

# LIFTING UP LOCAL OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE

Process for identifying and assessing  
Lifting Up Local opportunities



March 2025

Prepared by:

# Iberostar's Wave of Change

## Lifting Up Local Operational Guidance

**March 2025**

Prepared By FishWise

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## I. Introduction

Iberostar's Lifting Up Local initiative marks a strategic evolution in its responsible seafood sourcing policy, moving beyond traditional certifications to embrace a holistic approach that integrates environmental, social, and economic considerations. This initiative stems from lessons learned during Iberostar's journey towards sourcing 100% of seafood from responsible sources by 2025. Initially, the focus was on certification, ratings, and fishery improvement projects (FIPs), as aligned with other industry leaders. However, Iberostar has the advantage of being located in seafood producing countries, where there are opportunities to support the socio-economic resilience of fishing communities and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in countries that Iberostar operates. Leveraging Iberostar's work to date and infrastructure, such as the Seafood Evaluation Process and its extensive in-country network, the Lifting Up Local initiative aims to bridge a sourcing gap and allow for the responsible procurement of domestic, artisanal seafood. Iberostar commits to directly engaging with local seafood harvesters, fostering resilient local food systems by investing in improvements over time.

The following framework is built on the strong foundation of other accepted standards and guidance, specifically the [FAO's Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries](#) (SSF Guidelines) and the [FAO's Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture \(GSA\)](#). The SSF Guidelines present guiding principles that have informed other resources that were taken under consideration during the design of Lifting Up Local Operational Guidance: [Community Catch Standard](#), Conservation International's [Social Responsibility Assessment \(SRA\)](#) Tool for the Seafood Sector, and FishWise's [Roadmap for Improving Seafood Ethics](#) (RISE). The [Sustainable Fisheries Partnership](#) (SFP) leveraged the Responsible Seafood Sourcing (RSS) Standard as the backbone for the Lifting Up Local guidelines. FishWise then worked closely with Iberostar to adapt the RSS Standard to be fit for purpose and incorporated all of the rich resources listed throughout this operational guidance. The FAO's GSA provides technical guidance for aquaculture stakeholders at all levels, with an objective to promote environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

By adopting this operational guidance, Iberostar aims to identify local fisheries and aquaculture options that fall outside the traditional market based tools like certifications and ratings, but align with Iberostar's holistic sustainability goals. Additionally, this process allows Iberostar to directly engage with and support local stakeholders and supply chain partners, establishing close relationships and trust that are essential for responsible sourcing practices. Iberostar has the opportunity to use the results from the Lifting Up Local assessments and experiences sourcing from small-scale fisheries to improve local and federal management through scalability and advocacy opportunities, making a broader impact.

## II. Workstream Orientation

The Lifting Up Local initiative is organized into three Workstreams that can operate in parallel but inform each other. Figure 1 presents a visual representation of the Workstreams. All Lifting up Local Workstreams are the responsibility of the Blue Foods Specialist. However, the Blue Foods Specialist is expected to leverage expertise of Procurement, Wave of Change, and Quality Assurance teams as well as any in-country consultants (See Roles and Responsibilities in Appendix I for a more detailed description of each team's involvement).

### Contextual Workstream

The Contextual Workstream is needed to understand the legal and operational frameworks in which a country operates. Any country with an Iberostar location can technically initiate sourcing within the Lifting up Local category. However, Lifting Up Local sources must come from a domestic market, meaning that the product is harvested, processed, and received in the same country as the Iberostar location.

**Initial Priority Countries** include Jamaica, Morocco, Brazil, and Tunisia.

Understanding the country context is essential for assessing Legal Compliance and Traceability of the Legal Origin of the product (both non-negotiables) and evaluating the Responsibility Self-Assessments.

#### **Outcomes of Contextual Workstream:**

- Identify legal frameworks and requirements (national, regional/local regulations)
  - Inform Product Workstream: what is required for legal compliance and origin (non-negotiables) and expected as *Acceptable* or *Best Practice* in Responsibility Self-Assessments
- Understand the management scheme for seafood products (wild or farmed) and what entities are involved
- Understand the current stock health of potential Lifting Up Local product(s)
  - Identify potential Lifting Up Local species of interest
  - Identify data improvement opportunities through Lifting Up Local projects.

## Product Workstream

This Workstream involves product and community assessments to ensure a Lifting Up Local product meets the non-negotiables and continues into further holistic assessments: environmental sustainability and social welfare.

### Outcomes of Product Workstream:

- LuL product(s) confirmed and searchable in the SAC
- Traceability KDEs collected and evaluated
- Completed Environmental Sustainability and Human and Social Welfare Self-Assessments<sup>1</sup>
- Improvement plans drafted for future monitoring and evaluation

The management of the Product Workstream is the responsibility of the Blue Foods Specialist, but it is expected that Procurement will be leading activities to collect key data elements to help evaluate the non-negotiables.

Responsible parties will coordinate with other relevant teams (e.g., Wave of Change) to execute each activity in the Workstream (Appendix I).

## Operational Workstream

Infrastructure needs to be in place to support maintained quality and freshness in order to effectively, efficiently, and safely source a local product. This Workstream is essential to assess what infrastructure exists and is missing in order to start sourcing a Lifting Up Local product (e.g., hygienic processing, maintained cold storage, reliable transportation).

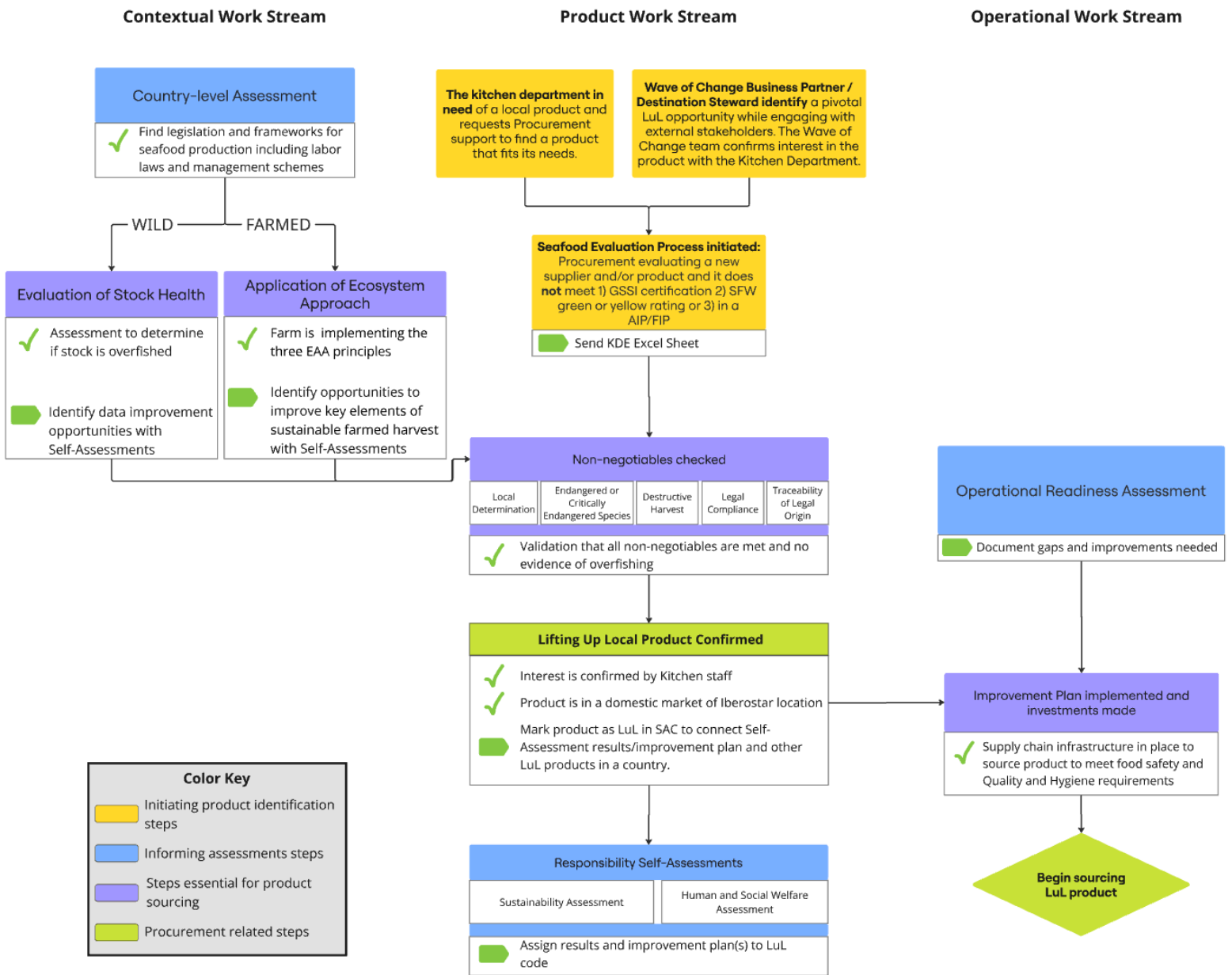
### Outcomes of Operational Workstream:

- Gap analysis of current procurement practices that support sourcing of Lifting Up Local Products and infrastructure needs
- Investments<sup>2</sup> are made to ensure supply chain infrastructure is in place to source Lifting Up Local product that meets food safety and Quality and Hygiene requirements
- Iberostar begins to source Lifting Up Local product
  - Informed by the outcomes of Product and Contextual Workstreams
- Iberostar leverages the new Lifting Up Local product for communication opportunities on location and in Wave of Change

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<sup>1</sup> Although the supplier (company representative, cooperative leader, etc.) could conduct the self-assessment without support, it is expected that local Iberostar staff will be present to support the assessment, especially the first time it is conducted. This will strengthen trust and respect while building local capacity.

<sup>2</sup> Improvements can be made by establishing local partnerships that will allow the fisheries to implement the improvements and/or with the support of the Iberostar Foundation that supports broader seafood sector improvements beyond a single supplier.



**Figure 1.** Visual representation of the three Lifting Up Local Workstreams. A check mark (✓) denotes a result required for the next steps. A green tab (➡) indicates an action taken.

### III. Stepwise Guidance

#### A. Contextual Workstream

The Contextual Workstream can be initiated prior to a discrete product being identified as a Lifting Up Local opportunity. There are three activities in the Contextual Workstream: Country-level Assessment, Evaluation of Stock Health, and an Aquaculture Carrying Capacity Assessment. The results from

these Contextual activities will inform the Product Workstream in the evaluation of the non-negotiables, determining what is acceptable in the self-assessments, and identifying opportunities for improvement.

The Contextual Workstream is the responsibility of the Blue Foods Specialist. It is expected that the Blue Foods Specialist will leverage their expertise to conduct the three activities and will coordinate with the appropriate teams. It is critical that the Blue Foods Specialist communicates with the Wave of Change team, who may have more in-country experience. The results of the Contextual Workstream will inform the Product Workstream. Those coordinations are detailed in Appendix I. The results from the Country-level Assessment, Evaluation of Stock Health, and Applying the Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture should be documented and shared transparently with the Lifting Up Local initiative team.

### 1. Country-level Assessment

The Country-level Assessment is critical to understanding the frameworks within which the fishing/aquaculture community exists. This assessment should be comprehensive, meaning that it will include investigations into environmental, social, and economic frameworks and legislation related to fisheries.

Topic	Critical Information to Identify
Small-scale fishery designation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify how the country defines small-scale fishery</li> <li>● Identify what criteria/frameworks exist for managing small-scale fisheries</li> <li>● Identify culturally significant fisheries and artisanal fishing practices</li> </ul>
Labor Laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify responsible agencies</li> <li>● Identify measures related to forced labor, child labor, human trafficking, and safe working conditions</li> <li>● Identify protection of freedom of association and collective bargaining, including labor associations (e.g., unions), are legal and supported</li> </ul>
Fisheries Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify responsible agency</li> <li>● Identify decision-makers. Roles and responsibilities should be defined and understood in the management system.</li> <li>● Identify how stocks are managed (e.g., single or multi-stock assessments).</li> <li>● Identify the methodology for management measures and what informs those measures (e.g., scientific evidence, local and traditional knowledge).</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify frameworks to support co-management or community-based fisheries management<sup>3</sup>.</li> </ul>
Legal Harvest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify a framework to provide legal rights to fishers (e.g., permits, licenses, concession areas).</li> <li>Identify what registrations are required.</li> <li>Identify the presence/absence of available vessel registries and violations (e.g., black/grey lists, IUU fishing allegations).</li> </ul>
Aquaculture Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify responsible agency(ies) for various production areas (e.g., land-based, freshwater, coastal, offshore)</li> <li>Identify registrations and permitting requirements</li> <li>Identify integrated planning and zoning agencies</li> </ul>
Food Safety Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify responsible agency</li> <li>Identify food safety laws and relevant regulations for seafood production, procurement and handling, to manufacturing, distribution and consumption</li> </ul>
Traceability Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify if traceability requirements are in place. These are likely in place for food safety and trade.</li> <li>Identify responsible agency.</li> <li>Identify if there are established data collection platforms/systems in place.</li> </ul>
Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify responsible agency.</li> <li>Identify MCS efforts in place.</li> <li>Identify if there are avenues for coordination with local authorities established.</li> </ul>

Strengths and gaps are expected to be identified, and the Blue Foods Specialist should document findings with opportunities for improvement using the template in Appendix II. As outlined in the Sustainability and Advocacy section (III A.3) below, this assessment provides insight into how Iberostar can collaborate to support county-level improvements through its Wave of Change program.

Resources:

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<sup>3</sup> Community-based fishery management models can result in local management and participatory decision-making, have been known to improve livelihoods, and participate in conservation efforts. Sourcing from small-scale fisheries that are community-led and in accordance with country specific laws aligns with section 5.15 of the [FAO's Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries \(2015\)](#). Community-based fishery management models can vary across countries. Some examples include fishing cooperatives and fishing associations, fishery recovery plans or community-managed MPAs and/or monitoring programs, customary fishing rights, and Beach Management Management Units (BMUs)

- The Outlaw Ocean’s [Global Fishing Legislative Database](#) is an extensive resource to find country-specific legislation. For example, [Brazil’s profile](#) is relatively comprehensive and can act as a great starting point for the Country-level Assessment.
- The [Fisheries Transparency Initiative](#) (FiTI) works to improve the “accessibility, credibility and usability of national fisheries management information.” Countries can support sustainable management by committing to implement the [FiTI standard](#). FishWise leveraged this standard, along with the [Global Charter for Fisheries Transparency](#), to inform the critical information identified in the above table. However, Iberostar can leverage FiTI and the [Coalition for Fisheries Transparency](#)<sup>4</sup> to advocate for improvements in fisheries management and transparency for informed business decision-making.
- The [Community Catch Standard](#) outlines targets for Governance and Labour Rights, which inform the above table and can act as guidelines for Iberostar’s identified improvement recommendations where a gap exists. The standard also includes an evaluation matrix for small-scale fisheries.

## 2. Evaluation of Stock Health

As part of /following the country-level assessment, the Blue Foods Specialist will need to assess what information exists about the potential LUL stock health, specifically whether the fishery in question is **overfished** and/or if **overfishing is occurring**.<sup>5</sup>

Understanding the status of these two reference points will help identify where additional management measures might be needed and or how the current management procedures are working. Overall, this provides Iberostar with an understanding of the level of risk they are taking in sourcing this local species, as it indicates whether there is any basic understanding of the biological stock and impact of fishing on the population and broader environment.

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<sup>4</sup> The Coalition for Fisheries Transparency is a collective group of civil society organizations in which FishWise is a member. FishWise, as a sustainability consultant, can keep Iberostar informed on industry and government progress, advocacy opportunities, and encourage them to participate when able and appropriate.

<sup>5</sup> Overfishing is occurring when fishing mortality is greater than the level needed to maintain maximum sustainable yield; Overfished is when the stock size, for a variety of reasons, is below the biomass level that would sustain long term viability.

**If the information indicates that the species or species complex is Overfished and Overfishing is occurring, it is recommended that Iberostar not source this product and look for opportunities to advocate for improvements.**

Topic	Critical Information to Identify
Biomass Estimate	Is there any estimate of biomass for the species, either individually or as part of a multi-species complex?
Stock Status	Is there a stock assessment available for the target species and species complex?
Overfished	If the fishery is reported as overfished: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is there a rebuilding plan in place that is informed by regular stock assessments?</li> <li>● Have management measures effectively stopped overfishing from occurring and supported the rebuilding of the stock?</li> </ul>
Overfishing	If no overfishing is occurring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● When was the last stock assessment, and what data was used within the stock assessment?</li> </ul> If overfishing is occurring, but the stock is not overfished: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Was the last stock assessment conducted within the last 5 years, and is there a management plan in place?</li> </ul>
Environmental Impacts of Fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Information on the impact of harvest on threatened or protected species, including the capture, entanglement, or other interaction causing injury.</li> <li>● Presence of mortality limits and the use of mitigation measures to limit mortality and injuries.</li> <li>● Information on common bycatch species</li> <li>● Information on the impact of fishing gear or farming method on surrounding habitat (e.g., seabed, mangroves, etc.)</li> <li>● Understanding of the potential waste that can be created and disposed of at sea and onshore (e.g., contaminants, plastics, chemicals, nutrients, etc.)</li> </ul>

If there is no biomass estimate, nor any understanding of the impact of fishing on the environment, the Sustainability Self-Assessment (see page 24) will provide more detail on the gaps in information and opportunities for improvement.

Resources: The Blue Foods Specialist should leverage the resources below in addition to working with in-country agencies (NGOs, IGOs, Academia) that support fisheries management efforts.

- Iberostar’s Blue Foods Specialist’s ‘Country-Level Assessment’
- European Commission and FAO status of the stock reports
- The [Community Catch Standard](#)
- SFP’s [Fish Source](#) provides information about the status of many fisheries, fish stocks, and aquaculture. This also includes information about management plans.
- [MRAG Fisheries Assessment Tool](#) - provides examples of data in relation to a scale similar to that of the MSC scoring.
- Examples for country specific NGO’s:
  - Mexico: WWF-Mexico, [SmartFish AC](#), EDF-Mexico, [COMEPESCA](#)
  - Japan: [Seafood Legacy](#)
  - Spain: WWF-Spain, [Sustainable Fisheries Partnership](#)
  - Brazil: Conservation International

### **3. Applying the Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture**

Aquaculture encompasses a wide range of practices, each with distinct environmental and social implications. The LuL initiative should identify operations implementing an Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture (EAA) due to its demonstrated potential to contribute positively to local ecosystems, economies, and communities. The EAA is a non-prescriptive framework that integrates aquaculture activities into the broader environmental and social landscape, with the goal of promoting sustainable development. By focusing on aquaculture farms practicing EAA principles, the LuL initiative can align sourcing efforts to support diverse stakeholders underpinned by practices in sustainability, environmental stewardship, and community empowerment.

The EAA is underscored by three interconnected principles:

- 1.** Production must not threaten the sustained delivery of ecosystem services or functions, and should stay within the ecosystem’s carrying capacity, using best practices to prevent ecological degradation.
- 2.** Aquaculture should enhance human well-being and equity, prioritizing food security and equitable benefits across stakeholders, especially vulnerable communities.
- 3.** Aquaculture development and operation should align with other sectors and policies, promoting integrated planning and management.

Iberostar can use these principles to assess the relative ecological, social, and operational risks of potential LuL farms, to inform what additional information should be collected in the self-assessments, and the degree of intervention that Iberostar would be willing to make for improvements. It is recommended that Iberostar collect and assess information on actual and potential risks at various scales (e.g., regional, farm-level).

**If the information indicates that the farm or farmed species is not implementing the three EAA principles, it is recommended that Iberostar not source this product and look for opportunities to advocate for alignment with the EAA.**

Key elements outlining sustainable farmed harvest		
Item	Description	Information to Identify
Integrated Zoning and Planning	Aquaculture activities are planned and regulated to avoid conflicts with other resource users and conserve sensitive habitats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who are the other resource users (e.g., fishers, tourism, energy, etc.) and what are the vulnerable habitats impacted by users within the aquaculture production region?</li> <li>Are there any known conflicts with other resource users in the region? What management is in place to mitigate conflicts?</li> </ul>
Environmental Impact	Evaluate and manage the impacts of aquaculture on the environment and community, with ongoing monitoring and corrective actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the actual or potential environmental impacts by aquaculture farms in the area?</li> <li>What mitigation practices do farms use to minimize impacts?</li> </ul>
Carrying Capacity	Site selection and farm management must recognize the ecosystem's capacity to safely absorb inputs without ecological harm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How well suited is the local ecological and social environment to accommodate aquaculture production?</li> <li>What are the physical and production characteristics of farms?</li> </ul>
Better Management	Use of efficient and sustainably-sourced feed, waste management,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the conventional farm practices for the region?</li> </ul>

Practices (BMPs)	disease control, and biosecurity measures to minimize ecological footprint and protect both farmed and wild populations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What input resources are available for farms? What technologies or management practices are used on farms?</li> </ul>
Social Well-being	Practices should avoid negative impacts on local communities, especially land use, employment, and access to resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any known “high-concern” issues towards aquaculture in the region?</li> <li>• What are the employment practices on the farm? (See SRA Appendix)</li> </ul>

As potential gaps are identified during the application of the EAA and key elements of sustainable farmed harvest (above) are assessed, the Environmental Sustainability Self-Assessment (see page 24) should be used to document more detail on the gaps in information and opportunities for improvement.

Resources: The Blue Foods Specialist should leverage the resources below in addition to working with in-country agencies (NGOs, IGOs, Academia) that support fisheries management efforts.

- Iberostar’s Blue Foods Specialist’s ‘Country-Level Assessment’
- FAO’s [Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries - Aquaculture Development - Ecosystem approach to aquaculture](#).
- FAO’s [Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture](#)

#### 4. Scalability and Advocacy

The Contextual Workstream should, in essence, provide Iberostar with a country-level assessment of strengths and opportunities for improvement. While this work is meant to support Iberostar’s understanding of in-country, small-scale fisheries, often tied to smaller regional management, it still provides insight into how Iberostar can work collaboratively to support county-level improvements through its Wave of Change program.

For example:

- Encourage other companies operating similarly to adopt the LuL framework, emphasizing relational seafood supply chains (RSSCs) and supporting local fisheries.
- Incentivize improvement measures through fair prices, capacity building, and advocacy for best practices.

- Join or support alliances and coalitions within the hotel/tourism sector to collectively enhance sustainability and support local communities and ecosystems.

## B. Product Workstream

The Product Workstream is the responsibility of the Blue Foods Specialist. Responsibility does not necessarily mean that this person is doing all the work; it means that they are responsible for making sure the process is completed accordingly and with the support of the appropriate teams, such as Procurement and Wave of Change. Those coordinations are detailed in Appendix I.

### 1. Non-negotiables

Once a Lifting Up Local opportunity is identified, Iberostar can leverage its already established Seafood Evaluation Process. Through this process, Procurement will send the product KDE Excel spreadsheet to the supplier to help begin evaluating the five non-negotiables. See [Appendix III](#) for a decision tree with required information for evaluating LuL non-negotiables.

- A. Local Determination<sup>6</sup>: In alignment with Iberostar’s “Local Community Engagement Policy,” the Lifting up Local initiative aims to support fishing and aquaculture communities directly affected by the operations of Iberostar in a specific geographic area (i.e., country). Sourcing LuL products provides an opportunity for traceability improvements and socio-economic development. For the purposes of LuL, “local” requires seafood products to come from a domestic market, meaning that the product is harvested, processed, and received in the same country as the Iberostar location.

Countries Eligible for LuL Product Sourcing <sup>7</sup>	
Aruba	Greece
Brazil	Montenegro
Dominican Republic	Portugal

<sup>6</sup> If the product is deemed culturally and nutritionally significant to the local community, the Blue Foods Specialist has the responsibility to take that into consideration and seek more regionally appropriate options.

<sup>7</sup> Locations of Iberostar destinations as of September 2025.

Jamaica	Spain
Mexico	Morocco
USA	Tunisia

- B. Endangered or Critically Endangered Species: In alignment with the Seafood Evaluation Process, the product is cross-checked with [IUCN](#) and [CITES Appendix I and II](#) to ensure the species isn't from an Endangered or Critically Endangered Species. Products can not be sourced unless it holds a GSSI benchmarked certification (e.g., Jamaican Queen Conch, Totoaba) or there are official statements from IUCN/CITES that confirm the sustainability of a particular fishery/farm (e.g., Brazilian Pirarucu).

Not Acceptable	Acceptable for LuL
IUCN Endangered species or Critically Endangered species	Not listed as Endangered or Critically Endangered species
Species listed in CITES Appendix I or II	Listed on CITES Appendix III <sup>8</sup>
	Listed but have official statements from IUCN/CITES supporting responsible harvest

- C. Destructive Harvest Practices:

The Blue Foods Specialist is responsible for determining if the gear aligns with Iberostar’s sustainability goals for wild and farmed production. The sustainability of fishing gear can depend on how it affects ecosystems, waste, fisher safety, and long-term stock health. Because of the scope of the LuL initiative, seafood products may be harvested using artisanal gear not found in the tables below. The Country-level assessment can identify recognized artisanal fishing practices.

Examples of Gear Sustainability Considerations	
Wild Production Method	Farmed Production Method

<sup>8</sup> [CITES states](#) that, “this Appendix [III] contains species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES Parties for assistance in controlling the trade”

Selectivity and bycatch risk	Escapement and genetic impact potential <sup>9</sup>
Habitat impact	Habitat impact <sup>10</sup>
Gear composition	Water quality and pollution
Worker safety	Worker safety
Potential for lost or abandoned gear	Feed and seed sourcing
Fuel efficiency	Disease

C.1. Wild Fishing Gear: Acceptable gear must always be legal and prioritize target species while minimizing unintended catches and habitat degradation<sup>11</sup>. It's important to monitor and regulate the use of these gear types to maintain their effectiveness and prevent adverse impacts on non-target species. Check the harvest key data elements (KDEs) to determine if the gear is acceptable or not.

Not Acceptable	Needs Evaluation <sup>12</sup>	Most Selective
Cyanide Fishing (Poison Fishing)	Bottom Trawls	Handlines & Pole-and-line
	Dredging	
	Drift Nets	Troll Fishing
Dynamite Fishing (Blast Fishing)	Gillnets	Trap and Pot
	Longlining	Diving
Any fishing in a no-take zones (See information from the Country-level Assessment to support this evaluation)	Mid-water Trawls	Surrounding Nets/Cast Nets
	Seine Nets	
	Pound Nets	Jigging

<sup>9</sup> Relative risk can be assessed by the degree of water exchange by the production method (e.g., open net pen vs tanks on land) and the potential invasiveness of the grown species in the surrounding area.

<sup>10</sup> For land-based and coastal aquaculture, deforestation and land-use changes should be considered in the Country-level assessment to ensure no recent (since 1999) loss of nature or land conversion.

<sup>11</sup> Some select examples of selective gear types include handlines, pole-and-line fishing, and trap and pot fishing, and size-specific mesh nets. However, for example, even pot lines can be harmful and entangle marine mammals if not managed effectively. See Appendix IV for more guidance on fishing gear.

<sup>12</sup> The gear listed in the "Needs Evaluation" column can be deemed acceptable or not depending on the results of the country-level assessment and effectiveness of fisheries management.

The two non-negotiable fishing gears included in the table above are never acceptable because of their destructive nature, irrespective of management measures. While all fishing methods have an impact, the level of impact is reduced through proper management. The Country-level Assessment should identify the relative level of impact by the gear in use and what measures are in place to monitor and regulate gear use to manage and mitigate adverse impacts on the habitat and non-target species (See Appendix IV). The Sustainability Self-Assessment will identify how the fisher group may be managing the gear and avoiding environmental degradation and by-catch.

**C.2. Farmed Harvest:**

The two non-negotiable farming practices included in the table below are never acceptable because they have substantial negative impacts on native wild populations, even if happening on a well managed farm. However, all farming methods can be destructive if not properly managed. The Country-level Assessment should support the understanding of the level of risk for the practices in use and what measures are in place to monitor and regulate the application of farm practices to operate within their carrying capacities and prevent adverse impacts on the habitat (See Appendix V). The Sustainability Self-Assessment will identify how the farmer may be managing the farm and applying practices to avoid environmental degradation.

Not Acceptable	Needs Evaluation <sup>13,14</sup>	Least impact
Wild Source Stock (production that uses wild caught juveniles)	Cages - full lifecycle	Regenerative/ Restorative <sup>15</sup>
	Cages - (open) dam systems	
	Float/tray/raft/rope/ bottom	

<sup>13</sup> The gear listed in the “Needs Evaluation” column can be deemed acceptable or not depending on the results of the country-level assessment and effectiveness of fisheries management.

<sup>14</sup> Production systems based on [GSI Production Methods for Aquaculture](#). This list aligns with GSI CBV Attributes to inform GDST but does not include all possible aquaculture production types.

<sup>15</sup> Regenerative (restorative) aquaculture can be defined as, “Aquaculture (that) occurs when commercial or subsistence aquaculture provides direct ecological benefits to the environment, with the potential to generate net positive environmental outcomes.” [TNC, 2021](#)

Non-native invasive species	Ponds Extensive	
	Ponds Semi-Intensive	
Any other illegal farm operations <i>(See information from the Country-level Assessment to support this evaluation)</i>	Ponds Intensive	
	Raceways	
	Aquaponics	
	Tanks	
	Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS)	

For farmed product that “Needs Evaluation”, the Blue Foods Specialist will need to conduct an Aquaculture Carrying Capacity Assessment (Appendix IV) to inform whether there are any known farm practices that are exceeding the following carrying capacity thresholds of where it operates. There are four carrying capacities to be assessed:

- 1) Ecological Carrying Capacity,
- 2) Social Carrying Capacity
- 3) Physical Carrying Capacity, or
- 4) Production Carrying Capacity,

Examples of Carrying Capacity Assessments	
Topic	Critical Information to Identify <sup>16</sup>
Ecological Carrying Capacity	<p><u>Definition:</u> Ecological carrying capacity is defined as the magnitude of aquaculture production that can be supported without leading to significant changes to ecological process, services, species, populations, or communities in the environment.</p> <p><u>Assessment:</u> What are the potential and actual environmental impacts of aquaculture production on the surrounding ecosystem? How are these impacts being mitigated? What are the impacts at the farm-level and what are the impacts at the industry-, jurisdictional-, and/or watershed-level?</p>

<sup>16</sup> Carrying capacity definitions from Ross, et al. (2010). Carrying capacities and site selection within the ecosystem approach to aquaculture.

	<p><u>Example:</u> A cluster of coastal aquaculture farms have cleared mangroves to develop production ponds. Now, the farms are experiencing flooding from storm surge and sea level rise. Some farmers have abandoned their ponds, are clearing more mangroves, and building new ponds. This farm cluster is imposing significant environmental impacts and operating beyond its ecological carrying capacity.</p>
Social Carrying Capacity	<p><u>Definition:</u> Social carrying capacity can be defined as the amount of aquaculture that can be developed without adverse social impacts.</p> <p><u>Assessment:</u> Do the adverse impacts of aquaculture production outweigh the positive impacts for local stakeholders? Do any of the other carrying capacity impacts (i.e., physical, production, or ecological) affect or inhibit social uses of resources?</p> <p><u>Example:</u> Near-shore and off-shore aquaculture systems will require coordination amongst a breadth of other industries, communities, and resource users to reduce conflict and ensure coordinated spatial planning, including but not limited to shipping, fisheries, tourism, and energy. Operating aquaculture farms in spaces without coordinating with such actors would likely lead to adverse social impacts.</p>
Physical Carrying Capacity	<p><u>Definition:</u> Physical carrying capacity is based on the suitability for development of a given activity, taking into account the physical factors of the environment and the farming system.</p> <p><u>Assessment:</u> What is the overall development potential of a farm to operate in its physical space? Are the areas of operation adequate and available for production?</p> <p><u>Example:</u> An inland aquaculture farm in an arid environment is pumping large volumes of groundwater. The extraction rate exceeds the natural replenishment rate of the aquifer. This operation would exceed the physical carrying capacity.</p>
Production Carrying Capacity	<p><u>Definition:</u> Production carrying capacity estimates the maximum aquaculture production of a given system, typically at the farm level but can also apply to whole water bodies such as lakes or reservoirs.</p> <p><u>Assessment:</u> What is the initial stocking density of the species compared to conventional industry practices? What is the final harvest yield of the species compared</p>

	<p>to conventional industry practices? What is the number of production cycles compared to conventional industry practices? How does the production intensity affect animal welfare (e.g., disease) or environmental impact (e.g., effluent loading)?</p> <p><u>Example:</u> Whiteleg shrimp (<i>L. vannamei</i>) can be grown in a wide range of production intensities. Stocking densities can include less than 10 post larvae per square meter (PLm<sup>-2</sup>) up to 200 (PLm<sup>-2</sup>) while yields can range from several hundreds of kilograms per hectare to tens of thousands of kilograms per hectare. The <i>maximum</i> production can be influenced by the farm's technological investment and management, such as the use of aerators, lined ponds, and high-quality feed and seed resources.</p>
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Evaluating these four parameters will help to inform how the aquaculture farm impacts, and is impacted by, its' environmental and built surroundings. Developing an understanding for carrying capacity thresholds will enable Iberostar to make an informed decision on sourcing the farmed species as it will indicate the ability of ecological and social environments to sustain production.

Operating beyond any carrying capacity threshold, at the farm or regional level, is a non-negotiable that should not be acceptable due to the environmental, social, and/or animal welfare harm that comes from these practices. The Country-level Assessment and application of the Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture should help to identify potential operational risks that are beyond the system's carrying capacity and what measures are in place to monitor and regulate aquaculture production, at the farm and regional levels, to ensure production is within capacity thresholds. Additional guidance on carrying capacity can be found in the Environmental Sustainability Self-Assessment Section F.

D. Legal Compliance

To accurately assess legal compliance, the Blue Foods Specialist needs to have completed the Country-level Assessment. The assessment will identify what legal frameworks are established to support fisher, vessel, and farm registration, the presence of appropriate permits, any records of legal violation, and requirements for business documentation. Depending on how the country manages its fisheries and aquaculture, there could be a

varying combination of registration requirements (e.g., federal, municipal, regional). What is required by national law should be required by Iberostar. **If there is no proof of license to harvest (e.g., open-access fishery, “free-fisher”) and there is no proof of business, Iberostar cannot purchase the product.**

Required Information	Potential Examples
License to harvest	Fishing license, Vessel registration, Farm registration and ID
Business documentation	Tax ID, Business Name, Location (e.g., company information needed to register on Iberostar’s vendor portal)
Documentation to support compliance with federal labor laws	Company or cooperative policies and procedures

According to best practice and as outlined in the RSS Standard, the legal information acquired should be verified against any “documented violations within the last 12 months related to Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated fishing, trading, and processing or any applicable fisheries management regulations.” However, this can be difficult without government transparency, and Iberostar can leverage its Destination Steward to advocate for transparent national vessel registries and improved monitoring, control, and surveillance to be able to support verification of legality.

It is also required to evaluate the company’s compliance with federal labor laws, including ensuring the absence of child labor. Basic compliance with federal labor law is non-negotiable; however, during the Human and Social Welfare Self-Assessment, further strengths and opportunities for improvement will be identified.

E. Traceability of Legal Origin

Traceability information includes records detailing the product’s movement through the supply chain from the point of harvest (origin) to the final sale (Iberostar). To accurately assess traceability of legal origin, the Blue Foods Specialist needs to have completed the Country-level Assessment, which will identify **government traceability requirements**. For example, documents record the

legal capture, processing, sale, distribution, or trade of seafood products. This may also include any food safety documentation. The KDEs provided in the table below are recommended based on best practice, GDST standards, and expected information required for legality. Depending on what the Country-level Assessment deems essential for traceability of legal origin, some KDEs may need to be added and/or adjusted. Procurement will work with the Blue Foods Specialist to ensure the accurate list is shared with the supplier.

KDEs Required <sup>17</sup>	
Traceable Information: product identification information to be <u>collected</u> for all critical tracking events and shipping	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Product Ownership: For chain of custody during ownership transfer in tracking events, suppliers must capture the source and destination of owning parties               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Location name</li> <li>○ ID/authorization</li> <li>○ Address and Country</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Item/SKU/UPC/GTIN (Linking product identifier)</li> <li>● Product Form</li> <li>● Species</li> </ul>	
Production Method (wild)	Production Method (farmed)
Fishing Event	Farm Event
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gear Type</li> <li>● Catch Area (permit area, coordinates)</li> <li>● Date(s) of Capture</li> <li>● Vessel Registration</li> </ul>	Location Data (Farm) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Organization</li> <li>● Location</li> <li>● Location ID<sup>18</sup></li> <li>● Location Country</li> </ul> Farm Data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Date of Harvest</li> <li>● Farming Method (e.g., pond, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Processing Event</b> ( <i>same for wild and farmed</i> )	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Product Origin (e.g., country of origin labeling)</li> <li>● Production date</li> </ul>	

The KDEs outlined above should be sent to the supplier to effectively communicate what data needs to be provided. The in-country staff (e.g., Wave of Change Business Partner) can support in-country data collection. **This is an opportunity to build capacity, improve the**

<sup>17</sup> The KDEs detailed are in alignment Iberostar’s current practices and with [GDST Standard](#) to encourage efficient traceability

<sup>18</sup> Location ID is a unique indicator generated by the authorities in the country of operation that gives the facility the license to operate.

**market access, and mitigate risks of sourcing local products.** By providing a specific KDE expectations that is standardized with seafood traceability best practice (GDST), it is expected to minimize the burden of data collection and streamline requests.

## 2. Lifting Up Local Product Confirmed

A Lifting Up Local product is deemed responsible when it meets the non-negotiable criteria and **1)** does not have evidence of being overfished in the Evaluation of Stock Health for wild products or **2)** provides evidence that the farm is implementing the three Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture (EAA) principles. After the Procurement and Blue Foods Specialist evaluates the non-negotiable criteria, the Blue Foods Specialist reviews all five non-negotiables and ultimately validates the findings, leveraging their expertise and insights from the Contextual Workstream activities.

**Once that is confirmed, the Lifting Up Local product must be assigned a code,** similar to how products are associated with certification (MSC, ASC chain of custody) or FIP codes. The code is used to identify the product, can be searchable, and will be associated with the results of related assessments and improvement plans. Codes should have a standardized format, for example, it could include an alpha and numerical component to represent the country and a specific product number (e.g., LUL-BR-01, LUL-MEX-23).

Action Step	Responsibility
Assign LUL code and associated product KDEs in SAC	Procurement
Validate non-negotiables and create a folder, titled with associated LuL code, to include self-assessment results, improvement plans, and monitoring reports	Blue Foods Specialist
Add Contextual Assessment results to the relevant LuL folder	Blue Foods Specialist

Código	Artículo	Referencia	Género	Especie	Acuicultura/Salvaje	Procesador Primario	Origen	Abanderamiento
22859	FILETE TILAPIA S/PIEL RESPON...	ASC-9035	OREOCROMIS	NILOTTICUS	Acuicultura	HAINAN QINFU FOODS...	CHINA	ASC-C-01126
22858	FILETE TILAPIA C/PIEL RESPON...	ASC-9031	OREOCROMIS	NILOTTICUS	Acuicultura	HAINAN QINFU FOODS...	CHINA	ASC-C-01126
24017	TRUCHA AHUMADA PRECORTAD...	SFW-2502	ONCORHYNCHUS	MYKISS	Acuicultura	Salmones Antartica SA	CHILE/ESPAÑA	ASC-C-02284
22505	ALMEJA BLANCA RESPONSABLE	ASC-9015	MERETIX	LYRATA	Acuicultura		VIETNAM	ASC-C-03719
22503	SALMON AHUMADO PRECORTA...	BAP-2307	SALMO	SALAR	Acuicultura	Salmones Blumar SA	CHILE	BAP - F12438
859810	SALMON ENTERO C/CABEZA CO...	GF07-3330	SALMO	SALAR	Acuicultura	Salmones Blumar SA	CHILE	BAP - F12438 / BAP - D...

**Figure 2.** Screenshot of Procurement’s view of SAC. The yellow box shows where the new LUL code will be added.

### 3. Responsibility Self-Assessments

The self-assessments will leverage country-specific work completed in the Contextual Workstream by the Blue Foods specialist but go deeper to identify gaps and potential opportunities for improvement. Although the supplier (company representative, cooperative leader, etc.) could conduct the self-assessments without support, it is expected that local Iberostar staff will be present to support the assessment, especially the first time it is conducted. This will strengthen trust and respect while building local capacity.

Opportunities identified through the Environmental Sustainability Self-Assessment and Human and Social Welfare Self-Assessment can help Iberostar develop and prioritize actions to support the relevant local community through our Wave of Change (WoC) Innovation Hub. An action plan can then be developed by the Destination Steward, in partnership with the Blue Foods specialist (in collaboration with external advisors), to address the identified gaps (e.g., partnerships, fair pricing determination, capacity building, co-investments/co-financing, long-term contracts).

Leverage these documents to help identify how a company is meeting the criteria above. Rank company performance against each of the criteria and associated indicators as **Best Practice, Acceptable, Needs Improvement, or No Data**<sup>19</sup>.

Ranking	Context
<b>Best Practice</b>	Beyond legal compliance, this is the highest threshold. Informed by international standards and expert guidance.
<b>Acceptable</b>	Meets legal compliance, meaning that it is good enough to continue sourcing confidently. Informed by Country-level Assessment, Evaluation of Stock Health, and the Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture.
<b>Needs Improvement</b>	It does not meet legal compliance and requires further improvements. This can also be used where there is little to no legal threshold to meet

<sup>19</sup> SFP’s Lifting Up Local Framework and Criteria for Compliance adapted from RSS Standard

	within a country. It could include poor data or some evidence of the criteria but doesn't fully meet them.
<b>No Data</b>	This is the lowest threshold, and improvements should be prioritized. This means there is no data to support the assessment.

Regardless of ranking, an established monitoring and evaluation of the criteria should be conducted at regular, established intervals to mitigate risks of IUU fishing, mismanagement of resources, and to ensure Iberostar is meeting its goal to improve sustainability and social welfare over time. **If assessments are returned with consistent “No data,” “Needs Improvement,” and/or no improvements after 3 years of Iberostar investment, it is suggested that sourcing decisions be re-evaluated.**

### Environmental Sustainability Self-Assessment

The criteria for the Environmental Sustainability Self Assessment align and map to performance indicators within the Community Catch Standard, the [MRAG Americas Fisheries Assessment Tool](#), and the EDF [Framework for Integrate Stock and Habitat Evaluation](#). The Community Catch Self-Assessment tool is available online via the Community Catch Digital Platform at [www.communitycatch.org](http://www.communitycatch.org) and is free to use. There is value in using this as it can set up fisheries to become certified by the Community Catch standard if they so choose, and the standard has been reviewed and incorporated into Lifting Up Local guidance.

Using the criteria and resources below, the Blue Foods Specialist, in partnership with the in-country staff (e.g., Wave of Change Business Partner, Destination Steward, local consultant), can help map major gaps in the environmental management of the LuL fishery.

#### **Evaluation Criteria (WILD):**

- A. Stock Status** - In the absence of a recent stock assessment or appropriate reference points, qualitative information and data-limited approaches should be applied.
- Is there an up-to-date stock assessment or reliable estimate of biomass available?
  - Does the stock assessment provide an indication of biomass relative to biological limited reference points (e.g., MSY)?

- Are proxy indicators (e.g., CPUE, size of individuals, fish trip duration) available to provide estimates of stock status?
- Do proxy indicators estimate that the target stock is improving or declining?
- Biological Information
  - i. If not estimated through models, Is there anecdotal information (see local knowledge) or life-history characteristics from related sister species?
- Fishing effort (estimate of effort of fishing mortality)
  - i. Is there an in-season catch time series?
  - ii. Is standardized catch per unit effort (CPUE) data for at least 5 years available?
  - iii. Or is there an effort time series using consistent data-collection methods (e.g., catch, length of trip and catch area, trip by trip)?
- Local Knowledge: Incorporating local fisher insights and experience into sustainability assessment, especially when the official stock health data is limited (data-poor fishery).
  - i. Are there signs of stock health (catch sizes, bycatch frequency, duration of fishing trips)?
  - ii. Are there signs of stock decline attributed to external factors (e.g., climate change, runoff, industrialization)?

**B. Effective Management** - Evaluate whether there is a management plan and harvest strategy in place and that it is effective at maintaining the target stocks above depleted levels.

- Is there a fishery-specific management plan, regulations or similar? How does community-based management play a role (e.g., co-management)?
- Does the management plan for clear ecological objectives for the fishery, include targets, and a plan for reviewing and updating targets based on new quality information?
- Does the management account for risks and uncertainty in its guidance on setting and reviewing targets
- Is illegal, unreported, or unregulated fishing/harvest present?
- Is there monitoring to provide evidence that management measures are effectively reducing exploitation?

**C. Environmental Impact of Harvest**

- Is bycatch monitored, and are bycatch species well documented? If so, are they in healthy abundance, or are they overfished or depleted?

- Is selective fishing gear used with minimal bycatch?
- Is there a bycatch monitoring protocol in place, and is bycatch being handled/managed, and/or are bycatch reduction devices being implemented with successful results?
- Are any Endangered, Threatened or Protected (ETP) species caught by the fishery?
- Does the fishing greatly contact the seafloor, and if so, what kind of habitat is being fished in? Is the spatial footprint of the fishery known?
- Are management measures in place to reduce fishing's impact on habitat, and are they monitored and enforced?

Resources:

Practice can be informed by the following resources:

- [Community Catch Draft Standard](#) and
- [MRAG Fisheries Assessment Tool](#)
- Iberostar Fishermen's Local Knowledge Form (Appendix III)
- [EDF Data-Poor User-Friendly Guide](#)

Wild Example Action Recommendations:

- Scenario: A wild capture fishery is data limited and there is no stock assessment model to indicate whether overfishing is occurring.
- Recommended Process: Throughout the process, the Destination Stewards, Blue Foods Specialist, and local expert identify opportunities to collect new standardized data in addition to collating anecdotal information to support a data-limited stock assessment to be conducted. The fishers may agree to a standardized way of reporting:
  - (1) Catch information such as species, weight or number of fish, and fish size (length) per unit of effort, and
  - (2) Effort information, such as for each individual vessel or fisher (if handlines for example) time spent fishing, area fished, number of hooks, hauls, pots etc.

**Evaluation Criteria (FARMED):**

- A. Environmental Impact** - Aquaculture production, and resource use (e.g., feed, water, energy, etc.) should not impair the sustained delivery of ecosystem services or functions and should prevent ecological degradation.
- Does the farm collect data on resource use?
    - i. Is the feed supplier known?

- ii. Are the origins of marine (e.g., fish meal, fish oil etc.) ingredients known and from sustainable sources?
- iii. Are the origins of terrestrial (e.g., soy, wheat, etc.) ingredients known and from sustainable sources?
- iv. Are freshwater resources available and used sustainably?
- v. Has there been historic or recent deforestation (since 1999<sup>20</sup>) in the farming region? Is deforestation ongoing?
- o Does the farm collect data on animal husbandry practices?
  - i. Does the farm collect wild seed or broodstock for production?
  - ii. Is the hatchery known?
  - iii. Does the farm stock at densities appropriate for the species and growing environment?
  - iv. Does the farm apply appropriate disease prevention and mitigation protocols?
  - v. Does the (shrimp) farm perform eyestalk ablation?
- o Does the farm collect data on production practices?
  - i. Does the farm collect data on harvest yields, harvest cycles, feed use, and feed conversion ratios?

**B. Carrying Capacity** - Farm management needs to ensure that the farm is not exceeding the physical, production, ecological, or social carrying capacities of where it operates.

- o Physical Carrying Capacity
  - i. Can the physical farming site accommodate aquaculture production?
  - ii. Are the physical characteristics of the farm site able to sustain aquaculture?
  - iii. For inland systems, is there adequate water supply?
- o Production Carrying Capacity
  - i. At the farm scale, what is the maximum biomass and biomass density that is produced?
  - ii. At a regional scale (e.g., lake), what is the maximum biomass that can be produced?
- o Ecological Carrying Capacity
  - i. What is the magnitude of aquaculture that can be supported without leading to significant changes in ecological processes, services, species, populations, or communities in the environment?

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<sup>20</sup> The 1999 Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP7) to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands was a significant meeting that uplifted global attention to the importance of mangroves, including the threat of deforestation by aquaculture. 1999 marks a significant point in government commitments and certification, like ASC, prohibit the conversion of wetlands (including mangroves) after May 1999 for certified farms.

- Social Carrying Capacity
  - i. What is the amount of aquaculture production that can be supported without adverse social impacts?
  - ii. Are there conflicts with other resource users?

**C. Integrated Zoning and Planning** - Farms and farm operations should be planned and regulated to avoid conflicts with other resource users and conserve sensitive habitats.

- Are there governance systems to regulate aquaculture operations?
- Is there coordination within the jurisdiction to reduce conflicts with other sectors (e.g., fishing, shipping, energy, etc.)?

**D. Better Management Practices** - The farm and management should aim to minimize its ecological footprint to protect both farmed and wild populations.

- Is the farm using feed efficiently and from sustainable sources?
- Is waste management handled properly and managed to reduce untreated effluent discharge?
- What disease prevention and controls are in place?
- What biosecurity measures are being implemented to reduce wildlife interactions?
- What protocols are in place to minimize and mitigate escapees?

Resources:

Practice can be informed by the following resources:

- [FAO's HANDBOOK - Ecosystem approach to aquaculture management](#)
- [Best Practices for Aquaculture Management](#)
- [SFP's Introduction to Aquaculture Improvement Projects \(AIPs\)](#)
- [SFP's AIP Toolkit](#)

Farmed Example:

- Scenario: The LuL initiative is trying to decide between two sources of tilapia in Brazil, one grown in semi-intensive inland ponds versus one grown in cages in a reservoir.
- Recommended Process: Throughout the process, the Destination Stewards, Blue Foods Specialist, and local expert identify opportunities to collect new production data in addition to collating anecdotal information to assess an Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture.

- 1) Environmental Impact: Input resource information such as feed and seed suppliers, feed conversion ratios. Production data such as stocking density, production cycle duration (days), production cycles per year, disease prevalence, and yield per cycle. Impacts on ecosystems, impacts on native species, and recent deforestation.
  - 2) Carrying Capacity: Environmental and social data such as algal bloom occurrence, fish die offs (wild or farmed), total number of farms in operation, other neighboring industries in operation.
  - 3) Integrated Zoning and Planning: Local and national regulations, farmer co-ops, or other industry associations. Potential or actual conflicts with other resource users.
  - 4) Better Management Practices: Data availability and documented farm management practices over time.
- Outcome: The semi-intensive inland ponds are implementing globally accepted best management practices, including lining their ponds and implementing measures to minimize escapes. The farm is a member of a co-op of tilapia farmers in the area that support sourcing sustainable feed and seed, sharing new technologies, and using resources efficiently. The tilapia cage farmer is motivated by high production and competing with the other growers in the reservoir. The farmer claims high yields but does not keep consistent records of feed use, mortalities, or production cycles. Local fishers have expressed frustration over the rapid expansion of aquaculture and noticeable decline in ecosystem health. Between these options, the semi-intensive tilapia pond farmer is a better choice for the LuL initiative. While additional information should be collected to ensure alignment with the EAA, this farm has LuL potential. Meanwhile, the cage farm is implementing potentially harmful practices in a water body that may be beyond its ecological carrying capacity and should not be considered for LuL.

## Human and Social Welfare Self-Assessment

The Human and Social Welfare Self-Assessment is rooted in the [Social Responsibility Assessment](#) (SRA) Tool for the Seafood Sector<sup>21</sup>. The SRA

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<sup>21</sup> The SRA is leveraged as to not recreate a new assessment, but use one that has been created by experts and has been implemented. However, aspects of SFP's Lifting Up Local Framework and Criteria for Compliance adapted from RSS Standard and the Community Catch Standard are integrated and

is also used as the framework for FIPs to report on social performance. However, the evaluation criteria below are not the full SRA, but a subset that is appropriate for the Lifting Up Local initiative. Appendix II presents the curated list of applicable SRA Components and Indicators for small-scale fisheries and smallholder aquaculture farms. Results from the Country-level Assessment should be referred to prior to this assessment to understand what context the supplier is operating within and how local management supports social welfare in the potential absence of federal, legal framework(s).

#### Evaluation Criteria:

##### **A. Protect Human Rights, Dignity and Access to Resources**

- Labor Laws and International Standards: In the absence of federal regulations and frameworks to effectively evaluate, how is local management upholding key international labor standards (e.g., child labor, forced labor)? Is there evidence of abuse and/or harassment occurring? Identify and understand what measures are in place to address labor issues.

*SRA indicators: 1.1.1, 1.1.4, 1.1.5, 1.1.6, 1.1.7*

- Safety and Emergency Measures: What safety and emergency measures are in place for workers (e.g., on vessels, processing plants, etc.), including access and right to medical care in the case of injury?

*SRA indicators: 1.1.8, 1.1.10, 1.1.11*

- Responsible Seafood Economy: What measures are in place to improve transparency and equity in trading practices? Supporting documentation and transparent agreements between buyers and suppliers supports proof of equitable trading.

*SRA indicators: 1.1.7, 1.2.1, 1.2.2*

##### **B. Ensure equality and equitable opportunity to benefit**

- Inclusive Representation: Are there available roles for women and other marginalized groups and are they participating in the fishery? Is there an ability for women and other marginalized groups to hold decision-making positions?

*SRA indicators: 2.1.2, 2.1.3a, 2.2.1*

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included in the evaluation criteria of the Human and Social Welfare Self-Assessment to honor the alignment across efforts.

- Anti-Harassment and Non-Discrimination: Are there active measures in place to prevent sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination/violence?  
*SRA indicators: 1.1.1, 2.1.1, 2.2.2*
- Equitable Opportunities to Benefit: Do all stakeholders have the ability to equitably benefit? Is there collaborative management?  
*SRA indicators: 2.1.2, 2.1.3a, 2.2.1*

### **C. Improve food, nutrition, and livelihood security**

- Community Development Opportunities: Are there benefits to the community, including nutritional and livelihood security, education, and/or healthcare?  
*SRA indicators: 3.1.1a, 3.1.1b, 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.1.4*
- Long Term Sustainability: Does the fishery or farm contribute to long term, sustainable economic development for the community?  
*SRA indicators: 3.2.1, 3.2.2.*

#### Resources:

- Refer to Appendix II for the list FishWise curated of applicable SRA Components and Indicators for small-scale fisheries, and use this abbreviated SRA to complete the Human and Social Welfare Self-Assessment.
- The Community Catch [standard](#) for small-scale fisheries incorporates social and environmental criteria, which presents targets for Best Practices for wild fisheries.
- The Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) [Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries](#) presents another model for evaluating small-scale fisheries, including social responsibility metrics.

#### Example Action Recommendations:

##### Gender Representation:

- Scenario: The cooperative has an effective collaborative management and stakeholder participation structure in place, but women and folks of other genders are systematically excluded from decision-making or participation in economic opportunities.
- Recommended Process: Iberostar works with the local community and institutions to (1) educate the community about why gender representation and equity is important, (2) work with

the community to adjust the cooperative structure to more effectively allow for gender representation in decision-making.

### C. Operational Workstream

To assess the operational readiness of Iberostar procuring and serving a Lifting Up Local product, a gap analysis should be conducted. This means that the below criteria are assessed to determine strengths and opportunities for improvement in order to begin sourcing local products. Complete the assessment and implement necessary measures before re-evaluating the product's ability to meet the evaluation criteria.

#### Evaluation Criteria:

- A. **Buy-in from Kitchen Staff and Chef:** Incorporating the kitchen staff and chef from the beginning when a potential Lifting Up Local product is identified is best practice. This will allow for Procurement and Destination Stewardship/Sustainability Manager to understand the kitchen's willingness or reservations about serving the new product. Kitchen teams need to be ready to incorporate the new product into their culinary offerings.
  - Is the kitchen staff ready to incorporate the new product? Why or why not? What needs to be done in order to prepare or build buy-in from the kitchen and chef?
  
- B. **Infrastructure Readiness:** Prior to committing to sourcing the product, Iberostar must assess the 1) availability of the desired products and 2) feasibility of transporting them to properties. Ensuring smooth logistics not only facilitates operational efficiency but also minimizes environmental impact and food safety risks.
  - Has supply chain logistics been assessed and verified? Identify what logistical challenges exist (e.g., transportation, storage, delivery schedules) and determine what is needed to ensure reliable supply logistics (e.g., new logistics partner, improved scheduling).
  
- C. **Quality and Hygiene Maintained:** The product must adhere to stringent quality and hygiene standards. Therefore, it is necessary to verify that all sourced products, including Lifting Up Local products, meet Iberostar's country-specific established criteria. This guarantees that the food served to our guests meets the highest standards of quality and safety.

- Identify the specific quality and hygiene issues. Is cold storage maintained consistently? Determine what measures are needed to meet the required country-specific standards (e.g., additional testing, certification, process improvements).

#### Resources:

- Internal Documents: Iberostar should identify and leverage key internal documents that outline supplier code of conduct and quality control and assurance standards.
- Legal Hygiene and Food Safety Standards: Reference the outcomes of the Country-level Assessment in the LuL folder to make sure that the product meets legal food safety requirements.
- SWOT Analysis: A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis could be helpful if it is challenging to get all the kitchen staff on board with the product. This exercise allows the Destination Steward to work with the kitchen staff to address the perceived threats and weaknesses of sourcing this product.

#### Example Action Recommendations:

- Scenario: The kitchen staff approves and seeks out species/products, and the quality did meet requirements *when* the cold chain was maintained. However, this is a major limiting factor as the company does not have consistent refrigerated trucks and cold storage facilities often lose power.
- Recommended Process: Iberostar works with the supplier to identify priority infrastructure and distribution projects that would support Iberostar and the local community in selling and receiving local seafood products, such as investing in solar-powered generators for cold storage.

## Appendix I. Roles and Responsibilities

This table outlines the activities by workstream and who is leading the activity and how they are coordinating with others. Note that the responsibility of the workstream is not necessarily the lead of the activity. The responsible party of the workstream is in charge of making sure all the activities are done and follow the correct process.

Light grey bar in the left column: Contextual Workstream

Medium grey bar in the left column: Product Workstream

Dark grey bar in the left column: Operational Workstream

Activity	Description	Activity Lead	Others engaged & supporting
Country-level Assessment	A country assessment is conducted to identify <b>how</b> coastal fisheries and aquaculture farms are managed and <b>if</b> there is infrastructure in place to support monitoring, stock assessments, and co-management schemes. Make sure that you are looking for legal frameworks to help assess non-negotiable 4 and 5 and Responsibility Self-Assessments	Blue Foods Specialist	Wave of Change team / External consultants
Evaluation of Fisheries Stock Health	Evaluate the health of the fish stock from the identified LuL opportunity. The health of the stock can be assessed with governmental information and external resources (e.g., academic institutions). Iberostar is comfortable, given the results, that the fishery is not overfished <u>and</u> no overfishing is occurring.	Blue Foods Specialist	Wave of Change Team / External consultants
Applying the Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture	Evaluate the farm- and industry-level production practices from the identified LuL opportunity. Aquaculture production practices can be assessed with governmental, academic, and civil society institutions. Iberostar is comfortable, given the results, that the aquaculture farm is applying the Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture.	Blue Foods Specialist	Wave of Change Team / External consultants
Initiation of Lifting up Local	Identify the opportunity to bring forward to the Blue Foods Specialist.	Blue Foods Specialist /	Guest Experience

Evaluation	<p>There are several avenues in which a LuL opportunity can be identified:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The kitchen department needs a local product and requests Procurement support to find one that fits its needs.</li> <li>2. Destination Steward/Wave of Change Business Partner (or other in-country personnel) identifying a pivotal LuL opportunity while engaging with external stakeholders. The Destination Steward/Sustainability manager confirms interest in the product with the Kitchen department.</li> <li>3. Procurement deems a product not responsible under established and accepted certification (GSSI benchmarked), rating (SFW), or improvement project (FIP, AIP), and explores if it may fit within the LuL initiative</li> </ol>	Procurement	Wave of change team
Inform Supplier about Expectations	<p>Inform the supplier about the upcoming process to ensure they are familiar with Iberostar's expectations and avoid overwhelming them with unexpected steps. Include the additional self-assessment steps. This can be communicated through a supplier expectation letter or, in its absence, a detailed explanatory email or call outlining the process to be considered a LuL product.</p>	Procurement	Blue Foods Specialist  Fishing Community/Supplier
Seafood Evaluation Process Initiated	<p>Procurement sends product KDE spreadsheet to supplier and KDEs are collected and returned. Additional assistance from the in-country staff may be required to collect KDEs. The goal here is to see what they can provide and what they may be missing that will inform improvement plans. However, KDEs are needed to evaluate the non-negotiables</p>	Procurement	Fishing Community/Supplier
Non-negotiable 1	<p><b>Local Determination:</b> Procurement ensures that the seafood product is harvested, processed, and received in the same country as the Iberostar location</p>	Procurement	Blue Foods Specialist Wave of Change team

<p>Non-negotiable 2 (<i>RSS Standard Sustainability Indicator</i>)</p>	<p><b>Endangered or Critically Endangered Species:</b> Procurement checks IUCN, CITES to make sure the opportunity isn't sourcing from an Endangered or Critically Endangered Species. Confirm with Destination Steward/Sustainability Manager and Blue Foods Specialist. If documents of support are required, leverage Blue Foods Specialist.</p>	<p>Procurement</p>	<p>Blue Foods Specialist</p>
<p>Non-negotiable 3 (<i>RSS Standard Sustainability Indicator</i>)</p>	<p><b>Destructive Harvest Practices:</b> Procurement confirms that destructive fishing gear or farmed harvest practices are not in use. Coordinate with the Blue Foods Specialist to ensure the Country-level Assessment supports the understanding of the level of risk for the gear in use and what measures are in place to monitor and regulate the use of gear to maintain their effectiveness and prevent adverse impacts on the habitat and non-target species.</p>	<p>Procurement</p>	<p>Blue Foods Specialist Wave of Change Team</p>
<p>Non-negotiable 4 (<i>RSS Standard Criteria</i>)</p>	<p><b>Legal Compliance:</b> The in-country Destination Steward/Sustainability Manager works with Blue Foods Specialist to make sure the product can meet legal compliance (based on findings from Country-level Assessment). Procurement is involved to make sure business documentation requirements are available in the internal system (e.g., supplier portal, SAC)</p>	<p>Blue Foods Specialist</p>	<p>Procurement Wave of Change Team Fishing Community/Supplier</p>
<p>Non-negotiable 5 (<i>RSS Standard Criteria</i>)</p>	<p><b>Traceability of Legal Origin:</b> The in-country Destination Steward/Sustainability Manager works with the local supplier to make sure company information is available for legal procurement and origin KDEs are available by referring to the LuL KDE expectations. Destination Steward/Sustainability Manager coordinates with Procurement to make sure KDEs are shared and available.</p>	<p>Procurement</p>	<p>Blue Foods Specialist Wave of Change Team Fishing Community/Supplier</p>
<p>Lifting Up Local Product Confirmed</p>	<p>As the responsible party of the Product Workstream, the Blue Foods Specialist ensures the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess and validate the non-negotiables, providing a clear rationale for their decision. Ultimately, the Blue Foods Specialist will confirm whether the product is deemed responsible (or not) under the LuL framework</li> <li>Procurement assigns LuL code and associated product KDEs in SAC; communicates with supplier and confirms operational</li> </ul>	<p>Blue Foods Specialist</p>	<p>Procurement</p>

	<p>readiness prior to procurement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blue Foods Specialist creates a folder, titled with associated LuL code, to include self-assessment results, improvement plans, and monitoring reports</li> <li>• Blue Foods Specialists adds Contextual Assessment results to the relevant LuL folder</li> </ul> <p>Information from Vendor Portal, KDE spreadsheet, and LuL Code available in SAC.</p>		
<p>Environmental Sustainability Self-Assessment <i>(RSS Standard Criteria, but indicators are adapted to fit for purpose)</i></p>	<p>The in-country staff (e.g., Destination Steward, WOC Business Partner) works with the Blue Foods Specialist, local partners and suppliers to go through the assessment of indicators, and scores as "best practice", "acceptable", "needs improvement", "and no data".</p> <p>Identify recommended actions for investment and improvement</p>	<p>In-country wave of change team / External consultants Fishing community / supplier</p>	<p>Blue Foods Specialist</p>
<p>Human and Social Welfare Self-Assessment <i>(RSS Standard Criteria, but aligned with applicable SRA indicators)</i></p>	<p>The in-country The in-country staff (e.g., Destination Steward, WOC Business Partner) works with the Blue Foods Specialist, local partners and suppliers to go through the assessment of indicators, and scores as "best practice", "acceptable", "needs improvement", and "no data".</p> <p>Identify recommended actions for investment and improvement</p>	<p>In-country wave of change team / External consultants Fishing community / supplier</p>	<p>Blue Foods Specialist</p>
<p>Operational Readiness Assessment</p>	<p>-Assess and determine what needs to prepare the kitchen team. -Assess and determine needs to meet standards and maintain cold chain. Implement changes and re-evaluate. -Assess and verify supply logistics</p>	<p>Procurement (both in-country and headquarters)</p>	<p>Kitchen Staff Hygiene Team Supply Chain Partners</p>

## Appendix II. Country-Level Assessment Template

Topic	Critical Information to Identify	Country-specific Findings
Small-Scale Fishery (SSF) Designation	SSF Definition	
	Criteria/frameworks for managing small-scale fisheries	
	Culturally significant fisheries and artisanal fishing practices	
Labor Laws	Responsible agencies	
	Measures related to forced labor, child labor, human trafficking, and safe working conditions	
	Legal support for the protection of freedom of association and collective bargaining, including labor associations (e.g., unions)	
Fisheries Management	Responsible agency	
	Identify decision-makers. Roles and responsibilities should be defined and understood in the management system.	

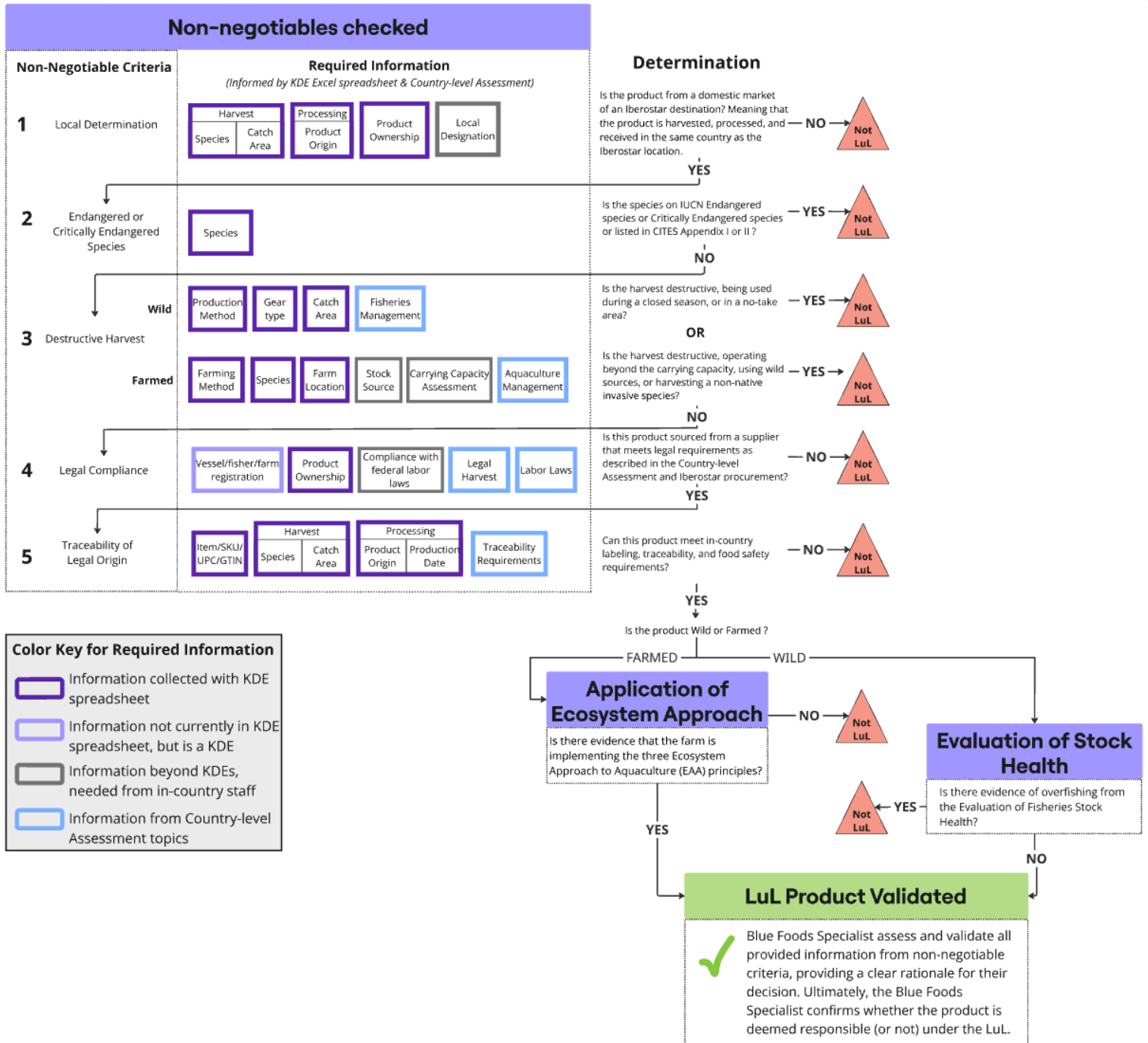
	Stock management approach (e.g., single or multi-stock assessments).	
	Methodology for management measures and what informs those measures (e.g., scientific evidence, local and traditional knowledge).	
	Frameworks to support co-management or community-based fisheries management.	
Aquaculture Management	Identify responsible agency(ies) for various production areas (e.g., land-based, freshwater, coastal, offshore)	
	Identify registrations and permitting requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the governance systems that regulate aquaculture operations?</li> </ul>	
	Identify integrated planning and zoning agencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there coordination within the jurisdiction to reduce conflicts with other sectors (e.g., fishing, shipping, energy, etc.)?</li> </ul>	
Legal Harvest	Framework(s) to provide legal rights to fishers (e.g., permits, licenses, concession areas).	
	Required registrations	
	Presence/absence of available vessel registries, and violations (e.g., black/grey lists, IUU fishing allegations).	

Food Safety Requirements	Identify responsible agency	
	Identify food safety laws and relevant regulations for seafood production, procurement and handling, to manufacturing, distribution and consumption	
Traceability Requirements	Traceability requirements in place. These are likely in place for food safety and trade.	
	Responsible agency	
	Established data collection platforms/systems in place.	
Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS)	Responsible agency	
	MCS efforts in place	
	Avenues for coordination with local authorities	



# Appendix III. Non-negotiable Evaluation

This figure is meant to demonstrate the workflow and required information for evaluating Lifting up Local (LuL) non-negotiables. If the product is deemed not LuL, Procurement always has an opportunity to further engage with the supplier and the Wave of Change team to communicate Iberostar's expectations and support information collection from a new supplier.



## Appendix IV: Carrying Capacity Assessment Template

Topic	Critical Information to Identify	Farm-specific Findings
Ecological Carrying Capacity	What are the potential and actual environmental impacts of aquaculture production on the surrounding ecosystem?	
	How are these impacts being mitigated?	
	What are the environmental impacts at the farm-level and what are the impacts at the industry-, jurisdictional-, and/or watershed-level?	
Social Carrying Capacity	Do the adverse impacts of aquaculture production outweigh the positive impacts for local stakeholders?	
	Do any of the other carrying capacity impacts (i.e., physical, production, or ecological) affect or inhibit social uses of resources?	
Physical Carrying Capacity	What is the overall development potential of a farm to operate in its physical space?	
	Are the areas of operation adequate and available for production?	
Production Carrying Capacity	What is the initial stocking density of the species compared to conventional industry practices?  (e.g., post larvae per m <sup>2</sup> or fingerlings per m <sup>3</sup> )	
	What is the final harvest yield of the species compared to conventional industry practices?  (e.g., tonnes per hectare per cycle)	
	What is the number of production cycles compared to conventional industry practices?	
	How does the production intensity affect animal welfare (e.g., disease) or environmental impact (e.g., effluent loading)?	

## Appendix V: Guidance on Fishing Gear

Gear, regardless of selectivity and impact, must be deemed legal. Gear that “Needs Evaluation” require further scrutiny and support of the the Blue Foods Specialist to incorporate findings from the Contextual Workstream to understand how gear is managed and monitored to minimize impact. For more information refer to [FAO’s Classification and Illustrated Definition of Fishing Gears](#).

Most Selective	
Handlines & Pole-and-Line Fishing	These methods involve using a single fishing line with a hook. They are highly selective and result in minimal bycatch
Troll Fishing	This method involves trailing baited lines behind a moving boat. It's selective and reduces bycatch.
Trap and Pot Fishing	Traps and pots are stationary fishing gear that allows for the capture of target species while minimizing bycatch.
Diver	Divers (e.g., spear fishers, hand collection) directly harvest seafood, which is highly selective and has minimal impact on the seafloor.
Surrounding Nets/cast nets	These nets (including modified cast nets such as suripera nets) are set around a school of fish and then pulled tight. Properly used, they can be selective and reduce bycatch.
Jigging	This method uses a mechanical or electronic device with multiple hooks to catch fish selectively.
Needs Evaluation	
Bottom Trawls	This method involves dragging a weighted net along the seafloor, which can lead to habitat destruction and high bycatch, including non-target fish and marine species. When equipped with excluder devices, bycatch can be reduced. Effective deployment, management of soak time, and effective seabird mitigation tools can significantly reduce bycatch.
Dredging	Dredges are used to harvest species like scallops and clams by scraping the seafloor, causing significant damage to benthic habitats.
Drift Nets	Drift nets, especially those of excessive length, can entangle and kill non-target species, including marine mammals and seabirds.
Gillnets	When gillnets are sized/designed for appropriate selective fishing, and soak time is management appropriately, impacts on non-target species

	is reduced. When equipped with excluder devices (e.g., TEDs), gillnets can reduce bycatch of non-target species as well.
Longlining	This method involves using multiple baited hooks on a single line. It's relatively selective and allows for the release of non-target species. Effective deployment, management of soak time, and effective seabird bycatch mitigation tools can significantly reduce bycatch.
Mid-water Trawls (or trawling in general)	This method can have a high environmental impact due to bycatch. When equipped with excluder devices, bycatch can be reduced. When mid-water trawls are deployed effectively and seabird bycatch mitigation tools deployed, impacts on benthos and non-target species can also be significantly mitigated.
Seine Nets	Depending on their size and usage, seine nets can lead to significant bycatch of non-target species, including juvenile fish. Seine nets may use Fishing Aggregating Devices (FADs) and should be managed and monitored effectively to minimize environmental impact (e.g., not using derelict fishing gear).
Pound Nets	These stationary nets can trap large quantities of fish, which may lead to overfishing of specific species and bycatch. However, when deployed and monitored effectively, the impacts of pound nets can be significantly mitigated.
<b>Not Acceptable</b>	
Poison Fishing (Cyanide fishing)	This method is used to collect live fish and requires releasing sodium cyanide into the water to stun the fish for harvest. Sodium cyanide is indiscriminate; it does not only impact the target species but can damage coral and other marine species.
Blast Fishing (Dynamite fishing)	Blast fishing involves using dynamite to kill or stun fish in order to be easier to collect. This method leaves lasting impact, damaging reef habitat and can result in the deaths of non-target species.

## Appendix VI: Guidance on Aquaculture Production Systems

**Aquaculture production, regardless of impact, must be deemed legal.** Production systems that “Needs Evaluation” require further scrutiny and support of the Blue Foods Specialist to incorporate findings from the Contextual Workstream to understand how production is managed and monitored to minimize negative environmental and social impact.

### Least Impact

Regenerative/Restorative: Regenerative, or restorative, aquaculture can be defined as production practices that provide direct ecological benefits to the environment and contributing positive ecosystem services. Generally, the species grown in these systems do not require feed inputs which reduces the environmental sustainability risks stemming from feed ingredients (marine and terrestrial) as well as nutrient effluents.

### Needs Evaluation

The aquaculture production systems listed align with [GDST’s FarmingMethod Codes](#), as described by [GSI CBV attributes for Aquaculture Methods](#). The described methods cover the spectrum of aquaculture systems as they relate to water exchange, where cages are open systems with no water control and RAS systems are fully enclosed with complete water control. However, this list is not fully exhaustive of all aquaculture production types (e.g., silviculture, Integrated Multi-tropic Aquaculture (IMTA), rice-paddy culture, etc.), and that identifying and categorizing systems may differ across geographies or industries.

Production systems identified as “Needs Evaluation” require further investigation because any of them could be operating within production, environmental, and social thresholds (low-risk) or beyond their carrying capacity (high-risk). Additionally, an individual farm may be implementing best practices and operating within its capacity but the impacts of the surrounding farms and industry as a whole should be assessed to understand the assimilative capacity of the receiving water body and ensure cumulative impacts are within their ecological carrying capacity.

### Not Acceptable

These are non-negotiable farmed production systems that should be excluded from the LuL Initiative. These systems pose significant ecological risks, even under well-managed operations.

Least Impact	
Regenerative/ Restorative	Beyond sustainable, regenerative aquaculture generates positive environmental outcomes in addition to its food and livelihood provision.  While bivalves and seaweeds have been well documented for their regenerative potential, other species such as sea cucumbers, sponges,

	snails, abalone, or unfed-herbivorous finfish could provide ecological benefits under farming conditions <sup>22</sup> .
<b>Needs Evaluation</b>	
Cages - full lifecycle	<p>Cage systems, including hard-sided and net-pen structures, are typically anchored in open water bodies. The open water exchange of these systems allows for the farmed species to live in ambient conditions, which increases risk of nutrient waste (i.e., from feces and excess feed) as well as susceptible to changes in water temperature, dissolved oxygen, or pathogens. “Full lifecycle” denotes species that were raised in hatcheries and do not rely on wild source stock.</p> <p>Typical species grown in cages include carnivorous finfish, such as salmon, yellowtail, and seabass.</p>
Cages (open) dam systems	<p>This method is a type of cage system that is specifically in a dam system, or fresh water reservoir. These systems tend to have lower water exchange rates and thus, the receiving water body has higher risk of exceeding its nutrient carrying capacity if there are too many inputs.</p> <p>Tilapia farms are a good example of cage systems in reservoirs.</p>
Float/tray/raft/rope/bottom	<p>These production systems are used to describe the methods for cultivating bivalves and seaweeds in open water bodies such as the intertidal, nearshore, or freshwater environments. Bivalves filter the ambient water, which can provide substantial ecosystem service benefits but also increases the risk of pathogens and human health concerns (e.g, bacteria such as <i>vibrio</i> or amnesic shellfish poisoning from domoic acid).</p> <p>Oysters being marketed for raw bars are typically grown in “rack and bag” or floating raft systems. Seaweeds can be grown on rope longlines.</p>
Ponds Extensive	<p>Extensive pond systems can be characterized by their large spatial footprint per yield, lower nutrient pollution risk, lower stocking density, and lower production intensity (in metric tons per hectare per cycle)<sup>23</sup>. These systems use earthen (dug out) ponds and have lower input resource needs, often relying on natural sources of nutrients for feed. The large spatial requirement has historically resulted in deforestation during expansion to increase production.</p>

<sup>22</sup> TNC. (2021). Global Principles of Restorative Aquaculture.

<sup>23</sup> Figure 1 in Goto et al., (2023). A nature-based solutions approach to managing shrimp aquaculture effluent.

	<p>Shrimp species, including whiteleg and giant tiger prawn, are grown in extensive ponds. Finfish, such as milkfish and carp, are also grown in these systems.</p>
<p>Ponds Semi-Intensive</p>	<p>While there is no definitive characteristic that designates production intensity, semi-intensive systems can be described as having a smaller footprint per yield, higher nutrient pollution risk, higher stocking density, and higher production intensity compared to extensive ponds<sup>23</sup>. These systems begin to introduce compound feeds and may implement technologies like paddle-wheel aerators to increase dissolved oxygen.</p> <p>Whiteleg shrimp and giant tiger prawn are commonly grown in semi-intensive systems.</p>
<p>Ponds Intensive</p>	<p>Further along the production spectrum, intensive ponds have the lowest spatial footprint per yield, higher pollution risk, highest stocking density, and highest yield<sup>23</sup>. These systems are characterized by increased resource use, such as compound feeds, hatchery seed, energy for multiple aerators, plastic- or cement-lined ponds, etc. The high stocking density means that there is higher nutrient pollution and disease risk but that less space (thus less land conversion risk) is needed to increase production.</p> <p>Whiteleg shrimp is grown in intensive ponds. Whiteleg shrimp and catfish can also be grown in super-intensive ponds with extremely high stocking densities and yields.</p>
<p>Raceways</p>	<p>Raceways are typically used in freshwater systems near rivers, creeks, or flowing water. They are designed to mimic the unidirectional flow of water such that water from the natural source is directed to one end of the raceway, flows into the production area where the target species is grown, and flows out of the other end of the raceways back into the flowing water body. Nutrient effluent pollution and risk of escapes can be minimized with proper management practices in place.</p> <p>Rainbow trout is a species commonly grown in raceway systems.</p>
<p>Aquaponics</p>	<p>Aquaponics is a type of system that aims to grow both terrestrial plants (sometimes for consumption) and aquatic species in tanks on land. The nutrients (i.e., excess feed and feces) from the aquatic species provides some or all of the nutrients for the terrestrial plants. While in theory this approach minimizes nutrient pollution while maximizing food production, the commercial application is limited.</p>

	Freshwater aquatic species can be grown in these systems, including tilapia and giant river prawns. Plants such as lettuce are commonly grown using aquaponics.
Tanks	<p>This method uses above ground enclosures (tanks) on land to produce a wide range of aquaculture species. Since they are completely separated from natural water systems, the aquatic environment can be entirely controlled—which can be beneficial for production but will require additional monitoring, maintenance, and resources. In addition to feed, seed, and energy inputs, water resources (either fresh or pumped from the ocean) will also be needed.</p> <p>Freshwater, brackish, and marine species can be grown in tanks (salts can be added to the desired concentration for the target species but may require additional effluent mitigation).</p>
Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS)	<p>Recirculating Aquaculture Systems are a specific type of tank system that also uses land-based tanks but also has the ability to clean and recycle most of its water. Some water is lost to evaporation and in disposing of nutrient wastes, but has less overall water demand. These systems are enclosed within a building to control biosecurity and implement many technologies and management practices in the control environment.</p> <p>Atlantic salmon are the primary species grown in RAS systems.</p>
Not Acceptable	
Wild Source Stock (production that uses wild caught juveniles)	<p>The capture of wild populations for the intended purpose of feeding in captivity for harvest has substantial negative impacts and should be avoided. <a href="#">Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch Criterion 8X- Source of Stock - Independence from wild fish stocks</a> states that, “With the exception of sources that would otherwise not survive (for example, ephemeral mussel spat), Seafood Watch considers that capturing wild fish, even from a sustainable fishery, and raising them on a farm is a net loss of resources and ecosystem services.” A reliance on wild populations for farmed grow-out production is unsustainable and should be avoided.</p>
Non-native invasive	<p>Many commercial aquaculture species are produced outside of their native habitat. Non-native species that show little evidence of establishing in the wild, even when escapes occur, may be lower risk as an invasive species. For example, whiteleg shrimp are not native to Asia but have been widely introduced for aquaculture production, and while some adults can survive in the wild, there has not been evidence of a widespread, established, breeding population<sup>24</sup>. Non-native species</p>

<sup>24</sup> De Silva et al., (2021). Review on impacts of Litopenaeus vannamei on aquaculture.

	<p>become problematic when they increase their competition and genetic interaction risks with wild populations when they impose “negative impacts to wild organisms in the receiving environment resulting from their predation on wild stocks, habitat alteration, competition for feed sources, reproductive hybridization, or disruption of reproductive processes of wild fish” (<a href="#">Seafood Watch Standard for Aquaculture A4.0, 2020</a>). Non-native species that have shown documented risks of being invasive and/or competing with wild populations, or if data is lacking, should be avoided.</p>
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## Appendix VII. SRA Indicators for Lifting Up Local

The following SRA indicators should be evaluated during the Human and Social Welfare Self-Assessment v 2.0. [Use the SRA Tool](#) to rank the indicators as “Best Practice”, “Acceptable”, “Needs Improvement”, “No Data”. Outcomes should be documented and recommended actions should be included as part of an improvement plan.

### **PRINCIPLE 1: Protect human rights, dignity, and access to resources**

Component 1.1: Fundamental human rights are respected, labor rights are protected, and decent living and working conditions are provided, particularly for vulnerable and at-risk groups

- 1.1.1: Abuse and harassment
- 1.1.4: Debt bondage in small-scale fisheries and and smallholder farms
- 1.1.5: Child labor
- 1.1.6: Freedom of association and collective bargaining
- If wage workers (i.e., not self-employed):
  - 1.1.7: Earnings and benefits,
  - 1.1.8: Adequate rest
- 1.1.10: Occupational safety
- 1.1.11: Medical response

Component 1.2: Business conduct and commercial agreements uphold human rights and dignity of workers.

- 1.2.1: Corporate responsibility and transparency
- 1.2.2: Economic flexibility and autonomy

### **PRINCIPLE 2: Ensure equality and equitable opportunity to benefit**

Component 2.1: Recognition, voice, and respectful engagement for all groups, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, culture, political, or socioeconomic status

- 2.1.1: Grievance reporting and access to remedy
- 2.1.2: Customary rights
- 2.1.3a: Participatory governance of fisheries and aquaculture resources

Component 2.2: Equitable opportunities to benefit are ensured to all, through the entire supply chain

- 2.2.1: Equitable opportunity to benefit from the fishing or aquaculture sector
- 2.2.2: Discrimination

### **PRINCIPLE 3: Improve food, nutrition, and livelihood security**

Component 3.1: The health and wellbeing of resource-dependent communities is maintained or improved

- 3.1.1a: Impact of the fishery/farm on food and nutrition security
- 3.1.1b: Food and nutrition security for small-scale fishing and smallholder farming communities
- 3.1.2: Healthcare
- 3.1.3: Education
- 3.1.4: Access to basic services for small-scale fishing and smallholder farming communities

Component 3.2: Livelihood opportunities are secured or improved, including fair access to markets and capabilities to maintain income generation

- 3.2.1: Benefits to and within community
- 3.2.2: Livelihood security

# Appendix VIII: Fisher's Local Knowledge Assessment Form

*Created by Yago Doson*

Instructions: Please answer the following questions based on your observations and experiences in the fishery. Your input will help us assess the health of the fish population in your area.

Catch Rates: Are you observing constant or increasing catch rates of the target species over time?

- Yes
- No

Fish Size: Are you noticing a consistent or increasing size of the target species?

- Yes
- No

Fishing Trip Durations: Are fishing trips remaining consistent in duration over time?

- Yes
- No

Species Diversity: Are you observing a stable or increasing diversity of fish species in the area?

- Yes
- No

Fishery Pressure: Do you perceive any signs of overfishing or excessive fishing pressure on the target species?

- Yes
- No

Environmental Changes: Have you noticed any significant changes in the local environment that could impact fish populations?

- Yes
- No

Disease and Parasite Load: Are you noticing signs of disease or high parasite loads among the target species?

- Yes
- No

Human Impact: Do you observe any direct human impacts (e.g., pollution, habitat destruction) affecting the target species?

- Yes
- No

Regulatory Compliance: Are fishermen adhering to regulations set by authorities to protect fish populations?

- Yes
- No

Overall Perception: Based on your observations and experiences, do you believe the fish population in your area is healthy and sustainable?

- Yes
- No

## Appendix IX: Farmer's Local Knowledge - Supplemental Questions

The following questions can be used to supplement the EAA assessment, but should not replace the collection or assessment of information within the Contextual Workstream, or non-negotiable Product Workstream. These questions can be asked by the Blue Foods Specialist to address gaps in the EAA assessment and better understand the potential risks and ways that local producers are managing those risks. Instructions: Please answer the following questions based on your observations and experiences in the aquaculture sector. Your input will help us assess the impacts of aquaculture production in your area.

**Harvest Size:** Are you harvesting at a consistent size/weight of the target species? If not, why?

**Production Cycles:** Are production cycles remaining consistent in number and duration over time? If not, why?

**Harvest Yields:** Are your harvest yields (e.g., tonnes per hectare per year) of the grown species consistent each cycle? If not, why?

**Farming Pressure:** Do you observe any signs of deforestation, land-clearing, or excessive farming pressure on the local environment? If yes, describe (e.g., rate of change, magnitude of impact).

**Environmental Changes:** Have you noticed any significant changes in the local environment that could impact water quality for aquaculture production? If yes, describe (e.g., rate of change, magnitude of impact).

**Disease and Pathogen Load:** Are you noticing signs of disease in the grown species? If so, how often and how severe? What practices are used to prevent or treat diseases?

**Human Impact:** Do you observe any direct human impacts (e.g., pollution, habitat destruction) affecting aquaculture production? If yes, describe (e.g., rate of change, magnitude of impact).

**Regulatory Compliance:** Are aquaculture farmers adhering to regulations set by authorities to operate responsibly? If not, why? What are the barriers to compliance?

**Other Resource Users:** What are the social dynamics amongst aquaculture farmers? How is aquaculture perceived by other local community actors?

**Overall Perception:** Based on your observations and experiences, do you believe the aquaculture production in your area is sustainable? Explain why or why not.