



The Aquatic Blue Food Coalition



## Aquatic/Blue Food Coalition

**Key mission:** Promoting understanding, acceptance, and integration of sustainable aquatic/blue foods in food systems and food value-chains thinking and decision making, at all levels. The Coalition aims to engage with government, civil society and interested partners toward realizing the full potential of aquatic/blue foods to help end malnutrition and build nature-positive, equitable and resilient food systems. This will help meeting many of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

The Coalition works towards improved food and nutrition security, lower environmental impact, and improved socio-economic equity in relation to aquatic/blue foods.

**Background:** The Coalition is based on the extensive international cooperation before the UN Food Systems Summit 2021 which provided solid [evidence](#) for the urgent need to integrate sustainably harvested aquatic/blue foods into national and local food system policies and programs. The Aquatic/Blue Food Coalition rises to the challenge of still-untapped potential of aquatic/blue foods<sup>1</sup> to meet protein needs and reduce micronutrient and other [nutrition](#) deficiencies, improve heart, brain and eye health, and replace consumption of less healthy foods.

The Coalition recognizes the important role of these foods as part of the [climate solution](#). Recent [analyses](#) also show that climate change is impacting aquatic food production and aquatic ecosystems significantly, and that investment in climate resilient management is an urgent priority to avert significant negative impacts in the tropics, where climate impacts will be most severe and where the most vulnerable populations are concentrated.

The Coalition is grounded in the international consensus already achieved – the 2021 [COFI Declaration](#), the [Ocean Panel](#), [Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication](#), the [Committee on World Food Security](#), and [UN Nutrition](#). It will take advantage of existing networks like the [Global Action Network](#), the [Blue Food Assessment](#), the [Safe Seaweed Coalition](#), and [Rise Up for the Oceans](#). The urgent need is to mobilize action to deliver on those commitments.

**Members:** The Coalition includes Member States, civil society organizations, academic institutions, aquatic food producers and those along the value chain, consumer groups, financial institutions and philanthropies brought together by a shared conviction that blue food transformation will not only improve nutrition but also contribute to community resilience, [good jobs](#), gender equity, and poverty alleviation. Sustainably managed fisheries and aquaculture are climate friendly and contribute to the restoration of biodiversity.

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<sup>1</sup> “Blue, or aquatic, foods” include fish, shellfish, aquatic plants, and algae, captured or cultivated in freshwater or marine systems.

**Commitment:** Members are joining together in a shared vision about the following:

- (1) Raise the profile of blue/aquatic foods in discussions of the future of food systems, including in the context of international forums such as CBD, the UNFCCC and CFS, and in national policymaking -- highlighting the relevance of aquatic foods to the SDGs and to the priorities of many government decision-makers, including health ministers, development ministers, finance ministers, and prime ministers.
- (2) Mobilize support -- including investment, technical capacity, and partnerships -- for countries, or groups of countries, that are setting out to integrate aquatic/blue foods into their food systems and to implement core aquatic food priorities.

Coalition work could include, for example, initiatives to:

- a. Improve utilization of already caught blue food resources through: reducing waste and using 100% of what is landed or grown, and improved management and management policies of both the wild caught/harvest and aquaculture sector.
- b. Advance sustainable aquaculture production through increased production, increased production efficiency, lowered environmental impact and improved social equity.
- c. Promote novel sustainable uses of aquatic blue resources as well as sustainable use of hitherto un-used aquatic resources.

**Organization:**

The organization of the Coalition remains informal and flexible in structure for the time being. Certain division of labour in leadership is envisaged based on capacity and willingness of members.

- **Leadership in charge** of organizing work is based on two co-chairs, with different regional representation, and a small executive committee of 5-6 Member States and non-member states that meets in between group calls. Initially it is planned to have the committee open for interested members and on a voluntary basis without financial obligations.
- **Structured monthly working meetings** (video calls) with clear agenda for the whole group will enable regular networking, briefings of interested parties, advocacy, and inclusive membership participation for the purpose:

(1) to provide briefings on upcoming international meetings and other opportunities to raise the profile of blue foods and coordinate engagement; and

(2) to present country or regional initiatives that need support from Coalition members which can be matched with funding or technical assistance.

*Ad hoc meetings for specific presentations or discussions are also planned, potentially in cooperation with other interested actors.*

**-A lean secretariat** of 1-2 people affiliated with a partner organization is planned.

**Current working group members and partners:**

Member States: Bangladesh; Belize; Canada; Chile; European Union; Fiji; France; Germany; Ghana; Iceland; Japan; Kenya; Korea; Mexico; Netherlands; New Zealand; Norway; Palau; Peru; Portugal; Spain; Thailand; Tonga; United States of America

Intergovernmental organizations: The Pacific Community; WorldFish/CGIAR

Academic institutions: Stockholm Resilience Center; Stanford University

Civil Society: Environmental Defense Fund; WWF; World Resources Institute; Rare; Oceana; Monterey Bay Aquarium; Island Sustainability Unit

Private Sector: Safe Seaweed Coalition; Global Salmon Initiative; Blue Food Partnership

## **ANNEX: How the Coalition for Blue/Aquatic Foods Will Get Things Done**

The Blue/Aquatic Foods Coalition Members will work together to highlight the importance of aquatic foods in meeting food security and nutritional needs, protecting and enhancing biodiversity and resilience against climate-induced shocks, securing livelihoods and decent jobs, and enabling gender equality in important international forums, with a special focus on reaching audiences not historically attentive to aquatic foods as critical sources of food security; those venues will include:

- [2022 UN Oceans Conference \(6-8 April 2022\)](#)
- [Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity \(COP 15\) \(25 April-8 May 2022\)](#)
- 35<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI 35) (September 5-9, 2022)
- [50<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee on World Food Security \(CFS 50\)](#) (10-13 October 2022)
- [Group of 20 Intergovernmental Forum \(G 20\)](#) (30-31 October 2022)
- [UN Climate Change Conference 2022 \(UNFCCC COP 27\)](#) (7-18 November 2022)

### **Mobilizing Support for Sustainably Producing Blue/Aquatic Foods:**

The Blue/Aquatic Foods Coalition Members will work to identify sources of financial and technical support for projects that promote the integration of aquatic/blue foods into food systems at the appropriate regional, national or international level; Members will leverage not only their bilateral aid programs but also their memberships and participation in institutional official development assistance (ODA) programs and ongoing collaborations that can benefit from a heightened focus on the role of blue/aquatic food, including:

- [The Global Environment Facility's International Waters](#)
- [High Level Panel Ocean Action 2030](#)
- [FAO Blue Transformation initiative](#)
- [World Bank ProBlue](#)
- [High Level Panel Blue Recovery Model for COVID recovery](#)