with certification. In addition, CRI efforts often do not fully address critical systemic issues that can be barriers to long-term sustainability of individual fisheries and aquaculture farms, such as cumulative environmental impacts, labor rights, climate change impacts, and biodiversity loss, which often can only be achieved through policy changes. Therefore, there is an opportunity for new approaches that aim to address systemic barriers at scale while engaging seafood sector stakeholders broadly in improvement efforts, as complementary to CRI approaches.

Seafood jurisdictional initiatives aim to initiate or accelerate more holistic policy-level approaches to private sector seafood interventions across a whole region or jurisdiction. While these jurisdictional initiatives may not be able to solve all ecosystem-level sustainability challenges on their own, by engaging with industry, government, local communities and Indigenous Peoples and NGOs, and within the context of the larger regional social and ecological realities, the jurisdictional initiative process will begin to engage a wider set of necessary actors and contextualize the industry those larger limits of the seascape. The reality is that success in achieving the ultimate outcomes and lasting systemic change may require patience, perseverance, and long-term financing.

## **Jurisdictional Initiatives for the Seafood Sector**

Frameworks for jurisdictional initiatives have been developed by the NGO community in recent years to drive improvements at scale for environmental challenges in terrestrial commodities such as soy, palm oil, and timber and have restricted themselves to national and sub-national political jurisdictions (Fishman et al. 2017, Boyd et al. 2018, CI 2018, Boshoven et al. 2020). These initiatives have provided added value to credible certification efforts by addressing not only environmental, but also additional social and economic barriers to sustainability at a jurisdictional level, or within the boundaries of a management system.

In terrestrial commodities, these initiatives are often called ‘jurisdictional or landscape approaches’ and have been defined as “an integrated landscape approach that aims to reconcile competing social, economic and environmental objectives through participation across stakeholders and sectors, implemented within governmental administrative boundaries, and with a form of government involvement” (CI 2018).

We describe here a jurisdictional initiative for seafood as a commodity-focused, multi-stakeholder, stepwise framework to achieve positive environmental, social, and economic outcomes.

**Specifically, jurisdictional initiatives aim to improve sustainable seafood production, as well as reduce biodiversity loss (including maintenance and/or restoration of critical ecosystems and threatened species), increase climate resilience, address cumulative impacts, enhance the economic profitability of those involved, and ensure safe and decent working conditions and inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.** These initiatives are designed to be long-term engagements that drive systemic changes at ecologically and politically relevant scales, and that rely on long-term efforts such as policy reform, public-private partnerships, and trust-based community engagement. Jurisdictional initiatives can be particularly effective at driving alignment and collective action by government, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, private sector, and civil society groups toward a shared vision and agenda for seafood production across a seascape (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Key requirements to drive improvements in jurisdictional initiatives.

Fisheries and aquaculture production raise new opportunities and challenges for the application of jurisdictional initiatives. The mobile and transboundary nature of many wild fish species often confounds jurisdictional initiatives from a fishery management perspective, as well as in terms of stakeholder behavior. In aquaculture, the interconnectivity of open (e.g., cages and pens) and semi-closed (e.g., ponds and raceways) production systems that rely on common waterbodies create the need for coordinated effluent and disease management, which can also influence stakeholder behavior and complicate jurisdictional initiatives. Another key difference influencing the industry level approach outlined in this document is linked to the realities of most seafood sectors and supply chains. In terrestrial landscapes with multiple commodities planted together (or in rotation), largely sold to a single buyer and with readily available geo-spatial land-use monitoring tools, different models focused on multiple commodities in a region are possible.

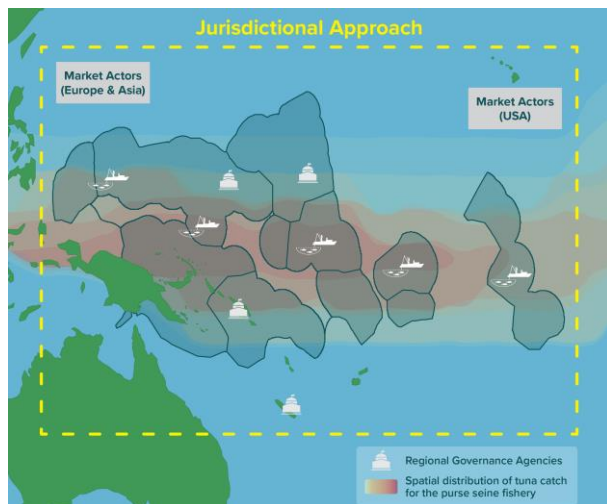
Despite these challenges, governments, producers, and NGOs are accelerating efforts to develop and implement jurisdictional initiatives to support seafood sustainability at-scale (Box 1). Many of these initiatives are early iterations of terrestrial jurisdictional approach efforts.



**Box 1. Case Studies: Advancing seafood jurisdictional initiatives**

**1.1. Fisheries**

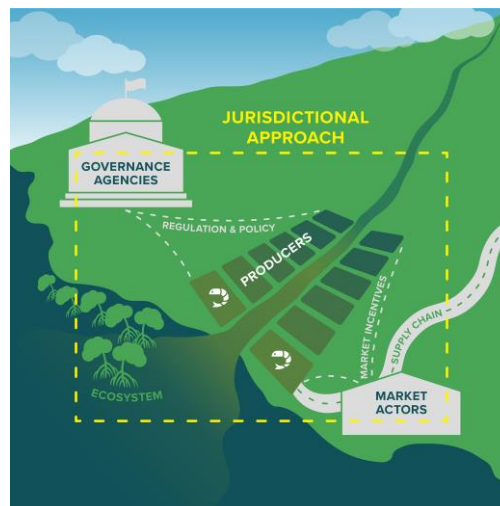
Among the best examples of a large-scale fishery jurisdictional initiatives comes from the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) tuna fishery in the Western Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO), wherein 8 pacific islands' governments partnered to create a new political/fishery management jurisdiction that matched the ecological distribution of the purse-seine tuna fishery (i.e., policy approaches at a jurisdictional scale). The initiative partners subsequently obtained MSC certification for the whole fishery, and then developed joint-ventures with private sector partners to commercialize tuna coming from the new 'verified sourcing area' (i.e., market-based approaches).



The stock status of these commercial tuna species in the WCPO is one of the most sustainable on the planet (Brouwer et al. 2018, ISSF 2019), illustrating the success by PNA members in integrating effective governance systems, together with market-based approaches within a politically and ecologically defined jurisdiction (Kittinger et al. 2021).

**1.2 Aquaculture**

A jurisdictional initiative for shrimp aquaculture is currently being developed in Banyuwangi, East Java, Indonesia. The initiative focuses on enabling farms across the region to improve shrimp farm performance to match international environmental and social standards. Numerous aquaculture farms occupy multiple watersheds in the project region, resulting in these farms being ecologically connected through shared water resources and dependent on a range of ecosystem services. Disease outbreaks, pollution problems, and other unsustainable practices represent shared threats that require farmers to work together to reduce risk.



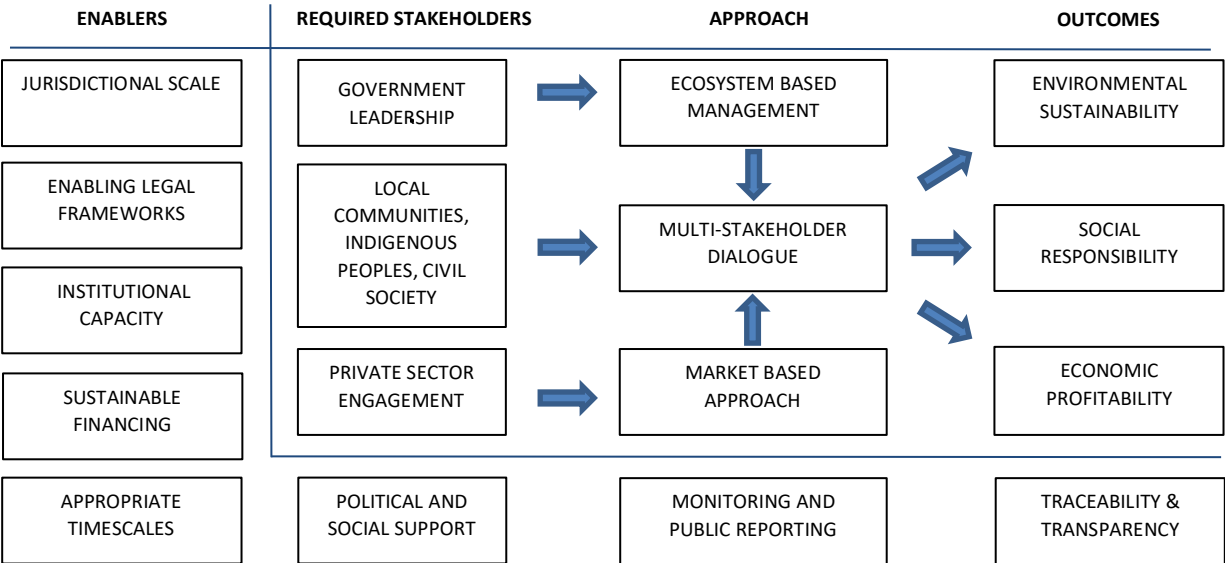
A jurisdictional initiative is currently underway in this area to incentivize the adoption of responsible practices through a zonal management approach, implemented collaboratively by producers, government, supply chain companies, and nonprofit organization (Kittinger et al. 2021).

International market actors are also advancing significant commitments to support the development of these jurisdictional initiatives. In 2021, the U.K. supermarket chain Tesco introduced a new 'Seascope' sourcing approach to marine sustainability aiming to manage whole marine ecosystems in a healthy, productive way. Through this new approach to tuna sourcing, developed in partnership with the WWF, Tesco will work with suppliers and others across the industry to implement a roadmap to transition sourcing only from fisheries with an ecosystem-based management approach by 2030 (Seafood Source, March 2021).

Despite these successes, the jurisdictional initiative concept is still nascent for fisheries and aquaculture production systems, and there is need for greater clarity around the key elements of successful jurisdictional initiatives for seafood. Guidance for practitioners or companies is also needed to clarify what makes jurisdictional initiatives for fisheries and aquaculture impactful and credible and how to measure progress. For these initiatives to become more mainstream, it is critical to define what a credible jurisdictional initiative for seafood should encompass to help ensure greatest impact and long-term viability.

### Elements of Successful Jurisdictional Initiatives

As summarized in Figure 1, jurisdictional initiatives utilize policy and market-based strategies at relevant political and ecological scales to achieve social, economic, and environmental objectives in a seafood production system. In addition, these initiatives are locally driven and locally defined through multi-stakeholder forums, providing an opportunity to improve inclusivity and democratize planning and management. This allows for engagement of smallholders who may not participate in certification due to cost and capacity constraints. The latter considerations, as well as other key elements needed for jurisdictional initiatives to be successful and credible are summarized below (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Elements of successful jurisdictional initiatives for seafood

## Enablers:

- **Jurisdictional Scale:** Jurisdictional initiatives oftentimes occur at different scales than traditional certification, rating, and/or improvement efforts (CRI). The appropriate political and ecological scale of a jurisdictional initiative should be determined by the highest-level political jurisdiction that is needed to address the key sustainability challenges (environmental, social, economic) identified.
- **Enabling Legal Frameworks:** An enabling framework of laws, conventions, regulations, and policies exist, or can be developed, at the appropriate scale to facilitate the design and implementation of jurisdictional initiatives.
- **Institutional Capacity:** Adequate institutional frameworks and capacity are present, including personnel, infrastructure, and equipment, to make the relevant governance structures (governmental, commercial, and civil) work effectively and efficiently.
- **Sustainable Financing:** A long-term financing strategy to cover the multi-million-dollar cost is essential. Early identification of various types of long-term financing models is needed to support and sustain a jurisdictional initiative at its various stages. Nearly all jurisdictional initiatives rely on a blended finance approach.
- **Appropriate Timeframes:** Timeframes of successful jurisdictional initiatives often range from 8-30 years. This is due to the focus on policy change, participatory and multi-stakeholder processes, and ecosystem-level outcomes reliant on collective impact. The complexity and duration of jurisdictional initiatives require sustained engagement and investment to achieve systemic change; therefore, local and global expectations across all types of stakeholders need to be thoughtfully managed to create achievable goals and timeframes and help ensure lasting results. These timeframes also must be thoughtfully considered when discussing recognition, claims, and incentives.
- **Political and Social Support, Including Local Community Engagement:** Resilient processes are needed in the design of the initiative to ensure broad political support across levels of government (local, subnational, national) and strong shared ownership by the private sector and civil society. This will help safeguard the initiative against political change. A strong narrative that articulates the initiative's goals, needs, and early successes is crucial to building support across stakeholders. Engagement with all who may be impacted, including Indigenous Peoples and local communities is critical.
- **Monitoring and Public Reporting:** A public, multi-stakeholder reporting framework for communicating accessible information on a regular basis about outcomes achieved, key partners who contributed, and future actions to be taken is key for transparent dialogue. The latter will include a set of metrics to enable regular assessment of improvements against impact outcomes at a jurisdictional scale (beyond the individual entity, farm, or supply chain level).
- **Traceability and Transparency:** A set of metrics to enable regular assessment of product traceability (see *Section 1.8: Traceability and Transparency* for additional information).
- **Appropriate Claims and Verification:** Claims made by jurisdictional initiative stakeholders as a whole and/or individual participating entities should be appropriate to the phase of the initiative, as well as verifiable. Credible and robust verification of monitoring, evaluation, and progress against goals is critical for ensuring impact of the initiative's activities (see *Section 1.6 Claims* and *Section 1.7: Verification* for additional information).

### Required Stakeholders:

- **Government Leadership:** Leadership from government is critical, and staff engagement at the sub-national level is often useful, supported by national-level commitments or initiatives. To ensure durable change, it is important to obtain political commitment and leadership of the initiative across various levels of government (local to national). Successful jurisdictional initiatives often have sub-national implementation plans linked to national policy initiatives and embed the work in government operations.
- **Private Sector Engagement:** Long-term commitments of private sector actors throughout the supply chain (e.g., from producers to processors to retailers) are crucial for project success, given the dominant role the market plays in driving change in the seafood sector. Some actors may join the effort informally to engage with regional suppliers and reduce risks while others may seek more formal involvement.
- **Civil Society Coordination:** On-the-ground coordination and implementing partner(s) are needed to support management of the jurisdictional initiative and its activities, including coordination of a multi-stakeholder entity.

### Approaches:

- **Ecosystem-Based Management:** Jurisdictional initiatives aim to achieve an adaptive, ecosystem-based, and climate-resilient approach to management. While a single industry and its stakeholders may not have the ability to achieve ecosystem-based management alone, a jurisdictional initiative will engage holistic levers and other important actors needed to ultimately achieve ecosystem-based management. For additional information about the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries, please reference the FAO e-learning academy, including guidance for policy makers, NGOs, and other practitioners about why, when, and how to use the EAF-Implementation Monitoring Tool (EAF-IMT; FAO 2022).
- **Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue and Engagement:** Success depends on robust and inclusive stakeholder dialogue and engagement during scoping, design, and implementation. Stakeholder interests should be sufficiently aligned to develop shared goals. To ensure success, we recommend the main parties involved in the initiative document the degree of engagement and buy-in by different stakeholders, such as by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that defines the specific roles and responsibilities of each entity so that expectations are clear from the outset about the objectives and the role that each group plays.
- **Market-Based Approaches:** Market Based Approaches comprise a wide array of strategies focused on generating incentives along the supply chain that favor sustainability (Jacquet et al. 2009, Sutton 1998, Murphy et al. 2021). The latter approaches are traditionally driven by the private sector and focus on encouraging sustainable behavior through market signals. Certification is a prominent example that has effectively promoted fisheries sustainability due to its inclusion in the sourcing requirements of large retailers in Europe and North America.



Outcomes:

- **Environmental Sustainability, Including Ecosystem, Climate and Biodiversity Resilience:** Goals to help reverse the decline of biodiversity, including maintenance and/or restoration of critical ecosystems and threatened species, increase climate resilience, and account for cumulative impacts.
- **Social Responsibility, Including Inclusivity and Cultural Considerations:** Goals to help address a variety of social issues (human and labor rights, equity, safe and decent working conditions, local (including Indigenous) community rights and engagement).
- **Economic Profitability:** Goals to help enhance the economic performance of a seafood production system, including by maximizing biological productivity, enhancing operational efficiency, and/or increasing market value (Holmes et al. 2014).



## 1.2 When to Implement Jurisdictional Initiatives Versus Other Approaches

### Certifications, Ratings, and Improvement (CRI) Projects Versus Jurisdictional Initiatives

A common question that arises is when to implement a jurisdictional initiative compared to other traditional certification or improvement project pathways for fisheries and aquaculture production systems. We recommend developing a jurisdictional initiative if stakeholders desire to increase the resilience of the ecosystem or tackle more systemic social and environmental drivers rather than focusing solely on the sustainability of a single fishery, farm/group of related farms, or supply chain. This would mean tackling issues that are not often or fully addressed in established CRI efforts, such as ecosystem-level biodiversity, climate resilience, regional social issues, and industry/cross-industry cumulative impacts.

Seafood jurisdictional initiatives are complementary to CRI efforts and may occur before or after application of other mature and credible market-based tools, depending on political will and economic conditions. A jurisdictional initiative could help address risks around the continued effectiveness of traditional CRI efforts, such as lack of government engagement at all levels.

We recommend implementing this type of initiative if there is strong engagement and commitment from the government at relevant levels (e.g., national, regional, or local), strong commitment from other critical stakeholders (e.g., local communities, producers, producer groups, and supply chain companies), and a viable pathway for financing the initiative as this is more likely to achieve the desired outcomes. A recent report commissioned by the ISEAL Alliance highlights when to pursue individual or collaborative improvement strategies, including value chain and systemic strategies, which can also be used to decide when to implement jurisdictional initiatives (see *Step 1: Scoping* in Section 2 for additional information).

Certification systems can play an important role in seafood jurisdictional initiatives. In collaboration with local jurisdictional initiative conveners, certification systems can (ISEAL 2017):

- Help shape sustainability objectives/targets at the jurisdictional initiative level.
- Help adapt or develop new credible verification or monitoring methods for the initiative.
- Enable dialogue across producers and existing certificate holders on connectivity and other issues beyond individual production unit (cumulative impacts)
- Adapt their tools, guidance, and expertise for capacity building to fit specific local needs.
- Identify laggards and high performers, enabling the use of financial incentives at site level to incentivize continuous improvement within the jurisdiction.
- Strengthen confidence and risk management for investors.
- Provide incentive for market partners to engage.

**Table 1.** Differences between certification, ratings, and improvement (CRI) efforts and jurisdictional initiatives (adapted from CI 2019)

<b>Certifications, Ratings, Improvement Efforts</b>	<b>Jurisdictional Initiatives</b>
Useful tools for individual fisheries, aquaculture farms/group of related farms, and/or supply chains.	Commodity focused (multiple fisheries/farms).
<p>Depending upon the Unit of Assessment, there may be a mismatch between the scale of management and scale of ecological processes being managed. This means that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For fisheries certification, the geographical area may not cover the complete range of the species across its lifecycle (e.g., larval to juvenile to adult).</li> <li>• Spatial interactions key to sustainability may not be considered (e.g., among inter-dependent fisheries or multiple fleets harvesting a single stock, or aquaculture farms in a watershed that rely on shared resources).</li> <li>• Ecological criteria are written to maintain individual stock health and may fail to consider the entirety of ecosystem services that may be impacted by fishing or aquaculture production.</li> <li>• May address farm and vessel practices and resource use efficiencies but may not protect all trophic interactions and key habitat functions.</li> </ul>	<p>Applied at the appropriate ecosystem level and political boundary needed to address sustainability challenges appropriately. This means that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For fisheries, the defined territory within the jurisdictional initiative can match the full range of the target species across its lifecycle.</li> <li>• By focusing on a defined production geography, jurisdictional initiatives may improve coordination amongst multiple economic sectors or entities that overlap or interact with each other (Boyd et al. 2018, CI, 2018). For example, terrestrial jurisdictional initiatives focused on preventing deforestation of regional forests by working to coordinate multiple producers and production types (Stickler et al. 2018).</li> <li>• Jurisdictional initiatives are more likely to recognize and invest in conservation measures that support the full suite of ecosystem functions in that geography.</li> <li>• More likely to recognize and address key habitat functions and trophic interactions.</li> </ul>
Typically, does not require a holistic approach to address systemic issues, including those that extend beyond environmental sustainability, such as social responsibility. Some aquaculture CRIs include area-based criteria, including social engagement, but the practice remains limited.	<p>Address broader policy/systemic issues, including areas not currently required under CRI, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecosystem based approach/ cumulative impacts</li> <li>• Biodiversity focus</li> <li>• Social equity/inclusivity</li> <li>• Building blocks for climate resilience</li> </ul>

Depending upon the Unit of Certification and stakeholders involved, may not adequately/equally include the interests and rights of smallholders, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities.	Locally driven and locally defined through multi-stakeholder forum. Allows for engagement of smallholders who may not participate in certification due to cost and capacity constraints.
Certification provides a certain level of traceability, assurance, and verification (ratings and improvements do not), and as such, participants may be able to make performance claims shortly after certification.	Participants likely cannot make performance claims until many years into the project, but engagement can reduce risks and raise opportunities for joint problem solving between sectors including government, fishers, farmers, and market/ supply chain actors.

### Seascapes Versus Jurisdictional Initiatives

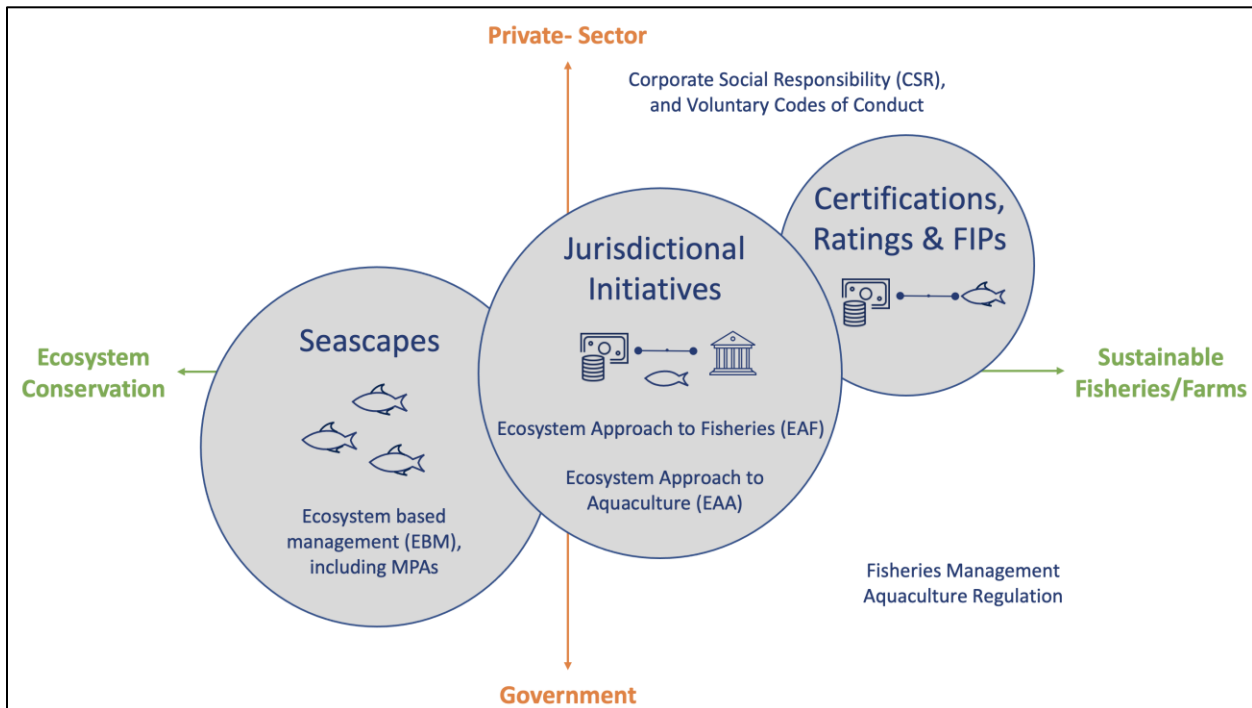
Recent debate has emerged around the similarities and differences between seascapes and jurisdictional initiatives. We briefly illustrate below when and how these two approaches coincide and diverge.

Seascapes are large, multiple-use marine areas, defined scientifically and strategically, in which government authorities, private organizations, and other stakeholders cooperate to conserve the diversity and abundance of marine life and promote human well-being (Murphy et al. 2021).

Based on these definitions, the two approaches may be analogous in certain cases, as reflected in the fact that all nine essential elements of seascapes are also included within the elements of successful jurisdictional initiatives for seafood (Figure 2). There are also examples where the two types of initiatives converge and/or overlap:

- The Lau Seascape in Fiji is located within the national tuna jurisdictional initiative in Fiji.
- The Fiji and New Caledonia tuna jurisdictional initiatives are located within the Pacific Oceanscape (CI 2016, Pratt and Govan 2010).
- The Eastern Tropical Pacific Seascape could be considered a jurisdictional initiative (if the industrial seafood sector operating in those areas were to participate in the initiative).

Despite the similarities, there are also specific tangible differences in how these two approaches have been traditionally applied. For instance, seascapes highlight the dual objectives of conservation and human well-being but have traditionally prioritized conservation objectives when tradeoffs emerge. Jurisdictional initiatives on the other hand tend to prioritize the sustainable use of a natural resource commodity as a key objective. The latter divergence in objective prioritization has implications on the types of stakeholders who lead each of the approaches (private sector engagement: commercial/industrial sector versus small-scale/artisanal fishers), as well as the types of financing mechanisms (i.e., commercial sourcing agreements versus tourism fees, grants, endowments, etc.) and management strategies that are employed to achieve the stated objectives (i.e., fisheries management versus marine protected areas). The latter similarities and differences between jurisdictional initiatives and seascapes are summarized below (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Comparison of objectives (green x-axis) and stakeholder participation (orange y-axis) in jurisdictional initiatives, seascapes, and certification, ratings, and improvement (CRI) efforts. The size of the grey circles is used to describe jurisdictional scale, whereby initiatives characterized by larger circles have a greater ability to achieve improvements at more relevant political and/or ecological scales.

### 1.3 Why Launch a Jurisdictional Initiative

With over one-third of the world’s commercial fish stocks at biologically unsustainable levels, aquaculture poised to continue growing to meet global demand for seafood, and impending climate change impacts, there is a clear need to scale mature market-based tools such as CRI models to address marine and freshwater health in a spatially meaningful and holistic way, taking ecological, social, political, and economic considerations into account.

#### Ecological Considerations

- There is a need to address seafood sustainability issues at an appropriate political and ecological scale that ensures the long-term sustainability of seafood resources, and of the underlying ecosystems upon which they depend. Traditional certification and ratings schemes tend to function on a fleet-by-fleet or individual farm basis. While this can address some important issues such as farm practices and farm resource use, it can also present key challenges around ‘leakage’ and ‘free riding’. “Bad actors” can operate in the same area as a certified fishery or farm, due to lack of addressing critical issues at a system-wide level. Seafood jurisdictional initiatives seek to address this by incorporating all actors at a relevant jurisdictional scale.

- Seafood jurisdictional initiatives also seek to address other environmental issues that impact the health and resilience of the ecosystem and are not explicitly accounted for in traditional CRI efforts, such as climate change impacts on production and associated ecosystems, cumulative environmental impacts in a region, and ecosystem-level biodiversity loss.

## **Social Considerations**

- Traditional CRI efforts do not fully incorporate social responsibility considerations. In addition, traditional CRI efforts often focus on a specific supply chain or fishery/farming operation, limiting larger regional or national mitigation and/or remediation efforts with respect to human and labor rights violations.
- Jurisdictional initiatives are locally driven and locally defined through a multi-stakeholder forum, providing an opportunity to improve inclusivity of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and democratize planning and management. This also allows for potential engagement of smallholders who often do not participate in certification due to cost and capacity constraints.

## **Political Considerations**

- The co-development of a seafood jurisdictional initiative with local stakeholders creates an opportunity for regional, national, and sub-national political priorities to be incorporated within the improvement framework to catalyze more durable change. While a seafood jurisdictional initiative will be focused on a particular commodity including its local stakeholders and relevant governance structure, it will also need to address and consider other users/industries/drivers and their stakeholders and regulatory frameworks driving towards systemic changes.

## **Economic Considerations**

- Certification and improvement efforts often put the onus on fishers, farmers, workers, or companies to invest in meeting the performance standards, which can be especially difficult and expensive for small-scale fishers and farmers. Multi-stakeholder efforts, such as jurisdictional initiatives, provide opportunities to share costs across the public and private sectors, and potentially financial institutions. Through blending of financial sources, risk profiles in the different components of a jurisdictional initiative can be matched with appropriate risk appetites of the various financing sources.

Figure 4 presents a high-level, generic Theory of Change for jurisdictional initiatives for the seafood sector. Each jurisdictional initiative should develop their own specific, more detailed theory of change to identify the underlying assumptions and risks to ensure the approach will contribute to the desired outcomes, and to support planning, implementation, and evaluation of the specific initiative.

Legend

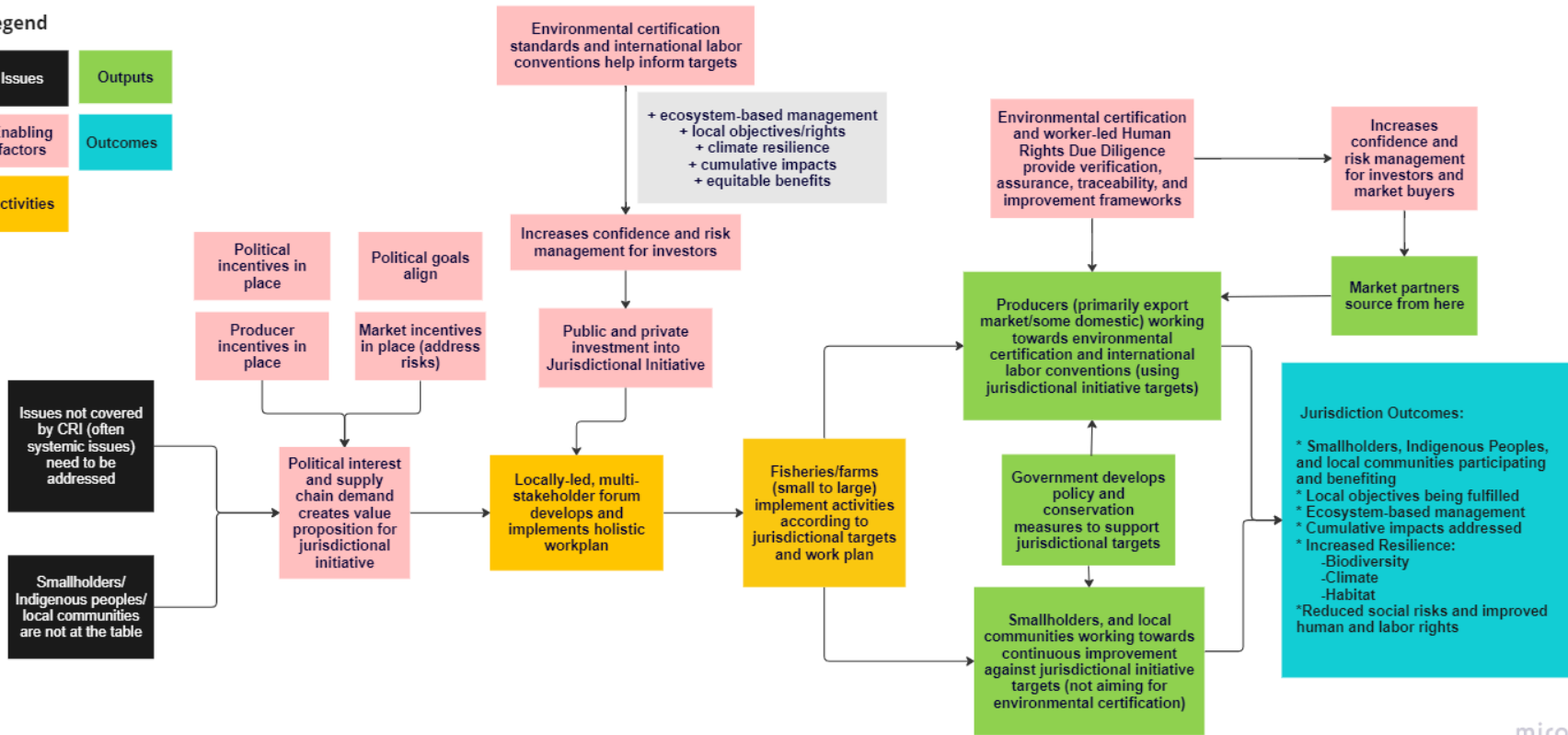


Figure 4. Generic Theory of Change for jurisdictional initiatives for the seafood sector

## 1.4 Who Benefits from a Jurisdictional Initiative?

Jurisdictional initiatives have the capacity to benefit stakeholders throughout a jurisdiction, including producers, government, supply chain companies, local communities, and Indigenous Peoples.

### Producers

- Market partners are increasingly committed to preferentially sourcing from and investing in the development of initiatives at the jurisdictional level, which address risks to their business, potentially providing a market incentive (e.g., higher, or fairer prices for product and/or access to new buyers, maintaining sourcing contracts).
- In some regions, fishers and farmers may seek stronger, science-based management at an ecosystem level because they see risks to their livelihoods/industry from factors such as declines in marine fisheries and marine wildlife, poor water quality, erosion from habitat loss, and mortality from unmanaged disease that could be better addressed by improvements in policy and enforcement.
- Across the world, poor aquaculture practices and overfishing have increasingly become public opinion concerns, in some places even threatening continued social license to operate. A seafood jurisdictional initiative can offer additional opportunities for industry leaders to engage in credible and meaningful efforts to demonstrate industry-wide progress in an ecosystem. They also offer an approach to raise the minimum bar, which may reduce overall industry reputational risks exacerbated by sometimes highly visible bad actors.
- Some jurisdictional initiatives may be able to provide equitable distribution of benefits – something that has not often been seen in traditional CRI efforts.
- Jurisdictional initiatives incorporate both environmental and social considerations (such as decent work, human rights, and community well-being) – historically, traditional CRI efforts have focused on one or the other or both, but in a limited way.

### Governments

- Jurisdictional initiatives can address risks from climate change, biodiversity loss, environmental degradation, and unethical human rights and labor practices that threaten productivity within a sourcing region, helping secure long-term health of marine and aquatic resources and thus increase the health and resilience of national fisheries and aquaculture production. This in turn supports national and local governments to deliver national and international-level commitments against conventions, such as the Convention of Biodiversity (CBD) and the Paris agreement on climate.
- Increase stability of nationally important food products for domestic consumption and export, protecting the economic security and livelihoods of constituents.



- Build a reputation as a government that manages its ocean and aquatic resources in ways that improve biodiversity, increase climate resilience, and protect the rights of fishers, farmers, and local communities.

## **Market Partners**

- Jurisdictional initiatives can address risks from climate change, biodiversity loss, environmental degradation, and unethical human rights and labor practices that threaten productivity within a sourcing region, helping secure long-term health of marine resources and thus stabilizing supply.
- The strong emphasis on multi-stakeholder engagement across the jurisdiction and alignment with government priorities helps to reduce potential local community and operational risks.
- Seafood jurisdictional initiatives offer a framework to contribute meaningfully to restoration, protection, and sustainable production that can address these larger, systemic challenges while simultaneously supporting wider corporate social responsibility and sustainability targets.
- Jurisdictional initiatives address sustainability challenges beyond individual supply chains to the broader sourcing region, such as climate change and biodiversity loss, meaningfully contributing to sustainable production, protection, and restoration of a production region. For example, addressing cumulative water quality impacts that affect farm mortality rates and therefore ultimately supply stability.
- Seafood jurisdictional initiatives can help improve value chain efficiency (including social and environmental externalities that increasingly affect bottom lines), mainly through avoided costs.
- When supported by robust monitoring and evaluation systems, jurisdictional initiatives may provide companies a way to credibly claim positive impacts as part of larger-scale improvements.

## **Local Communities/Indigenous Peoples**

- Jurisdictional initiatives provide local communities and Indigenous Peoples a platform to engage and eventually secure improved socio-economic security, continued dialogue with policymakers and private actors, and potential access to financing through public-private partnerships.
- Jurisdictional initiatives provide an opportunity to improve inclusivity and democratize planning and management of resources.

## 1.5 Metrics

All credible seafood jurisdictional initiatives seeking to drive change need to have a strong monitoring framework in place, with metrics relevant to the jurisdiction that will enable stakeholders to assess progress against the initiative's targets and milestones. The most effective metrics will be tied directly to performance against environmental, social, and economic outcomes at the jurisdictional level. However, given a jurisdictional initiative can span 8-30 years, it is also recommended to include pathway indicators to capture important initial steps that will lead to measurable outcomes over time.

The appropriate metrics for a specific jurisdictional initiative will depend on the local context but should tie to overall biodiversity, climate, social, and economic goals of the effort, including outcome goals and pathway goals focused on better management/policies and information to support effective implementation of those policies (Table 2). It is important to consider credibility and scope of existing metrics for tracking progress against identified indicators as well as information availability and frequency of other assessments upon which jurisdictional initiative tracking might rely.

ISEAL (2022b) describes that appropriate metrics for assessing performance improvements relative to targets should aspire to:

- Measure the status or trends in a specific sustainability outcome;
- Be standardized and applied consistently to facilitate comparability of findings over time. This is also a prerequisite for being able to aggregate data from multiple actors in a jurisdiction;
- Align with existing seascape or jurisdictional metrics, linking the monitoring with that of the states and municipalities within the seascape or jurisdiction;
- Be sensitive enough to detect relevant changes from a baseline state;
- Be consistent with SMART guidelines (i.e., specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound) so they can be objectively measured;
- Be cost efficient and not overly complex, recognizing that in some cases, more costly or specialized data might provide more reliable results; and
- Be defined in quantitative terms but supplemented by qualitative information when appropriate (e.g., for social issues like land conflict or forced labor).

While the best outcome and pathway metrics for a specific jurisdictional initiative will depend on the local context, when identifying appropriate metrics, it is important to also consider factors such as the frequency of external assessments that may be relied upon and/or the funding and capacity available within a project to conduct regular monitoring. In addition, because fishery and aquaculture production frequently occur within data-deficient systems and existing indices and metrics often are incomplete or come with caveats, it is critical to carefully define and communicate what is truly captured by the metrics identified for the jurisdictional initiative. Table 2 recommends minimum jurisdictional initiative components to be measured and Table 3 includes suggested resources to consult when setting location- and issue-specific metrics for a jurisdictional initiative.

**Table 2.** Suggested minimum jurisdictional initiative components.

<b>JA Category</b>	<b>Component</b>	<b>Metric Category</b>
<b>Biodiversity</b>	Fish stock/species health and abundance	Outcomes
		Legal Frameworks/Policies
		Information
	Endangered, Threatened, and Protected species	Outcomes
		Legal Frameworks/Policies
		Information
	Bycatch	Outcomes
		Legal Frameworks/Policies
		Information
	Ghost fishing	Outcomes
		Legal Frameworks/Policies
		Information
Habitats	Outcomes	
	Legal Frameworks/Policies	
	Information	
<b>Climate</b>	Climate-resilient fishery management	Outcomes
		Legal Frameworks/Policies
		Information
	Climate-resilient aquaculture	Outcomes
		Legal Frameworks/Policies
		Information
	Carbon emissions (fishing/transshipment/production)	Outcomes
		Legal Frameworks/Policies
		Information
<b>Social</b>	Human and labor rights (including civil, political, economic, cultural, social, collective, and Indigenous rights)	Outcomes
		Legal Frameworks/Policies
		Information
	Participation, inclusion, and informed consent in decision-making, resource planning, and management	Outcomes
		Legal Frameworks/Policies
		Information
<b>Economic</b>	Socio-economic benefits from fishery/farm (direct and indirect)	Outcomes
		Legal Frameworks/Policies
		Information

**Table 3.** Suggested resources for jurisdictional initiative metrics.

<b>Suggested Resources</b>
<b>Biodiversity</b>
Ocean Health Index
MSC performance indicators
ASC performance indicators
Stock assessment databases, e.g.:
o ICES Stock Assessment Database
o NAFO Stock Assessment Database
o Australian Stock Assessment Database
o Mediterranean Stock Assessments
ISSF Best Practices reports
IUCN Red List Database
Living Planet Index
Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI) Data Portal
FAO abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear guidance
FAO Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem (VME) Database
FAO benthic biodiversity indices
Clark Labs Coastal Habitat Mapping: Mangrove and Pond Aquaculture Conversion
Global Mangrove Watch
WTO Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes
PAS 1550
Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability
<b>Climate</b>
EDF Climate-Resilient Fisheries Toolkit
MSC performance indicators
ASC performance indicators
ISSF Best Practices reports
Setting Science-Based Targets in the Seafood Sector
Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Seafood Production
Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch and Dalhousie University Seafood Carbon Emissions Tool
World Economic Forum on Scope 1, 2 and 3
<b>Social</b>
ILO Fundamental Conventions & Rights at Work, ILO C188
Social Responsibility Assessment Tool
Seafood Stewardship Index Social Responsibility Methodology
Worker- Driven Social Responsibility Statement of Principles
Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication
The International Bill of Human Rights
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights
ILO Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, ILO Fundamental Conventions
ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy
PAS 1550: 2017 Code of Practice
UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
SDG Tracker
Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) of Indigenous Peoples
Social equity is key to sustainable ocean governance- Crosman, K.M., Allison, E.H., Ota, Y. et al. <a href="https://www.nature.com/articles/s44183-022-00001-7">https://www.nature.com/articles/s44183-022-00001-7</a>
<b>Economic</b>
Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) of Indigenous Peoples
Bennett NJ et al (2021) Advancing Social Equity in and Through Marine Conservation. Front. Mar. Sci. "Potential attributes to measure the elements of social equity" <a href="https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmars.2021.711538/full">https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmars.2021.711538/full</a>
Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests in the Context of National Food Security

## 1.6 Claims

Jurisdictional initiative participants may choose to become involved simply to engage with other actors around risks, risk mitigation, or problem-solving opportunities, whereas others may be driven by other incentives associated with participation. There are a variety of claims that seafood jurisdictional initiative participants can utilize to communicate with internal and external stakeholders (ISEAL 2022b):

- Process, outcome, and risk management claims about jurisdictional structures
- Investment or action claims
- Status and trend claims about jurisdictional progress

The following statements showcase examples of claims concerning jurisdictional initiative **structures** (i.e., the structural elements necessary for the initiative to be effective, such as engaged stakeholders, governance, a progress framework outlining timebound milestones, financing, and a monitoring system; ISEAL 2022b). No single stakeholder group should claim they have achieved these outcomes on their own, given the collaborative process of jurisdictional initiatives.

- Process: *We are co-developing a jurisdictional initiative that will help align practices amongst our seafood suppliers in the Pacific Island region within the next five years.*
  - Credible process-related claims can be made once timelines and milestones have been defined, against which future progress can be measured.
- Outcome: *We have a strong foundation in place to ensure strong and deep community engagement throughout the initiative.*
  - These initiatives can make claims about the structures and governance systems they have put in place (around stakeholder engagement, governance, financing, outcomes, action plans, and monitoring), but only after they have been established.
- Risk management: *We have processes in place to manage risks of human and labor rights violations within the supply chains and local communities are actively engaged in the initiative.*
  - Claims about managing risk tied to negative environmental, social, or economic outcomes can only be made if the risk area is a focus of the jurisdictional initiative and the necessary structural elements are in place (e.g., governance and monitoring systems).

Investment or direct action in a jurisdiction aims to address sustainability challenges at a scale that is meaningful for delivering impact. However, improvements in sustainability performance at the scale of the jurisdiction can take time to transpire. Prior to those jurisdictional performance improvements being achieved, stakeholders can make claims about their investments or participation in jurisdictional actions. For seafood companies engaging in jurisdictional initiatives, robust action claims can help support their corporate reporting and disclosure (ISEAL 2023).

ISEAL (2023) outlines the following seven core elements that jurisdictional action claims are expected to include:

1. Description of the type of jurisdictional action;
2. The sustainability outcome prioritized by local stakeholders towards which the action is contributing;
3. Scale and duration of the action or investment, and whether it is financial or in-kind;
4. Geographic area where the action is occurring;
5. Timing and duration of the action;
6. The name of the jurisdictional initiative; and
7. Partners with whom the action is being implemented.

In addition, as the action is being implemented, the stakeholder groups engaging in and/or supporting the jurisdictional initiative are expected to report on progress against time-bound milestones that are defined at the outset of the project.

The following is an example of an **action claim** that incorporates the core elements:

- We are contributing \$X over five years to support efforts in [insert geographic name] with [insert name of implementing partners]. Our goal is to support [insert name of the jurisdictional initiative] to achieve its vision of [insert initiative's overall goal including date by which goal will be achieved]. Since X date, we have been investing in A and B types of activities that aim to [insert the initiative's outcome(s) that the actions contribute to] by Y date.

Stakeholders making claims about their jurisdictional investments or actions should make the information publicly and easily accessible, (e.g., on their website, in sustainability reports, or through public reporting by the jurisdictional initiative itself).

The following showcase examples of claims concerning **performance** of the jurisdictional initiative (ISEAL 2022b):

- **Status:** *Within this jurisdiction, 30% of the fish stocks are overfished.*
  - These claims state the current performance status of an issue and use actual data.
- **Trend:** *Within this jurisdiction, wages of local workers have increased by 15% over the past three years, aligning with living wage estimates for the region.*
  - These claims express change in performance against a baseline.

No single stakeholder group should make **attribution** claims (i.e., We are responsible for a specific performance outcome), as it is often difficult to show a direct cause and effect relationship, and it disregards the influence of others in achieving the outcomes (ISEAL 2022a).

**It is important to note that seafood buyers and other stakeholders participating in a jurisdictional initiative should not claim premature or augmented successes. As noted previously, jurisdictional initiatives span a significant timeline, and associated claims should appropriately reflect the improvement journey over time. Given initiative duration, participants should expect that outcomes may not be obtained for many years (for example, improved fish stock health, given species generation times), and participants will need to focus for some time on process and engagement claims first, which highlight ongoing progress toward laying the groundwork for an effective jurisdictional initiative.**

## **1.7 Verification**

Verification of any jurisdictional claim is critical, as it ensures the integrity of the claim itself. Different levels of verification are required for structural, action, and performance claims due to the nature of the respective claims.

### *Verification of Structural Claims*

Verification of structural claims consists of reviewing documentation of the structures and operating systems that have been put into place. A high degree of transparency is necessary. Information about the structure, agreements, financing, timelines, milestones, and actions of the jurisdictional initiative should be made publicly accessible or documentation should be formally reviewed by either a second or third-party (ISEAL 2022b).

### *Verification of Action Claims*

Participants making action claims should make sufficient supporting information publicly and easily accessible, so others are able to confirm the accuracy of the statements made, including that the stated actions have been undertaken. In practice, progress will often be communicated by the implementing partner or jurisdictional initiative (ISEAL 2023).

### *Verification of Performance Claims*

The degree and level of independence of verification needed will depend on the claims made, track record of the jurisdictional initiative, level of transparency of the data, and trustworthiness of the data providers. A credible monitoring framework is key, one that specifies the indicators being monitored, guidance for measuring accurately and consistently against the indicators, the quality and relevance of data required, and how well the data are collected and managed (ISEAL 2022b).

ISEAL notes the appropriate extent and independence of verification should be determined by the amount of confidence the makers and receivers of the jurisdictional initiative claims need to have. The appropriate level of assurance will be affected by factors such as the:

- type of claims being made
- importance of the environmental and/or socio-economic issues being addressed
- past performance of the jurisdictional initiative

- transparency of the performance data
- reliability of the data sources and providers

Where verification is determined to be necessary and/or beneficial, it must evaluate both the quality and relevance of the collected data with respect to the specific performance or process claims, as well as the reliability and trustworthiness of the monitoring process. The quality of data can be reflected in the relevance, accuracy, spatial and temporal resolution, and availability of the data source.

ISEAL (2022b) provides guidance on how to assess the quality of the data provided, the relevance of the data to the claims being made, and the integrity of the monitoring process. Verification approaches should meet the following principles:

- A consistent, documented methodology is applied when assessing data integrity.
- Evaluators have documented qualifications appropriate for the topics being verified.
- There is some degree of independence in the verification process (data collectors, data managers, and those conducting verification should be impartial). Independent third-party verification is important when market-facing claims are being made to minimize risks of impartiality and ensure transparency
- A high degree of transparency – relevant information is made easily and publicly accessible.

Credible verification that ensures the integrity of the tracking process also relies on:

- whether the metrics used to evaluate performance are appropriate and relevant to the key issues within the jurisdiction, and whether they align with established jurisdictional measurement frameworks;
- the degree to which the data management protocols have been effectively implemented in practice;
- the reliability of the data analysis in drawing valid conclusions about the jurisdiction's performance; and
- the accuracy and clarity of communication in presenting the findings of the analysis.

The final verification approach should strive to meet the four key principles for verification of performance in jurisdictional projects defined by ISEAL (2022b): consistency, competence, impartiality, and transparency. Verification is ideally conducted by an independent third party to help ensure alignment with these principles.

## **1.8 Traceability and Transparency**

Traceability and transparency are critical components to seafood jurisdictional initiatives, helping to address seafood fraud and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing/farming (which is highly correlated with seafood worker exploitation and abuse) and supporting the verification of sustainable and responsible practices and stakeholder participation. Transparent and easily shared harvest/farm data provides governments with the information needed for decision-making



and fisheries/aquaculture management strategies; enables buyers to verify claims about legal, social, and environmental performance of products; and empowers producers to meet both local and import market requirements (e.g., legality, food safety) and help them meet consumer demands for more transparent and responsible supply chains.

Government officials and fishery/farm managers can use traceability tools as part of their work to improve the regulatory management of their fisheries and aquaculture farms. For example, traceability information can complement data used to set up management plans and protected areas and establish effective policies and regulations. Traceability systems are required as a component of jurisdictional initiative action plans and seafood certification schemes and can benefit developing countries with data-poor fisheries/farms. In addition, traceability systems can help establish effective and efficient data collection, sharing and storage, as typically data come from multiple agencies and companies that cannot easily exchange shared supply chain data.

To create better visibility throughout their supply chains, companies need to be able to trace seafood products back to the source of production – for wild-capture seafood this includes collecting key data elements (KDEs) such as vessel identity and fishing trip date, and for farmed seafood it includes KDEs such as the farm’s geographic location and the geographic location of feed and other raw material inputs used in aquatic production. Supply chain transparency and traceability is fundamental if companies are to credibly claim they are supporting improvements—both within their supply chains and at the jurisdictional level. Various technology platforms exist to help companies advance their supply chain traceability and better understand their jurisdictional level impacts. Ensuring transparent processes and structures is critical to both the internal and external credibility of a jurisdictional initiative.

When jurisdictional initiatives get to the point where claims associated with seafood products are sought, seafood jurisdictional initiatives should follow best practice guidelines for single supply chain traceability. This includes obtaining Chain of Custody certification for fisheries/farms (e.g., ASC/MSC) and following industry-wide interoperable standards developed by the Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST). The GDST has four core areas: (i) defining which Key Data Elements should be collected and when, (ii) aligning industry expectations around criteria for reliable data verification, (iii) fostering data sharing and interoperability by defining technology standards and data access protocols that allow proprietary traceability systems to communicate with one another, and (iv) aligning seafood traceability systems with modernizing regulatory standards, such as national IUU regulations (e.g., EU, US and UK). The GDST standards can and should be implemented within both industry and government systems, harmonizing data reporting requirements, streamlining data exchange, and easing compliance with both government regulations and end-buyer policies.

The following resources provide further guidance on the tools mentioned in this section, which can be used to implement robust traceability within a jurisdictional initiative (we recommend reviewing these resources in the order in which they are listed):

- [Guidance and Tools for Traceability in Fishery Improvement Projects](#): Comprehensive guidance and practical tools to help Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) practitioners and stakeholders successfully implement traceability in fisheries, to achieve improved FIP outcomes and encourage more transparent and responsible practices across the fishing industry.
- [GDST Standards and Materials](#): Resource library containing up to date information about the Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability, the GDST technical standards, and other supportive materials.
- [MSC Chain of Custody](#): Resources on the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Chain of Custody Standard
- [ASC Chain of Custody](#): Resources on the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) Chain of Custody Standard

## 1.9 Lessons Learned

Lessons learned described here are learnings from relatively early-stage (and primarily terrestrial) jurisdictional initiatives, with over half operating for five years or less.

- **Appropriate geographic boundaries need to be defined.** The boundaries of the initiative need to align the scope of environmental degradation with decision-making authority, capacity, and policy frameworks, without being too large. The boundary should produce enough product volume to meet market demand, and the trade value should be large enough to attract financial institutions to engage and invest.
- **A backbone organization is necessary.** A coordinating body is necessary for driving stakeholder engagement, vision-building, and technical assistance for capacity building. This organization should have the skills, reputation, and credibility to engage with and bring in diverse actors and stakeholders.
- **A common vision and multiple, balanced objectives matter.** A strong vision for management of natural resources within the jurisdiction facilitates effective multi-stakeholder engagement and helps orient resources and human capacity toward common goals. The objectives of the initiative must carefully balance local needs and goals with larger regional, national, or even international targets.
- **Strong community engagement and stakeholder participation is critical.** Strong multi-stakeholder engagement is critical for building trust and incentivizing best practice, for data-collection (especially in data-poor regions), and for ensuring policies and actions serve all stakeholders.

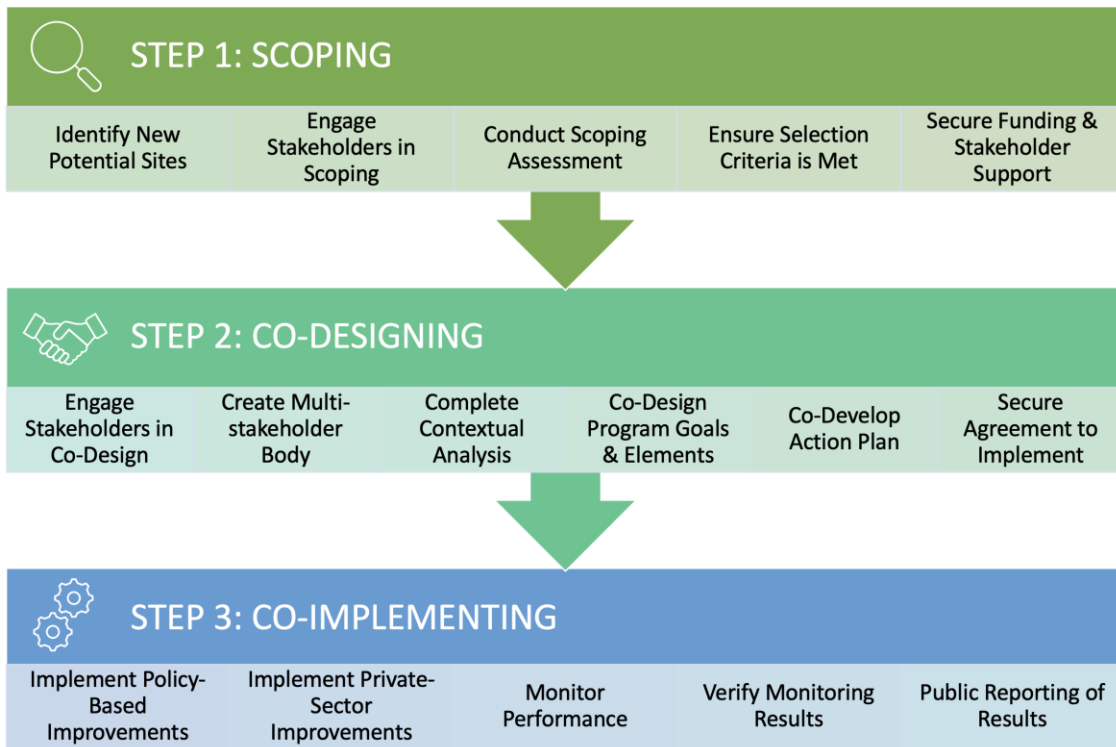
- **Meaningful engagement with Indigenous populations and local communities is key.** Participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities helps focus governance on addressing issues around land/sea/resource rights, human and labor rights abuses, equity, conflict resolution, and wider challenges to sustainability.
- **Government must be the driving force.** Government must be a core stakeholder committed to formal multi-stakeholder participation and decision-making. Initiatives that lack government engagement, such as supply chain improvements, do not fit into the jurisdictional initiative definition.
- **Private sector actors are crucial for success.** Companies must be engaged, influential, and supportive of the vision and plan, given the dominant role that market forces often play in driving jurisdictional level change.
- **Strong partnerships with producer cooperatives or associations can boost success.** These cooperatives/associations are often the entry point to scaling impact across dozens to thousands of small-scale fishers/farmers.
- **Robust, transparent, and collaborative multi-stakeholder development processes and decision-making platforms are needed.** A strong collaborative platform that provides transparency, frequent communication, and continued coordination is necessary to keep the project on course and ensure strong engagement across government, industry, local communities, and civil society sectors, which is necessary for success.
- **Technical partners are needed to support blended finance.** A technical assistance partner is needed to coordinate and develop an integrated set of investable projects to attract private capital and coordinate activities across the blended finance landscape. Having such a partner helps in de-risking the initiative for investors.



## Section 2. How to Implement Jurisdictional Initiatives

This section is designed around Figure 5 and provides guidance about the main steps in scoping, co-designing, and co-implementing jurisdictional initiatives for the seafood sector.

- The Scoping Step involves bringing stakeholders together and understanding the context in a seafood production system.
- The Co-Designing Step involves engaging stakeholders to diagnose the environmental, social, and economic performance of a seafood production system and create a shared vision for success with specific triple-bottom-line improvement goals for that system. The co-design step will also require that initiative partners agree on an improvement action plan with appropriate metrics to measure progress and develop a monitoring framework to track progress.
- The Implementing Step involves implementing the policy and private sector interventions outlined in the action plan, conducting regular monitoring and verification of improvement results, and public reporting of those results to ensure transparency.



**Figure 5.** Process to create new seafood jurisdictional initiatives

Jurisdictional initiatives need a robust design that supports credibility—to reinforce strong collaboration among diverse stakeholders, to support and incentivize the behavior and practice shifts necessary for driving change, to provide verifiable data that triggers continued release of resources such as funding, and to allow for continued evaluation and adaptation to ensure long-term targets are met. While jurisdictional initiatives will differ, they must fundamentally be focused on addressing key environmental, social, and production issues in the region.

## Step 1. Scoping

Scoping of jurisdictional initiatives often involves bringing stakeholders together and understanding the context in a seafood production system, including the following key steps: (1.1) Identify new potential jurisdictional initiative sites, (1.2) Engage stakeholders in scoping (1.3) Conduct a scoping assessment, and (1.4) Secure funding and stakeholder support for co-design. Each of these steps is described in further detail below.

### 1.1. Identify new potential jurisdictional initiative sites

Jurisdictional initiatives have traditionally been initiated in one of three ways (Table 4):

1. A political leader prioritizes the development of these types of initiatives to achieve the government’s goals in an area under its jurisdiction.
2. Private sector actors commit to and/or invest in supporting the development of jurisdictional initiatives to increase their supply chain resilience.
3. NGOs, civil society, donors, or other “backbone” organizations initiate and fund the planning and design of jurisdictional initiatives based on observed needs in an area, including ecosystem and local community resilience.

**Table 4.** Case studies illustrating different ways in which jurisdictional initiatives for wild-caught tuna have been initiated.

Political Leadership	Private Sector Commitment	NGO Coordination
<p>As highlighted in Section 1, the PNA tuna fishery is among the best examples of a large-scale fishery jurisdictional initiative. The cooperation between eight Pacific Island governments was born out of a need to adapt the inadequate tuna management schemes at the time, as well as a recognition that these tuna resource-owning countries could derive greater economic benefits through cooperation on policy reform.</p> <p>Since its establishment, the PNA agreement has benefitted from considerable political buy-in and ownership by government partners and has resulted in significant economic returns to these countries, from US\$60 million</p>	<p>In 2021, the U.K. supermarket chain Tesco introduced a new ‘Seascape’ sourcing approach to marine sustainability to ensure whole marine ecosystems are maintained in a healthy, productive way. Through this new approach to tuna sourcing, developed in partnership with WWF, Tesco will work with suppliers and others across the industry to implement a roadmap that leads to sourcing only from fisheries with an ecosystem-based management approach by 2030.</p> <p>The new seascape approach, which mirrors the landscape approach adopted in the Tesco UK Zero Deforestation Soy Transition Plan (2018), has been specifically designed to align with and build on existing</p>	<p>In 2022, the French overseas territory of New Caledonia and the Pacific Island nation of Fiji initiated jurisdictional initiatives for their longline tuna fisheries. The initiatives in each country were scoped following a set of engagements by Conservation International (CI) with the domestic industries that were focused on highlighting how engaging in a jurisdictional initiative could be beneficial to the local industry. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the industry in each country (Seafood Source, March 2023), which subsequently paved the way for an expanded partnership with government authorities.</p> <p>In New Caledonia, the jurisdictional initiative now</p>

<p>in 2010 to around US\$500 million in 2019.</p> <p>More recent examples of political leadership in the scoping of seafood jurisdictional initiatives can be found in the Cook Islands, where Prime Minister Henry Puna convened public, private, and civil society stakeholders to develop a national tuna 'gold-standard'. The latter commitment from the highest level of political leadership prompted the development of a new national tuna policy through a collaboration between the national technical agencies and ministries, private sector partners, and civil society groups (Cook Islands News 2019).</p>	<p>tools and guidelines already widely used by the industry, including the guidelines of the Global Tuna Alliance (GTA), the NGO Tuna Forum, and the MSC (Seafood Source 2021).</p>	<p>includes 100 percent of the local industry, ensuring all tuna fisheries operating within the political jurisdiction of New Caledonia's exclusive economic zone meet the highest standards required by high-value tuna markets.</p> <p>In Fiji, the partnership involves the Fiji Fishing Industry Association (FFIA), CI, WWF, and the Ministry of Fisheries, which will promote the integration of policy and market-based strategies to improve the economic, environmental, and social performance of tuna fisheries at a jurisdictional scale.</p>
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The examples in Table 4 provide a blueprint for how new potential jurisdictional initiative sites can be identified, such as the presence of, or ability or need to harness government and/or market partner support at the appropriate ecological and political scales. Support from government, private sector, civil society, and donors is critical for the successful design and implementation of effective jurisdictional initiatives, although endorsement by each of these partners is likely to be secured at different stages in the project. The availability of support from at least two of these stakeholder groups during the scoping phase is critical and can be used as selection criteria to identify new potential sites (Box 2).

<p><b>Box 2.</b> Selection criteria for scoping new jurisdictional initiatives</p>
<p><b>Political Will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government leaders or other decision-making authorities have expressed interest in strengthening environmental sustainability, social responsibility, and sustainable development within a seafood production area. These leaders have the institutional capacity, resources, and willingness to partner to achieve this vision. Several jurisdictional initiatives have started with the articulation and endorsement of a high-level vision for sustainable development in the jurisdiction by its elected leader (Seymour et al. 2020).</li> </ul>

**Private Sector Interest:**

- Local producers, processing facilities, and/or exporters have expressed interest in designing a seafood jurisdictional initiative. Alternatively, international importers and market partners are currently sourcing from the geography and/or have expressed tangible interest in directly supporting ecosystem-focused environmental sustainability and/or improving the social welfare of fishers/farmers, surrounding communities, and workers in the supply chain.

**Financial Opportunity:**

- Public, private, and/or philanthropic financing drives the initial development of these types of initiatives.

**Social Support, Including Local Champions, Indigenous Leadership and/or NGO Coordination:**

- The presence of strong local support and/or NGO leadership in developing jurisdictional initiatives based on the ecological and/or socio-economic importance of a particular area.

**Biological Significance:**

- Area is of national, regional, or international significance in terms of its biological attributes (Atkinson et al. 2011). For jurisdictional initiatives focused on one or two commodities, these specific seafood resources must be of particular significance to government and industry participants, since these stakeholders will need to engage in the design and implementation of policy- and market-based improvement strategies over an extended time horizon. Additional elements of biological significance that may motivate other stakeholders include biological diversity, important ecosystem features, and iconic species (for instance, totemic shark species for local Indigenous groups).

**Need for Improvements at a Jurisdictional Scale:**

- The improvements needed across a jurisdiction cannot be addressed completely through traditional market approaches, such as certifications and ratings schemes or traditional conservation, such as protected area designation. Noting the range of existing certifications and standards that exist for sustainable seafood, project developers should identify sites where traditional approaches alone are not well suited to achieve the desired improvements and sustainability outcomes (See *Section 1.2: When to Implement Jurisdictional Initiatives Versus Other Approaches* and Kittinger et al. 2021 for additional information).

**1.2 Engage stakeholders in scoping**

Developing a jurisdictional initiative is an inclusive process designed to ensure that a wide variety of stakeholders with varying perspectives are an integral part of the project from start to finish. This helps guarantee that activities are appropriate for the socio-political context of the fishery or aquaculture farms in the region.

Noting the need for support by one or more of the key stakeholders described in Box 3 below, project developers should engage a range of stakeholders in scoping new potential jurisdictional initiatives. Participants will vary depending on the nature of the project, but will often include:

- Government officials
- Fishers (industrial, artisanal, Indigenous, recreational)
- Aquaculture producers (small, medium, and large) and producer groups
- Labor associations/unions and/or fisher/farmer/worker-led organizations
- Other supply chain members and associated workers (e.g., hatcheries, feed mills, traders, processors, retailers, and importers/exporters)
- Fishery managers/aquaculture regulators
- Customary and Indigenous groups/local communities within ecosystem
- Academics, scientific and/or technical expertise
- Environmental NGOs and other civil society organizations

The roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder group will vary by jurisdictional initiative, depending on its unique circumstances. Effective strategies for engaging stakeholders will also vary but include developing outreach materials, hosting workshops, and—critically—building out relevant incentives for each stakeholder group. Understanding these incentives can also determine the most effective and credible ways to bring market-based leverage and actors into the jurisdictional initiative framework for that geography. As some stakeholders may not join the effort, or may take time to become engaged, this should be identified and factored into outreach and planning strategies.

### **1.3 Conduct a scoping assessment**

Once new potential sites have been identified, project developers should conduct a scoping assessment to evaluate whether the key enabling conditions are in place, or could be created, to support the successful co-design of a jurisdictional initiative (Figure 2).

The main findings of the scoping assessment could be captured in a relatively succinct document that provides the following:

- Brief description of the target geography and characteristics of the seafood production system.
- Summary of the key systemic environmental and socio-economic issues that have been identified in the seafood production system, including through the stakeholder engagement process. These key issues should focus on adoption of best management practices, impacts of the industry on biodiversity and habitat loss in the ecosystem, threats to people's rights and livelihoods, and risks around climate instability.
- Summary of the specific environmental and social goals the potential seafood jurisdictional initiative would seek to achieve, ensuring these respond to local priorities and conditions.
- Summary of the availability of support from key stakeholder groups highlighted in Box 2, including the presence of Political Will, Private Sector Interest, Financial Opportunity, Local Champion Leadership and/or NGO Coordination.



- Stakeholder group summary that includes a summary of discussions around incentives and motivations for each group, as well as how those various incentives could line up with credible requirements and systems for monitoring and evaluation, traceability, and other types of verification and assurance needed to build impactful markets-based leverage using a jurisdictional initiative.
- Explanation of why the initiative builds on, includes, or offers more opportunities to achieve environmental and social goals than other traditional markets-based fisheries/aquaculture improvement projects or certification pathways that have been used to leverage change (see *Section 1.2: When to Implement Jurisdictional Initiatives Versus Other Approaches* for additional information).

Desk-based reviews, as well as expert and stakeholder interviews can be used to guide the drafting of the scoping assessment. The tools outlined in Section 2.3 can also be used to inform the scoping assessment; however, project developers should not seek to address all the elements highlighted by those tools. The level of analysis required to scope, co-design, and ultimately implement a seafood jurisdictional initiative will include a series of steps that become increasingly more detailed. The scoping assessment can be used as the basis for developing a more complete diagnostic assessment of the seafood production system under Step 2.3, once all the activities under Step 1 (Scoping) have been completed.

#### **1.4 Ensure selection criteria are met**

Following completion of the scoping assessment, project developers should ensure that at least two or more of the selection criteria for scoping new jurisdictional initiatives is met (Box 2), including:

- Political will
- Private sector interest
- Financial opportunity
- Social support, including local champions, Indigenous leadership and/or NGO coordination
- Biological significance
- Need for improvements at a jurisdictional scale

Additional enabling conditions for consideration are highlighted in Figure 2, including enabling legal frameworks and institutional capacity.

#### **1.5 Secure funding and stakeholder support for co-design**

Prior to initiating the co-design of a seafood jurisdictional initiative (Step 2), we recommend the main parties involved in the scoping phase sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or similar agreement that outlines the overall vision for the jurisdictional initiative and defines the specific roles and responsibilities of each entity. This ensures clear expectations from the outset about the role each group plays. This may not be possible in all scenarios.

Furthermore, project developers should aim to secure funding for the co-design process of the initiative, which typically comes from philanthropic sources or local governments who are leading.

## Step 2. Co-designing a Jurisdictional Initiative for Seafood

Co-designing a seafood jurisdictional initiative often involves engaging stakeholders to understand the context more fully in a seafood production system, creating a shared vision for success, and determining improvement goals for that system. Partners then agree on an improvement action plan, decide on metrics to measure progress, and develop a monitoring framework to track progress. As such co-designing a jurisdictional initiative often involves the following key steps:

- 2.1. Engage stakeholders to participate in the in the co-design phase.
- 2.2 Create a multi-stakeholder body to lead program design and implementation.
- 2.3. Complete a contextual analysis that identifies key systemic environmental and socio-economic challenges in the seafood production system, and against which improvements and performance claims will be measured.
- 2.4. Co-design the initiative’s goals and elements; this includes articulating a high-level vision and goals for the initiative, as well as defining meaningful, relevant metrics and key performance indicators to enable assessments of baseline performance and progress towards targets, milestones, and outcomes.
- 2.5. Develop a clearly defined, time-bound action plan that lays out steps to meet program milestones and outcomes. As part of these efforts, develop a detailed budget for activities to be implemented and secure funding. Finally, develop an effective monitoring framework including data governance systems and protocols to credibly gather, store, analyze, and use data, and monitoring frequency.
- 2.6. Secure an agreement to implement the action plan, including by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or similar.

### 2.1. Engage stakeholders in co-design

Building on the stakeholder engagement efforts initiated in Step 1.2, the key actors described in Box 2 should formalize their collaboration through the development of a multi-stakeholder body responsible for co-designing the main elements of the jurisdictional initiative (Box 3). Engagement might include developing a communication plan with stakeholders who initially chose not to be directly involved in the jurisdictional initiative.

#### **Box 3.** Roles and responsibilities in designing a jurisdictional initiative

##### **NGOs/jurisdictional initiative developers:**

- Project developers should support the transparent development of a representative, multi-stakeholder platform to ensure strong and consistent participation by all pertinent stakeholders. The resulting multi-stakeholder body will be responsible for leading the program design and implementation.
- Project developers will oftentimes also lead the drafting of the contextual analysis, which identifies key systemic environmental and socio-economic challenges in the seafood production system.
- Support co-design of market and policy-based strategies to address key deficiencies identified in the contextual analysis.

**Government:**

- Relevant levels of government should actively participate in the multi-stakeholder body to design and implement the initiative. A political (i.e., Office of the Prime Minister) or technical leadership group (i.e., Ministry of Fisheries) within the group may also lead the coordination of the group.
- Support the development of a contextual analysis, providing data and insights that can help identify key deficiencies in the seafood production system. This might include data from monitoring systems or government-led modeling.
- Lead co-design of policy-based strategies to address key deficiencies identified in the scoping assessment.

**Private sector:**

- *“Downstream companies could clarify market requests for sustainability if they meet directly or through multi-stakeholder platforms with their local suppliers; it means committing to the transformative potential of a JA by rewarding progress with purchases; better understanding and taking responsibility for company supply chains and their local effects; using influence and advocacy to bring together various parts of government with stakeholders to address issues at jurisdictional scale, and getting involved with the upstream production of products fundamental to a company’s portfolio”* (CI 2018). In the early stages this may begin as company-level interest in engaging with key issues in the regions via the jurisdictional initiative process and articulating risks around their business’s long-term procurement without needed changes.
- The fishing or aquaculture industry can support the development of a contextual analysis, providing data and insights that can help identify key deficiencies in the seafood production system. This may include collected data or any industry-led modeling or reports.
- Lead co-design of market-based strategies and private sector-led interventions to address key deficiencies identified in the scoping assessment.

**All:**

- *“Companies, donors and NGOs should support governments in those jurisdictions that have demonstrated commitment through an inclusive process and clear actions to reduce ecosystem impacts and improve sustainability of commodity production. As noted elsewhere, sustainability at the jurisdictional level is a difficult and long-term process. Implementing jurisdictional sustainability plans or “road maps” will be expensive, and government leaders willing to take on the challenge will need to see that their courage and commitments are being recognized and rewarded during the journey and not only at the end point. This is especially important if we hope and expect other jurisdictions to follow the leaders”* (CI 2018).

**Other actors, including local communities:**

- While some relevant actors and even industries in the seascape may not join the stakeholder platform or initiative design process, their views or interests can be considered, and they should receive information on the progress on development and design in methods and frequencies they indicate.

**2.2 Create a multi-stakeholder body**

Project developers should support the transparent development of a representative, multi-stakeholder platform to ensure strong and consistent participation and collaborative decision-making by all pertinent stakeholders. Considerable resources are available that highlight how to

create multi-stakeholder engagement processes and decision-making bodies, including the United Nations Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO) guidance about facilitating Multi-Stakeholder Processes (MSP; Box 4).

**Box 4.** FAO guidance on facilitating Multi-Stakeholder Processes (MSP)

*A Multi-Stakeholder Process (MSP) is fundamentally about participatory decision-making and information sharing at the country level. Key stakeholders should be represented and decide what issues to focus on and what actions to take. MSPs range from simple processes, such as one-off consultations, to more complex ones such as multi-stakeholder networks and partnerships.*

*What are the benefits of MSPs?*

- *Relevance: Local stakeholders best understand which activities are truly relevant to their needs and realistic in a specific context.*
- *Ownership and sustainability: Local stakeholders share information and jointly decide what actions to take. This leads to greater local ownership of activities and outcomes – which makes them more sustainable.*
- *Builds partnerships and alliances: Having a common goal strengthens partnerships and creates opportunities for dialogue and sharing resources.*

*Tips for facilitating MSPs:*

- *Designing the MSP: Key stakeholders should be involved in designing the MSP and coordinating the process.*
- *Selecting Participants: Conducting a Stakeholder Mapping exercise will ensure that you do not miss any important groups affected by the issue at hand. Select people at approximately the same level of authority and keep a gender balance. Suggested Tool: Stakeholder Mapping*
- *Facilitation: Local facilitators should have had prior training in facilitation techniques and use the local language. They should make sure women have a voice and that the meeting is truly participatory. FAO and similar organizations can support the process, but their role should be that of an observer or mentor rather than leading the MSP. Suggested Tool: MSP Facilitation Guidelines*
- *Structure and set up: Having a permanent platform for multi-stakeholder consultations will ensure that the benefits of MSPs continue beyond the scope of the project or program.*
- *Process: During meetings, minimize long plenary presentations by experts and maximize group work and discussions. Different people should have the opportunity to take the floor and report back to plenary. Suggested Tool: Socratic Questions*
- *Common Goal: Stakeholders often have different, sometimes even conflicting, goals and objectives. MSPs can be used to find common ground and build a shared vision for the future. Suggested Tool: Visioning*

For additional guidance about the steps in setting up an MSP, see: <https://www.fao.org/capacity-development/resources/practical-tools/multi-stakeholder-processes/en/>

Ultimately, the multi-stakeholder body will be responsible for leading the program design and implementation. A strong collaborative platform that provides transparency, frequent communication, and continued coordination is necessary to keep the project on course and ensure strong engagement across government, industry, local communities, and civil society sectors, which is necessary for success. Additional resources about how to set up multi-

stakeholder platforms (Adekunle and Fatunmbi 2012), and potential challenges around these bodies (Faysse 2006) are also readily available from the scientific literature.

### **2.3 Complete a contextual analysis that identifies key systemic environmental and socio-economic challenges in the seafood production system, against which improvements and performance claims will be measured.**

Once a new potential jurisdictional initiative has been scoped, ideally including securing funding and stakeholder support, project developers should conduct a more complete contextual analysis to evaluate key socio-economic, environmental, cultural, and political contexts within which the initiative will be developed. The contextual analysis should identify key deficiencies in the seafood production system, as well as provide insights into whether key enabling conditions are in place, or could be created, to support the successful co-design of jurisdictional initiatives.

Identifying the most pressing environmental, social, and economic issues to be addressed in a seafood production system can be facilitated using various diagnostic tools. Credible seafood jurisdictional initiatives are centered on identifying the environmental issues around habitat and biodiversity as well as climate resilience and systemic social challenges in that region. We highlight various methodologies and tools below, which can be used to identify key deficiencies and leverage points for improving the triple-bottom-line performance of seafood production systems.

While we are not prescriptive about which methodologies to use, we recommend project developers begin to highlight key issues using rigorous diagnostic tools recognized by their market partners. For instance, if a target seafood commodity within a jurisdiction is intended to be sold to a retailer requiring products certified by the MSC, ASC, or BAP, project developers should at least utilize these assessment frameworks for environmental sustainability to help identify systemic issues across the jurisdiction. While certification standards are generally specific to the performance of an individual fishery or aquaculture farm, some indicators capture performance at the jurisdictional level, such as the effectiveness of national fishery management measures. Existing certification reports can be useful information sources and provide a level of verification of status against specific performance indicators that apply across the jurisdiction.

Note however, the environmental certification standards and other internationally recognized certification and ratings schemes may not include all the considerations that are important to jurisdictional initiative stakeholders (e.g., cumulative environmental impacts, climate change, social responsibility). These tools and frameworks should be complemented with other tools to adequately assess local priorities tied to the desired ecosystem and social systemic challenges in the jurisdictional initiative. The three [Performance Frameworks](#) developed by the Certifications and Ratings Collaboration may provide a useful starting point to identify critical environmental and social issues that should be reviewed for wild capture and aquaculture jurisdictional initiatives.

## Box 5. Diagnostic tools to identify key deficiencies in seafood production systems

### Fisheries

#### **Environmental Sustainability**

- Project developers can utilize a range of diagnostic tools to identify key issues in fisheries. For fisheries with limited data-availability, for instance, project developers could utilize the [Rapid Assessment Tool](#) highlighted on [FisheryProgress](#) to analyze the environmental performance of a particular fishery including the management framework of which it is a part.
- For more robust assessments, particularly for jurisdictions that have key fisheries selling to markets with MSC certification as a sourcing requirement, project developers can utilize the MSC Pre-[Assessment](#) and MSC Full Assessment Tools, preferably pulling from existing certification reports as these have been through an independent, third-party verified scoring process.

#### **Social Responsibility**

- The [Social Responsibility Assessment Tool for the Seafood Sector](#) (SRA) is a diagnostic assessment tool to assess risk of social issues, identify areas in need of improvement, and inform the development of a workplan that includes actions towards social improvements. A portion of the SRA tool is used as the framework for Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) to report on social performance on FisheryProgress.org. Note the Certification and Ratings Collaboration framework highlighted above has been incorporated into the SRA.
- Wild capture fisheries can also benchmark their performance against internationally recognized certifications such as the Responsible Fishing Vessel Standard or the FISH Standard for Crew for vessel or fishery-level improvements. Currently, there are no jurisdictional-level certifications.

#### **Economic and Financial Resilience**

- Value-Chain Mapping
- Cost-Benefit Analysis
- Financial Modeling and Business Case Development
- Economic pillar of the Fishery Performance Indicator (FPI) Assessment

#### **Other Tools**

- [Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries \(EAF\) Toolbox](#)
- [Fishery Performance Indicators \(FPI\) Assessment](#)
- [FishPath](#)
- [Climate-Resilient Fisheries Planning Tool](#)
- [Framework for Integrated Stock and Habitat Evaluation \(FISHE\)](#)
- [Tuna Sourcing Issues Identification Checklist](#)

### Aquaculture

#### **Environmental Sustainability**

- Project developers can benchmark their jurisdictions to internationally recognized certifications or frameworks, such as Sustainable Fisheries Partnership's [FishSource Framework](#).
- For more robust assessments, particularly for jurisdictions that have key aquaculture farms selling to markets with ASC certification as a sourcing requirement, project developers can benchmark against criteria in the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) standard, preferably pulling from existing certification reports as these have been through an independent, third-party verified scoring process.

### **Social Responsibility**

- Project developers can benchmark their jurisdictions to internationally recognized certifications or frameworks, such as the ASC or Global Seafood Alliance's Best Aquaculture Practices for farm-level improvements. Currently there are no jurisdictional-level certifications or frameworks.
- The [Social Responsibility Assessment Tool for the Seafood Sector](#) (SRA) can also be used to assess social risk in aquaculture jurisdictional initiatives.

### **Economic and Financial Resilience**

- Value-Chain Mapping
- Cost-Benefit Analysis
- Financial Modeling and Business Case Development

The main findings from these analyses might be recorded in a document that builds on the scoping assessment completed under Step 1, and which ideally will include the following sections:

- Executive Summary
  - Briefly describe the target geography and characteristics of the seafood production system.
  - Briefly summarize the key deficiencies identified in the seafood production system, including through the stakeholder engagement process.
  - Briefly summarize the goals the potential seafood jurisdictional initiative would seek to achieve, ensuring these respond to local priorities and conditions. The sectors and factors outside the focus of the jurisdictional initiative that present risks to achieving stated goals should be noted, and the main ways in which they should be considered/engaged with from within the jurisdictional initiative.
  - Briefly summarize the availability of support from the key stakeholder groups highlighted in Box 3, including the presence of political will, private sector interest, financial opportunity, local champion leadership and/or NGO coordination.
  - Explain why the jurisdictional initiative presents a competitive advantage to address issues compared with traditional fisheries/aquaculture improvement project or certification pathways (see *Section 1.2: When to Implement Jurisdictional Initiatives Versus Other Approaches* for additional information).
- Introduction
  - Provide an overview of the target geography and characteristics of seafood production system, as well as additional background information that may be relevant for the initiative.
- Fishery or Farm Status
  - This section provides information about the status of the fishery or farm area in terms of biological, social, and economic performance.
  - For fisheries, this could include the following considerations:
    - Ecological: Stock condition and potential for recovery if depleted. Fishing impacts to Endangered, Threatened and Protected (ETP) species as well as on vulnerable habitats. Management effectiveness.
    - Social: Human and labor rights and equity conditions in the fishery and community. Contribution to food security and nutrition, and to cultural identity of local communities.

- Economic: Contribution of fishery to local and national economies. Contribution of fishery to livelihoods of fishers and indirect workers (e.g., jobs at processors or input providers). Profitability of companies.
  - For aquaculture, this could include the following considerations:
    - Ecological: Type of production (e.g., fed versus unfed, open versus closed) and potential and documented negative and positive impacts on associated ecosystems.
    - Social: Human and labor rights and equity conditions in the farm and community. Contribution to food security and nutrition, and to cultural identity of local communities.
    - Economic: Contribution of production to local and national economies. Contribution of production to livelihoods of farm workers and indirect workers (e.g., jobs at processors or input providers). Profitability of companies.
- Regulatory System
  - Regulatory systems refer to the rules and regulations that are in place to control and monitor seafood producers' efforts and reduce the impact of local fisheries or farms on marine biodiversity and ecosystems. The purpose of this section is to characterize the existing regulatory systems and their effectiveness in meeting sustainable production goals (see Box 5 for tools that can be used to assess sustainability performance).
- Governance and Policy Framework
  - Governance and policy framework refers to the institutional, operational, legal, and customary frameworks that govern the seafood production system. The purpose of this section is to determine whether there are enabling political and institutional frameworks that promote the sustainable production of seafood, and to identify potential barriers to sustainable seafood production. This section should also identify power relations, social hierarchies, and decision-making processes that affect the seafood production system.
- Market Potential
  - The purpose of this section is to describe the size (value) and growth potential of existing and new potential seafood markets, as well as an assessment of market willingness to pay for products derived from a successful jurisdictional initiative. This section will help determine the competitiveness of the fishery and/or farm(s), as well as identify potential barriers to achieving market potential.
- Stakeholder Engagement
  - The purpose of this section is to identify whether there is stakeholder interest and commitment to participate in the co-design of a seafood jurisdictional initiative. Buy-in from each of the key stakeholders (see Figure 2) should be explicitly characterized, ensuring there is social predisposition, political will, and market interest of all relevant stakeholders in collaborating effectively on co-designing and implementing a seafood jurisdictional initiative.



## 2.4 Co-design the initiative's goals and elements

A first step in the design of several jurisdictional initiatives has been to articulate a high-level vision for sustainable development in the jurisdiction, which provides the framework needed for a more formal design (Seymour et al. 2020). Significant momentum can be generated when the vision of the program is endorsed by a high-level political leader, but institutional adoption by the pertinent regulatory agencies (i.e., Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Finance, etc.) is also critical to ensure the initiatives are not disrupted by changes in political administrations.

- **Determining goals and scope:** Sustainability and production-based goals should be clearly stated and relevant to the jurisdiction in which the program is being implemented.
  - What is the high-level vision for sustainable development/ecosystems in the jurisdiction?
  - What are the priority commodities (fisheries/aquaculture farms) of the jurisdictional initiative? Given the nature of seafood, most seafood jurisdictional initiatives will likely to be focused on a species/commodity; however, program design should consider other industries and inter-dependent commodities in the region and identify ways to engage with them.
  - What are the priority environmental and socio-economic challenges within the jurisdictional the initiative will seek to address? What are specific goals and metrics for social and environmental objectives? The scope should incorporate as many of the locally determined improvement priorities as possible, as determined by a robust and inclusive stakeholder engagement process.
  
- **Determining scale:** The program should be of meaningful scale to drive improvements.
  - Choose the spatial scale that allows you to have influence over the outcome you are seeking but not so large that you cannot gain traction/get it to work. What is the ecosystem level to appropriately address the key sustainability challenges identified?
  - The monetary value of the seafood production should be large enough to attract financial institutions to engage and invest.
  - The scale of a jurisdictional initiative is oftentimes determined by political boundaries, reflecting the need for jurisdictional initiative elements to be eventually incorporated into official government policies, regulations, and/or development plans at national or sub-national levels. What is highest level jurisdiction to address that ecosystem? Government engagement at the correct level is required. This can include subnational entities, but national level policies and levels of government are critical for success.
  - Climate change impacts on seafood production systems may alter the jurisdictional scale needed to address issues at an ecosystem level. Climate-driven shifts in species range, for instance, should be considered when determining the appropriate jurisdictional scale.

- **Identifying appropriately sized incentives for participating producers:** These should be commensurate to opportunity costs of conversion, where applicable.
  - Ensure the allocation of benefits, including reduction of production and supply risks, is commensurate with the contributions of each stakeholder to the outcomes. An approach to distributing rewards will need to be agreed on early on before the jurisdictional initiative is implemented. To distribute financial benefits, the national government may be able to transfer cash directly through existing governmental cash transfer systems or through a newly established Ecological Based Fiscal Transfer (EFT) mechanism – a mechanism to allocate fiscal transfers to the regions based on ecological performances (Tropical Rainforest Alliance 2021).
  
- **Determining metrics and key performance indicators:** Relevant metrics and key performance indicators should be determined to enable assessments of progress towards targets, milestones, and outcomes. Metrics should be tied directly to performance against environmental (i.e., biodiversity and climate), social, and economic outcomes at the jurisdictional level. Suggested categories for jurisdictional initiative metrics are included in *Section 1.5: Metrics* and include broad categories covering biodiversity, climate, social, and economic impacts of seafood production. Because a jurisdictional initiative can span decades, it may be helpful to define not only outcome-based metrics but also pathway indicators that can help capture important progress toward measurable outcomes over time. For example, an outcome metric could focus on population trajectories of endangered, threatened, or protected species while pathway metrics focus on the enabling conditions for outcome-based improvement – notably effectively implemented legal frameworks and management measures, with sufficient information to support effective management. This may provide more useful tracking of progress over the early years of a jurisdictional initiative. Example outcome and pathway metrics could include:
  - Environmental Sustainability
    - Area Under Improvement Management:
      - Hectares (or km<sup>2</sup>) of area under improved management (i.e., meeting all key elements of an effective management system) [pathway]
      - Number or volume of priority species under effective, precautionary, climate-resilient fisheries/aquaculture management [pathway]
    - Species Conserved:
      - Fishery/aquaculture impacts on ETP species are quantified and monitored [pathway]
      - Metric tons of seafood working toward improved practices tied to biodiversity [pathway]
      - Number or volume of wild-caught fish stocks at biologically sustainable levels [outcome]
      - Biodiversity index for jurisdiction [outcome]

- Habitat Conserved:
  - Management measures protect Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems within the jurisdiction [pathway]
  - Habitat index for jurisdiction [outcome]
- Social Responsibility
  - Socio-economic benefits:
    - Number of people receiving direct socio-economic benefits from fishery or farm, and number of people receiving indirect socio-economic benefits [outcome]
  - Inclusive decision-making:
    - Legal frameworks in place to support participation/inclusion in resource planning and management for all stakeholders involved in, or affected by, production activities [pathway]
    - Grievances raised and resolved by local and Indigenous communities against fishery or aquaculture industry [pathway]
  - Labor Rights:
    - Relevant legal frameworks explicitly require respect for women's rights including decent working conditions, equal pay [pathway]
    - Effective grievance mechanisms in place to support human rights violations [pathway]
    - Incidence of child or forced labor [outcome]
- Economic and Financial Resilience
  - Socio-economic Benefits:
    - Legal frameworks in place to support equitable distribution of benefits [pathway]
    - Amount of additional funding (increased cash flow) received by public and private sector partners as a result of the jurisdictional initiative [outcome]

## **2.5 Co-develop an action plan and secure funding**

Stakeholders should develop a clearly defined time-bound action plan that lays out steps to meet initiative milestones and outcomes. The action plan should identify the key policy and market-based strategies and actions to address the priority deficiencies identified by the scoping assessment. The action plan should also establish clear timelines, roles, and responsibilities for each key action (see the Action Plan Template for additional information (forthcoming)). The action plan can also identify and reference overlapping objectives around timelines for stakeholder engagement and information sharing.

As part of these efforts, it will also be critical to develop an effective monitoring framework including data governance systems and protocols to credibly gather, store, analyze, and use data, and monitoring frequency.

The accuracy of claims about jurisdictional performance depends on the quality of the monitoring process. This includes the quality, availability, and relevance of the data collected, as well as how effectively it is gathered, managed, and analyzed to draw conclusions. When choosing data sources and developing frameworks for monitoring against metrics identified, factors such as the relevance, accuracy, spatial and temporal resolution, cost, availability, and use rights should be considered.

A trustworthy monitoring framework should include the following (ISEAL 2022b):

- Clear guidance for application: For each individual metric clear, explicit guidance must be developed to ensure reliable and consistent assessments. This guidance must be fully developed and explicitly clear in order to ensure credible assessments and consistent tracking across years of JI implementation. We suggest testing the application of the guidance before it is finalized to ensure consistent interpretation and analyses across individuals and identify potential issues around information availability.
- Information sources: For each metric include the information source(s) used to gain insights about performance. Data sources should be made available in an accessible format to enable third parties to verify and derive insights about performance.
- Data management protocols: Procedures for collecting, storing, analyzing, and utilizing data are in place to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the collected data.

Finally, it will be critical to develop a detailed budget and secure funding for the costs of activities, coordination of the initiative, and monitoring and reporting. This will involve exploring and applying innovative and complementary investments. In addition to the investments required to reduce ecosystem impacts, improve livelihoods, and implement sustainable production systems, sustainable management of oceans, watersheds, and natural capital is fundamental to sustainability of a jurisdiction.

Three financial structures have typically been used in jurisdictional initiatives:

- 1) Local, regional, or global investors directly invest in a project or co-invest in complementary activities.
- 2) Investors contribute to a global, regional, or national fund. The fund may contribute directly to a project or to another fund at the jurisdictional level that specifically serves the initiative.
- 3) Blended approach of direct project investment and jurisdictional level fund.

The public sector (e.g., bilateral and multilateral agencies) has been the largest provider of funding to support jurisdictional initiatives thus far. However, their scale of financing is insufficient to match the scale of financing needed. As such, private sector investment also needs to be a primary source of financing. Companies who have already made commitments to ocean conservation, community development, or similar sustainability goals through either corporate or

philanthropic channels should consider directing these investments or philanthropic programs to support priority seafood jurisdictional initiatives. Blending various sources of financing — public, private, and in some cases philanthropic — is a way to manage the different risk profiles and risk appetites of the financing sources that will likely be needed to support the initiative overtime (Tropical Rainforest Alliance 2021).

## **2.6 Secure an agreement to implement**

The final step in the co-design phase is to secure agreement by all pertinent stakeholders to implement the co-designed action plan, including by potentially signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or similar agreement. These documents should be shared with all relevant stakeholders to support long-term transparency and accountability.

## **Step 3. Co-Implementing**

Once the milestones, timelines, and responsible parties have been identified in the action plan, implementation of these activities can begin by each pertinent partner, but under the overall coordination of the multi-stakeholder body, which may integrate new scientific data or new stakeholders as needed.

### **3.1 Implement policy-based improvements**

Public sector-led interventions should be undertaken in coordination with initiative partners and according to the action plan, which can be periodically updated and revised based on delays, progress, or updated information.

- Examples:
  - Setting a minimum floor for seafood production performance through policy and/or regulatory levers
  - Data collection and analysis to improve understanding of seafood production performance
  - Improving regulations and associated enforcement regarding human and labor rights, right to organize, and equity

### **3.2 Implement private sector improvements**

Private sector-led interventions should be undertaken in coordination with initiative partners and according to the workplan, which can be periodically updated and revised based on delays, progress, or updated information.

- Examples:
  - Gear trials to assess potential to reduce species and ecosystem impacts
  - Adoption of best management practices specific to farm type (e.g., small/medium/large, extensive/intensive, open/closed, fed/unfed).
  - Voluntary commitments such as expanding electronic monitoring beyond the existing regulatory requirements
  - Conducting Human Rights Due Diligence processes within supply chains
  - Adopting Supplier Codes of Conduct for human and labor rights and equity

### 3.3. Monitor performance against identified metrics

After implementation has begun, stakeholders must regularly and publicly track progress against the milestones laid out in the action plan and as noted above, ensure tracking is as transparent as possible. This ensures that jurisdictional initiative participants can credibly and publicly make associated claims (see *Section 1.6: Claims* for additional information).

As best practice, progress against the objectives and timelines outlined in the jurisdictional initiative's action plan should be reported publicly every three to six months. After determining the agreed upon frequency of monitoring and reporting, performance should be tracked against the outcome and pathway indicators identified in Step 2.4 and using the guidance and monitoring framework developed in Step 2.5.

A consistent monitoring and reporting template, tied to outcome and pathway indicators mapped directly to core objectives of the initiative, should be designed to enable continuous reporting, and improve processes and impacts over the course of the initiative.

### 3.4 Verify monitoring results and performance claims

Thoughtful, effective, and robust verification systems are critical to the credibility of the jurisdictional initiative, especially when public-facing claims are being made (see *Section 1.6: Claims* and *Section 1.7: Verification* for additional information). A handful of organizations, including ISEAL, have developed guidelines on how credible verification and assurance should work for jurisdictional initiatives (ISEAL 2022b); we suggest reviewing these documents for more detailed guidance.

The final verification approach should strive to meet the four key principles for verification of performance in jurisdictional projects defined by ISEAL (2022b): consistency, competence, impartiality, and transparency. Verification is ideally conducted by an independent third party to help ensure alignment with these principles.

### 3.5 Publicly report results

As these initiatives develop and advance, a public platform may be developed to house multiple seafood jurisdictional initiatives in a consistent and robust manner. In the interim, individual jurisdictional initiatives may choose to develop a website for their effort. Elements that might be posted on the website may include a summary workplan, public and regular progress updates against the action plan, overall goals and metrics of the jurisdictional initiative, participants and their roles, any data sources/scientific information, and funding sources for the initiative. As the initiative progresses, transparency around verification and reporting progress against goals must be included, especially once claims are used by participants. The website should also include a mechanism for feedback and guidance on responsible parties and roles. **Ultimately, there should be transparency in the structure, commitment, agreements, financing, and actions of the initiative, and this information should be publicly available.**

## Section 3. Market Partners

### Incentives to Participate in Jurisdictional Initiatives for Seafood

As seafood buyers, there are several reasons to participate in a seafood jurisdictional initiative. The following list includes incentives for retailers, brands, and importers to potentially incorporate jurisdictional initiatives into their overall sustainability portfolio.

- **Long-term supply:** Improved production practices, technical training support, engaged communities, and enhanced conservation areas can help increase productivity and secure the long-term health of a given geographic production area, stabilizing supply. In addition, engagement in jurisdictional initiatives can open new sourcing opportunities that may not have been previously available, adding shock-absorbing redundancy within sourcing geographies.
- **Proactive engagement in policy and regulations:** Engagement with policy makers and government agencies as part of the jurisdictional initiative process can provide industry members a way to proactively help shape environmental management and labor policies and their subsequent enforcement. In a world where many industries face increasing scrutiny, pro-active engagement can help to improve laggard performance and industry-wide reputational risks.
- **Commitments beyond the supply chain:** Via jurisdictional initiatives, companies can tackle issues that must be addressed beyond individual supply chains, such as climate change and biodiversity loss. Seafood jurisdictional initiatives provide a framework to contribute meaningfully to restoration, protection, and sustainable production that can address these larger, systemic challenges while simultaneously supporting larger corporate social responsibility and sustainability targets.
- **Claims:** When supported by robust monitoring and evaluation systems, jurisdictional initiatives can provide companies a way to credibly claim positive impacts as part of larger-scale improvements.

It is important to note that jurisdictional initiatives should not be a replacement for direct, individual supply chain initiatives and/or continued work with seafood suppliers. Rather, jurisdictional initiatives provide a complementary framework to support jurisdiction-wide environmental, social, and economic improvements. **We recommend developing a jurisdictional initiative if stakeholders have interest/need to increase the resilience of the ecosystem or tackle more systemic social and environmental drivers rather than focusing solely on the sustainability of a single product.**

### Role of Buyers within Jurisdictional Initiatives for Seafood

The primary goal of a jurisdictional initiative is facilitating and promoting effective governance at a jurisdictional level by utilizing synergies, maximizing use of resources, and bringing positive incentives through market drivers. Government efforts alone to reduce ecosystem impacts are significant, immediate, and can be politically costly. By contrast, market benefits to governments that commit to environmental sustainability and social responsibility can be uncertain. Therefore,

retailers and other seafood buyers play an important role in incentivizing progress through strong commitments and preferential sourcing via long-term contracts and other mechanisms.

Where governments have made strong commitments to reducing ecosystem impacts and driving environmental sustainability and social responsibility with clear, timebound plans and are adhering to those plans, directing purchases and other business to these jurisdictions will create important and positive incentives for market participants at the producer and trader levels. This involvement and public support for efforts can lower perceived “costs” and barriers to addressing key challenges to sustainable development.

On the flip side, companies that are losing business because governments in their production areas are not seriously addressing environmental sustainability and social responsibility can engage governments to advocate for improvements in that jurisdictional area. Seafood buyers can clarify market requests through direct engagement with governments or through precompetitive, multi-stakeholder platforms involving direct and indirect suppliers.

A buyer’s commitment to supporting jurisdictional initiatives means they are committing to the transformative potential of a jurisdictional initiative by rewarding progress with purchases; better understanding and taking responsibility for company supply chains and their local and cumulative effects; using influence and advocacy to bring together various parts of government with local stakeholders to address systemic issues at jurisdictional scale; and becoming involved with the production of products fundamental to a company’s portfolio.

### **How Market Partners Can Engage in Jurisdictional Initiatives for Seafood**

ISEAL (2022a) provides steps for how seafood buyers can prioritize where and to what extent to engage in a jurisdictional initiative:

1. Buyers prioritize which jurisdictions to engage in based on where they are potentially well-placed to have positive impacts. Determination of where to engage can consider the following, among other factors:
  - a. The company’s sourcing footprint
  - b. Current and future sourcing risks
  - c. Presence of high social or environmental values and threats to these values
  - d. Priority issues or regions for the company’s broader strategy and with its buyers
  - e. Existence of collective action initiatives and
  - f. The company’s potential to drive positive outcomes beyond its supply chain
2. Buyers refer to environmental sustainability and social responsibility assessments to determine which issues are critical to address in each prioritized jurisdiction:
  - a. The assessments consider the relevance of different issues based on status, trends, drivers, risks, specific vulnerabilities, etc.



- b. The assessments include a participatory process to consider the views of a variety of jurisdictional stakeholders including producers, community and Indigenous groups, local NGOs and civil society, local government, funding partners, and supply chain companies, among others.
3. Total buyer investment in a jurisdiction is determined per commodity and is commensurate with the company's total global volumes sourced of that commodity
  - a. Companies can target their investment or actions to specific regions and do not need to invest in every jurisdiction from which they source.
  - b. Investments can be financial or in-kind and can support:
    - i. Direct, issue-focused actions in prioritized jurisdictions
    - ii. Actions that influence the enabling conditions in the jurisdiction
    - iii. Structural outcomes related to jurisdictional initiative, such as co-developing action plans or implementing collective monitoring frameworks
  - c. For buyers to engage in a jurisdictional initiative, a traceability system must be in place to understand where products are coming from (see *Section 1.8: Traceability and Transparency* for additional information)

Determining the relationship between volumes sourced and scale of investment is challenging but, ideally, buyers sourcing a specific commodity can align on what constitutes a proportionate investment. Sustainability investments or in-kind support in a jurisdiction can complement actions, financing, or preferential sourcing the company is implementing through its direct supply chain, as well as any broader investments it is making to support better practices within the seafood sector (ISEAL 2022b).

The form of company engagement will vary according to the specific circumstances of each jurisdictional initiative, but the following provides examples of ways that market partners can support jurisdictional initiatives (ISEAL 2022b, Tropical Forest Alliance 2019, 2020):

- Participate in the multi-stakeholder development of the jurisdictional initiative (as detailed above).
- Pre-competitively align seafood companies operating in the same geography to effectively participate in a jurisdictional initiative.
- Lead a coalition of companies to participate in public-private collaborations that address specific challenges identified through the jurisdictional initiative process.
- Encourage companies, suppliers, and industry associations to participate.
- Provide technical assistance and/or financial support for the process and implementation of the action plan.
- Use advocacy and communications to provide public support for the process.
- Align procurement specifications and supplier contract terms with goals and targets of the jurisdictional initiative (e.g., longer-term sourcing contracts).
- Incentivize suppliers to engage in jurisdictional initiatives through preferential sourcing based on demonstrated progress in the initiative.
- Support fisher/farmer training on best management practices.

- Collaborate on traceability for the jurisdiction.
- Provide feedback on documents published for consultation.

Key factors to consider when engaging in a jurisdictional initiative include the time scale and funding. Appropriate timeframes of successful jurisdictional initiatives often range from 8-30 years due to the focus on policy change, participatory and multi-stakeholder processes, and ecosystem-level outcomes reliant on collective impact. In addition, long-term financing strategies are critical to cover the multi-million-dollar costs associated with large-scale environmental, social, and economic improvements. Seafood buyers may view jurisdictional initiative investments as added costs to current sustainability efforts; however, individual supply chains currently absorb costs in the form of product traceability, verification, certification, and improvement projects. By leveraging activities already being undertaken within specific supply chains and geographies, investments can be utilized as springboards to kick-start larger-scale initiatives that support the stability of seafood sourcing over the long term.

Seafood buyers should also consider supporting jurisdictional initiatives in regions where governments have demonstrated commitments to sustainable production, environmental protection, and comprehensive stakeholder engagement. As key jurisdictional initiative partners, companies can provide external validation and market-based rewards to governments willing to tackle such extensive and complicated projects (CI 2018).

### **Integration with Current Sustainability Targets**

Seafood jurisdictional initiatives are complementary to conventional certification, ratings, and improvement (CRI) efforts and can be used to build off initiatives already underway to improve the environmental sustainability and social responsibility of seafood supply chains and sourcing geographies. As jurisdictional initiatives aim to address sustainability issues across their full political and ecological range, encompass human and labor rights considerations, and incorporate broad and deep stakeholder engagement, jurisdictional initiatives also create enabling conditions that help CRI efforts be more readily achieved or impactful. Sourcing policies that already incorporate CRI targets can be augmented to also include objectives of jurisdictional initiatives, amplifying (but not replacing) targets already set for specific geographies and/or commodities. In this way companies can expand the reach of their sustainability commitments, setting targets that apply across production systems and not simply related to specific products or commodities.

Similar to CRI efforts, jurisdictional initiatives must include a strong monitoring and evaluation framework and associated, relevant metrics (see *Section 1.5: Metrics* for additional information). Any claims made by engaged stakeholders should be consistent with best-practice guidelines, and verification of claims made is crucial for buyers to ensure transparency and maintain credibility (see *Section 1.6: Claims* and *Section 1.7: Verification* for additional information).

## Section 4. Policy Makers and Management Authorities

The Earth Innovation Institute defines jurisdictional approaches/initiatives as “a type of integrated land management, with an important distinguishing feature: the landscape is defined by policy-relevant boundaries and the underlying strategy is designed to achieve a high level of governmental involvement” (C. Stickler et al. 2020). Multiple references and experts confirmed that policy-relevant boundaries are a key feature of jurisdictional initiatives, as the underlying theory of change is to engage the leading decision-making authorities for natural resource planning and use and improve both policies and practices that directly contribute to conservation and social gains.

Therefore, government must be a core stakeholder and, often, the driving force behind a jurisdictional initiative. In speaking about the selection of sites for the palm oil jurisdictional approach in Malaysia, David McLaughlin of WWF emphasized the importance of having the government on board and a governance infrastructure in place to carry out the initiative. “There is no progress if the government doesn’t want it. That led us to those places where there was strong governance to be able to build our [JA] model.” (WWF 2017)

Depending on the scale of the initiative, local, regional, and/or national government agencies may be involved, and each agency or administrative level may be motivated by different incentives. In many instances, a combination of levels of government is necessary to implement a full jurisdictional initiative strategy. For example, national-level authorities may oversee high-level policies related to ocean/water use rights, trade, and supply chain transparency, while sub-national agencies oversee development of ocean/water use plans, and local authorities oversee licensing and permitting processes. Most current jurisdictional initiatives are set up at a sub-national level, with leadership at the state, provincial, or regional level. For any level of government that is required, the jurisdictional initiative depends on strong leadership from the head of that administrative tier (i.e., governors for state or province-level initiatives) that is closely engaged in the seascape. This leadership also includes a strong commitment to sustainability.

Government engagement is a distinguishing characteristic of jurisdictional initiatives but must be married with formal multi-stakeholder participation and a decision-making platform to qualify as a jurisdictional initiative. Initiatives that lack government engagement, such as supply chain improvements, fail to fit into the jurisdictional initiative definition.

“As noted elsewhere, sustainability at the jurisdictional level is a difficult and long-term process. Implementing jurisdictional sustainability plans or ‘road maps’ will be expensive, and government leaders willing to take on the challenge will need to see that their courage and commitments are being recognized and rewarded during the journey and not only at the end point” (CI 2018).

Development and implementation of these road maps is a critical part of the jurisdictional initiative process. In many cases, the beginning of the process may uncover additional and unknown problems or conflicts. Governments and other jurisdictional initiative participants

should be supported and encouraged to build the appropriate institutions, processes, and mechanisms for adaptive management to deal with these issues and challenges as they arise.

### **Incentives for Management Authorities to Participate in a Seafood Jurisdictional Initiative**

As mandated managers of aquatic resources, there are benefits for management authorities (governments or governance bodies like Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs)) to participate in a jurisdictional initiative and ensure valuable seafood resources are well-managed and ecosystems are healthy. The obligations and potential benefits for management authorities are as follows:

**Fulfilment of international commitments:** Engaging in a jurisdictional initiative can support national management authorities to collaborate with relevant stakeholders to achieve international commitments, such as United National (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in relation to sustainable use of aquatic resources, integrity of aquatic ecosystems, well-being of people, and mitigation of climate change. Government engagement in a seafood jurisdictional initiative increases the visibility of their actions to meet these public commitments.

**Achieve national/local marine conservation, climate, and social targets:** Seafood jurisdictional initiatives aim to deliver ecosystem-based targets (ecosystem function, cumulative impacts, social inclusion). By engaging in these initiatives, management authorities are likely to achieve multiple national conservation targets rather than single targets. Again, government engagement in a jurisdictional initiative increases the visibility of their actions to meet these public commitments.

**Empowerment of local governments:** For local/sub-national governments, a seafood jurisdictional initiative provides a platform to not only support the delivery of national targets, but also assert their control and influence in ways that can showcase their own regional reputation and increase revenues to their local areas.

**Inclusive engagement of stakeholders in resource management:** The multi-stakeholder participation and co-management elements of a jurisdictional initiative provide a platform for management authorities to ensure all voices are heard. Issues can be addressed through open and honest dialogue among the stakeholders. A seafood jurisdictional initiative also provides structure to better coordinate and leverage resources across local, regional, and national governance levels, which could potentially improve efficiency.

**Cohesive policy reform and implementation:** Successful policy development and implementation requires support from stakeholders, particularly market stakeholders (e.g., seafood business), to translate the reform into real world benefits. Engaging in a jurisdictional initiative allows management authorities to ensure policy reform is practical and feasible, as implementation of these policies will be tested by market stakeholders.

**Stabilize production and improve social benefits:** Large-scale management that is sustainable should stabilize production of the sector, which helps stabilize jobs and revenue for governments. Where jurisdictional initiatives support livelihoods, increased income and stable production can help lift the quality of life in these communities.

### **Role of Policy Makers within a Jurisdictional Initiatives for Seafood**

Management authorities have typically played supportive and advisory roles within conventional CRI approaches, which are typically driven by market players. Conversely, management authorities/policy makers play a lead, pivotal role in jurisdictional initiatives, as explained in detail here. There can be no jurisdictional initiative without the government playing a critical role.

**Defining a clear jurisdictional boundary:** A rigorous jurisdictional initiative requires clear and coherent government policies to support improvement actions and to create a level playing field for all seafood producers. As such, a clear and defined jurisdictional boundary (geographically or geopolitically) is needed for which policies can be enforced.

**Ultimate resources managers:** Policy makers, such as relevant ministers and their departments (e.g., fisheries, marine, labour, environment) are accountable for managing resources and safeguarding the people who rely on these resources. These policy makers have the final decisions on catch levels for fish stocks, where fish/shrimp farms can operate, how workers in the seafood production system are treated, and ensuring climate resilient management. Commitments and leadership for sustainable seafood production and social welfare by management authorities are crucial for the success of a jurisdictional initiative.

**Delivery of ecosystem-based and multiple targets:** Jurisdictional initiatives focus on delivering high level ecosystem-based and biodiversity targets (including maintenance and/or restoration of critical ecosystems and threatened species, increasing climate resilience, addressing cumulative impacts), as well as ensuring safe and decent working conditions, inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and enhancement of the economic profitability of those involved. Achieving these targets is beyond the control of individual seafood supply chains and requires the involvement of national or regional governance.

**Local jurisdictional initiatives need policy support at national level:** Implementation of a jurisdictional initiative at a local level often requires alignment and leadership of national policies to create enabling conditions so these policies can work more synergistically. For example, in Brazil, the Espiritu Santo state-level jurisdictional initiative has been benefited by the revision of the Forest Code that helped the alignment of multiple national policies.

**Integrated and adaptive seascape management:** A jurisdictional initiative aims to mitigate impacts from multiple uses and provide resilience to climate-driven changes in the ecosystem (such as stock shifts), market needs, and stakeholder interests. Best practice suggests that jurisdictional initiatives align goals with international and national biodiversity and climate targets.

At the same time, jurisdictional initiatives should also incorporate climate and marine conservation projections to support adaptation and resilience.

### **Integrating the full life cycle of the production model and inter-dependency of the ecosystem:**

This is particularly important for aquatic ecosystems, where lifecycles of commercial species occur across different habitats (e.g., salmon) and adults may travel great distances. Focusing on protecting and restoring essential fish habitats, such as nursery and spawning grounds, could provide an opportunity for advancing sustainable production across multiple fisheries within a single jurisdiction. For aquaculture, open production models will need to expand the boundaries of the jurisdictional initiative to consider cumulative risks within the larger shared watershed to account for water quality and access issues, along with disease risk. This can only be achieved by the active involvement of policy makers as the leaders of a jurisdictional initiative.

### **How Policy Makers Can Engage in Jurisdictional Initiatives for Seafood**

Similar to seafood market partners, policy makers (i.e., governments and seafood resource management authorities) are crucial to the success of a jurisdictional initiative. The following practices that inform how policy makers can best contribute to seafood jurisdictional initiatives complement those identified within the *How Market Partners Can Engage in Jurisdictional Initiatives for Seafood* section (adapted from ISEAL 2022a).

#### **Prioritizing Actions**

Policy makers should work with stakeholders to identify the policy gaps associated with seafood production and nature protection/conservation across the jurisdiction. In addition, policy makers should engage in the baseline assessment for the jurisdictional initiative to help identify policy gaps for critical issues in relation to nature, climate, and social aspects, which become obstacles for sustainable seafood production. This could cover a wide range of policies, including fishery management plans, bycatch reduction/mitigation measures, and marine spatial planning regulations. Once policy gaps are identified, policy makers will be able to identify existing public and private resources that have already been invested in the jurisdiction and resources gap for implementing a successful jurisdictional initiative.

It should be noted that government interest in fisheries/aquaculture farms may be limited in some countries, especially at a subnational level, without strong incentives from market partners. Furthermore, resource management and governance capacity are generally weak around the world and may require substantial investment, particularly regarding national and international financial mechanisms, to support the long-term process of a jurisdictional initiative.

#### **Maximizing Impact**

Once policy gaps have been identified, government and management authorities should develop policy and conservation measures to address key issues that were identified through engagement with stakeholders and the baseline assessments. While local governments/authorities can support actions of market players and the producers at the ground/site level, some issues can only be

addressed through changes of policy at the national, and sometimes international level (e.g., tuna-related policies). As such, the leadership of the national government and support of local/sub-national government are crucial.

To ensure the effectiveness of the jurisdictional initiative's monitoring framework, policy makers should work with initiative partners to develop legal data requirements that could allow the initiative to measure progress against local, national, and international targets and commitments.

Policy makers can also provide or realign required investment (financial, enforcement and/or other forms) to support a jurisdictional initiative. Leadership from the management authorities is particularly important in seeking international financial support for the initiative.

### **Measuring Progress and Communicating Results**

Policy makers play an important role in effectively monitoring and reporting on progress and communicating results. Policy makers should:

- Work with jurisdictional initiative partners, in particular the project developers, to support the development of a collaborative monitoring framework with data that align with policy objectives. This allows policy makers to demonstrate that investment and supports policy reforms to achieve the desired targets.
- Work with their associated organisations, such as national research institutes, to provide support for the validation of data (e.g., recovery of fish stocks, and impacts to habitat, and socio-economic performance) in relation to the initiative's objectives.
- Work with jurisdictional initiative partners to develop the validation of contributions to the initiative as well as possible claims.

## **Conclusion**

As governments, seafood companies, and civil society organizations around the world seek opportunities to improve seafood production systems and commit to place-based ecosystem approaches, opportunities for seafood jurisdictional initiatives are greater than ever. Initiatives that tackle systemic barriers to sustainable production are an important tool for working toward a future where ocean ecosystems can continue to support the people and businesses who depend on them. By bringing stakeholders together (such as Indigenous Peoples and local communities, government representatives, civil society organizations, and seafood supply chain companies) to implement and support these initiatives, we can deliver significant conservation outcomes by addressing environmental, social, and economic barriers to environmental sustainability and social responsibility at relevant political and ecological scales. We hope this guide will help you join these efforts.

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