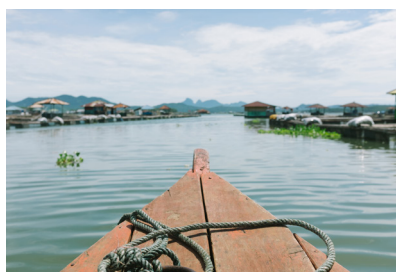# AIP TOOLKIT

GUIDANCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AQUACULTURE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Sustainable Fisheries
PARTNERSHIP

AIP TOOLKIT

THIS TOOLKIT provides guidance on the development and implementation of aquaculture improvement projects (AIPs), based on Sustainable Fisheries Partnerhsip's (SFP) Framework for Sustainably Managed Aquaculture.

It is designed to reflect the more-familiar process of developing fishery improvement projects (FIPs) within the wild-capture sector, using the widely accepted Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions guidelines for FIPs. This toolkit is also based on SFP's FishSource Aquaculture assessment method and profiles, which provide a tool to assess aquaculture production zones and track the progress of AIPs.

We look forward to working with industry, certification schemes, and NGOs to further develop models of improvement for aquaculture that will become as widely recognized by industry as FIPs are in the wild-capture sector.

We recognize that the process may not always be linear, but the following components are those we consider vital to evaluating progress and making sourcing recommendations.

The components of each stage can be delivered either by the AIP Implementer or by a consultant.

STAGE 0: AIP IDENTIFICATION

The need for an AIP is identified when a stakeholder or stakeholders within the aquaculture supply chain recognize the need to make improvements to production in a defined location (the aquaculture zone). This may be because of an environmental, production (e.g. disease), or market-related issue that is either publicly reported or privately noted.

STAGE 1: AIP DEVELOPMENT

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During the development stage, performance within the aquaculture zone is evaluated, improvement recommendations are developed, and AIP stakeholders are identified. As a result, a project scoping document is produced. The following should be created through the development stage:

Needs assessment

Implementers should identify the main sustainability issues at the geographic scale of the project and use these to develop actionable improvement recommendations. Following Article 9 (Aquaculture Development) of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and in order to address shared risks across an industry, SFP recommends that this process be based on the five principle areas of the SFP Framework for Sustainably Managed Aquaculture, although we recognize that not all five areas will be relevant in every project.

The needs assessment should 1) identify the main environmental or production management challenges facing the industry and regulators, 2) review the availability of public information and data about industry performance and management, and 3) develop improvement recommendations.

SFP has produced a *Needs Assessment Template* to assist this activity.

Stakeholder mapping

Membership in an AIP will vary with specific project needs and goals, but it is important to consider the full range of stakeholders that will be affected and have a role in decision making.

The project should identify the relevant stakeholders and their level of influence in driving the improvement recommendations forward. This mapping should include an early indication of where there is supply chain interest or leverage relevant to the project goals. SFP has produced an *AIP stakeholder mapping template* to assist this activity.

Scoping document

The scoping document summarizes the needs assessment and connects the improvement recommendations with the stakeholders who can drive them forward.

INFORMATION SOURCES FOR A NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

Both the needs assessment and stakeholder mapping rely on publicly available information. However, in many cases information may be limited. Fortunately, there are a range of information sources that can be consulted in order to identify stakeholders, data sources, and management issues, as well as subsequent actionable improvement recommendations.

1 SFP has published a series of FishSource Aquaculture Profiles that score data availability and the management of multiple aquaculture industries in various geographies worldwide against the five principle areas of the Framework for Sustainably Managed Aquaculture.

2 NGO ratings such as Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch guide and associated reports and the Seafish aquaculture profiles. Although these are generally at the national or international level and rely on aggregate descriptions, they help identify key sustainability issues and potential recommendations for improvement.

3 SFP, Conservation International, and the University of California Santa Barbara's Sustainable Fisheries Group have produced *Best Practices for Aquaculture Management: Guidance for implementing the ecosystem approach in Indonesia and beyond*, which provides advice on best practices for the zonal management of aquaculture and can be used or adapted to create appropriate actionable recommendations for improvement.

4 Other sources of information include reports by relevant government agencies and scientific organizations, such as aquaculture strategy plans, as well as those produced by regional organizations such as the FAO (including the National Aquaculture Sector Overview factsheets), WorldFish, etc.

5 Where the main concern is disease, a risk assessment against the Best Aquaculture Practices Biosecurity Area Management standard could also provide a useful starting point.

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STAGE 2: AIP LAUNCH

During the launch stage, the project's participants are recruited and a workplan is produced. Details of both should be made public.

Participant meeting

The AIP Implementer should workshop the scoping document with potential stakeholders identified in the mapping exercise, identify any additional issues, and prioritize the improvement recommendations.

It is critical that potential participants understand the benefits and responsibilities of joining an AIP from the beginning, as this will help prevent confusion during subsequent stages of the project. AIP participants need to attend regular meetings, liaise with government agencies, present to the supply chain, and fund AIP activities. AIP participants may choose to appoint a Secretariat or facilitator who would be responsible for coordinating activities and documenting progress once the AIP is launched.

Workplan production

A workplan should be developed, based on participant feedback and outlining activities to address the improvement recommendations. A workplan is flexible and can be revised, but must include:

- **PRIORITY IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATION** not all recommendations need to be addressed simultaneously.

- **ACTIVITIES** to achieve these recommendations.

- **THE RESPONSIBLE PARTIES** identify organizations/stakeholders/individuals/consultants responsible for completing each activity, including participants from outside the AIP.

- **TIMEFRAME** needed to complete each activity.

- **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS** to enable project participants to track and demonstrate progress.

- **AN ASSOCIATED BUDGET** budgets will vary depending on the types and extent of improvements required. Additional funding or in-kind contributions will also be needed to coordinate and administer the day-to-day activities of the AIP. AIPs can be funded through a variety of mechanisms (e.g., by a single or multiple companies, by a foundation, by an NGO or international development agency, or through creative cost sharing). Please see budget example for a template.

SFP has also produced a *workplan template for public reporting* and a *detailed AIP workplan template* to assist AIPs in recording and tracking progress.

Official commitment

A formal commitment outlining the improvement activities and associated responsibilities should be completed through the signing of an AIP agreement or MoU between members. SFP has produced a draft *MoU template for multiple partners* that can be adapted as appropriate.

Establishment of AIP portal

Participant commitment, the workplan (with the exception of budget details), and the scoping document should be made publicly available through an AIP participants' website or via a website created specifically for the AIP. SFP has created an AIP Directory that can be used for this purpose [www.aipdirectory.org].

STAGE 3: AIP IMPLEMENTATION

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During this stage, action must be taken to deliver on the workplan and start tracking progress. This stage will include:

Workplan activities

AIP participants will carry out workplan activities, review progress, and provide regular reports to AIP members and the public via the AIP portal. Participants may choose to create specialist subgroups.

Track and report progress

It is essential that the AIP participants publicly report on whether progress is taking place or not. Regular public reporting provides AIPs with credibility, allowing all interested groups to view the information. There should be an update at least every six months.

AIP participants should conduct an annual assessment of progress to date (or more frequently, if required by major buyers, donors, and other interested parties).

STAGE 4: IMPROVEMENTS IN AQUACULTURE MANAGEMENT

4

AIPs provide evidence of improvements to management or policy that have been made based on implementation of the workplan. Improvements at this stage include:

Verifiable improvements in policy or modifications to management practices (e.g., an increase in the information and management scores of a FishSource profile could be used to demonstrate these improvements).

STAGE 5: IMPROVEMENTS ON THE WATER

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AIPs provide evidence of improvements on the water due to the implementation of the workplan. Improvements at this stage might include:

Verifiable changes on the water, such as a reduction in disease, an increase in water quality of the receiving waterbody, or an industry shift of its feed sourcing to sustainable or improving fisheries (e.g., an increase in the outcome scores in the relevant FishSource profile could be used to demonstrate these improvements).

Other outcomes, such as increased support by financial institutions, increased market access, and improved socioeconomic impacts on farmers and the surrounding community, should also be documented.

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SFP's mission is to engage and catalyze global seafood supply chains in rebuilding depleted fish stocks and reducing the environmental impacts of fishing and fish farming. Our work is organized around two main principles: making available up-to-date information on fisheries and aquaculture for the benefit of major buyers and other seafood stakeholders; and using that information to engage all stakeholders along the supply chain in fisheries and aquaculture improvements and moving toward sustainability. Founded in 2006, SFP now has a staff of more than 60 globally and projects in more than two dozen countries.

For more information, please contact aquaculture@sustainablefish.org

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