



## **Sustainable Fisheries Partnership – Media Backgrounder**

Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP) is a unique, not-for-profit organization that works directly with the seafood industry to improve the sustainability of fisheries around the world. The organization was founded in 2006 and is registered in the United States but is “virtual” – SFP has no headquarters and staff are distributed globally and work from home.

SFP operates through two main principles: information and improvement.

### **Information**

SFP has created a database of fisheries, accessible to all, which contains assessments of sustainability and improvement needs. The database – called [FishSource](#) – includes more than 300 profiles, with more being added every week. FishSource reduces one of the primary barriers to seafood companies engaging in fisheries improvement, namely access to reliable and detailed information. The site is also a contributors’ network, welcoming contributions from professionals in the field to keep all the profiles at the cutting edge of scientific knowledge.

The fisheries information on FishSource is also linked to a software package called SFP Metrics that can sit on a commercial fish buyers’ PC and tell them the sustainability status of the fish they are ordering. This means that constantly updated fisheries information can be fed into any company’s procurement system and help staff implement sustainability policies.

### **Improvement**

Once seafood companies have information, they can identify where the problems lie in their supply chain and take action. However, trying to engage directly in a fishery, which may be thousands of miles away, is a daunting prospect for most organizations, especially when they have no in-house expertise on marine management. SFP helps to overcome this barrier by creating Fisheries Improvement Projects (FIPs) – essentially multi-stakeholder groups that include catchers, processors, and others with a stake in the fishery who work together to create and implement an improvement plan. SFP now has more than 40 FIPs operating around the world, which also serve as models for other fisheries seeking improvements.

### **Aquaculture**

Almost half of the seafood now produced originates from fish farms – aquaculture – rather than wild fisheries. This industry poses very different challenges to the wild capture sector, but the end products are identical at the point of retail. SFP has responded to industry requests by creating a parallel system for aquaculture, which complements the wild fisheries program. SFP is currently developing an aquaculture component for FishSource, along with aquaculture metrics for seafood buyers and a number of Aquaculture Improvement Partnerships (AIPs) in China, Vietnam, and Indonesia.

SFP has a vision of how aquaculture can become sustainable and is actively promoting a number of themes including sustainable aquaculture feeds and the need for data transparency across the industry. SFP is also encouraging the “zone” approach to aquaculture management – looking at the cumulative impact on a single water body of many aquaculture operations rather than focusing on the activities of any single farm.



## Opinion Leaders

Along with proactively supplying the tools that the seafood industry needs to become sustainable, SFP promotes new ideas to the corporate world that catalyze action. We have been active in:

- Making the connections between wild fisheries and aquaculture – sustainable aquaculture feed
- Identifying the need for corporate involvement in marine protected areas
- Helping the industry make sense of seafood sustainability standards and choose the right options
- Encouraging the fishing industry to go beyond reaching “good” performance and become “excellent” by using ecosystem-based fisheries management
- Communicating the absolute requirement for transparency and traceability throughout the catching and processing of seafood in order to ensure sustainability
- Formulating sector-wide advice on best practices – for instance, reducing bycatch in tuna fisheries
- Educating the industry about the potential threats from ocean acidification.

## Corporate Partners

SFP can number some of the largest retailers in the world among its partners, such as Walmart and Tesco, along with national leaders in the sector like Sobeys in Canada and Sainsbury’s in the UK. SFP also partners with global consumer brands and restaurant chains like McDonald’s. Out of the top 25 retailers in North America, 10 are SFP partners.

## Where We Work

SFP has staff around the world and is involved with a wide variety of fisheries across many oceans. You can find a complete list of FIPs, AIPs, and SFP corporate partners at our web site, [www.sustainablefish.org](http://www.sustainablefish.org).

## Conclusion

SFP is a young and dynamic business-focused NGO that is reshaping the world of corporate responsibility through the creation of powerful information tools and a methodology that allows companies to directly engage with suppliers of natural resources. It does not campaign or provide eco-labels, but dedicates itself to reducing the barriers to action by industry in creating a more sustainable world. The organization is “super-lean” – it has no headquarters and overheads are minimal, which means that SFP is now one of the most financially efficient NGOs in the sector. The organization continues to grow at a rapid pace and is now expanding from its focus in North America and Europe to China, Japan, southeast Asia, and South America.



## **CONTACTS**

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## **QUICK FACTS**

Founded: 2006

Legal status: SFP is a non-profit organization exempt from US federal taxes under IRS code section 501(c)(3)

CEO: Jim Cannon

Registered address: 4348 Waialae Ave.#692, Honolulu, HI 96816 USA

Operating Budget 2010/11: \$4.2 million (US)

Number of staff: Approximately 50

Number of FIPs: Approximately 40

Number of AIPs: 2, Chinese tilapia and Vietnamese pangasius

Number of profiles on [FishSource](#): more than 300 (November 2011)

Corporate partners: Approximately 25