

## **EU CODE OF CONDUCT ON RESPONSIBLE FOOD BUSINESS AND MARKETING PRACTICES**

*A common aspirational path towards achieving sustainable food systems*

### **EFFOP Annual report 2024**

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<b>N° in the transparency register:</b>	783980638121-41
<b>Date of signature of the Code:</b>	19 July 2021
<b>Step of the food chain represented:</b>	Processing sector
<b>Who do you represent?</b>	EFFOP represents 13 national Associations and producers in 13 EU and EFTA countries. Alongside the 40 producers represented by the trade association, 14 companies involved in the fishmeal industry contribute to EFFOP's missions as associated members.

Please note that *European Fishmeal and Fish Oil Producers* unveiled a new identity in November 2024: *EFFOP - Marine Nutrients Europe*. This change better reflects its central role in advancing blue food production and reinforces its position as the voice of Europe's marine ingredient producers.

**EFFOP – Marine Nutrients Europe** pledges to:

- **endorse the aspirational objectives set out in this Code**

Yes

- **promote and disseminate this Code with(in) its constituency**

Before signing the Code, EFFOP's Secretariat had informed the members of the Board about its scope and content. As an industry, fishmeal and fish oil is all about maximising the value of aquatic resources and providing food and feed chains with high quality ingredients derived from responsibly harvested marine resources. For years now, our industry has been committed to improving its sustainable performance to limit its environmental footprint.

Signing the Code of Conduct was therefore a logical step in implementing EFFOP's strategy.

In order to disclose EFFOP's pledge to its members, associated members and interested parties, EFFOP has published a [statement](#) on its website.

Since then, EFFOP's general assemblies and communication channels such as its website and LinkedIn page have been the main vehicles for disseminating the Code.

- **encourage its members to align their sustainability actions and/or business practices to the aspirational objectives and targets of the Code and invite them, on a voluntary basis, to adhere to this Code, as appropriate**

Sustainability in fishmeal and fish oil production is crucial for maintaining the health of marine ecosystems and ensuring the long-term viability of the industry. By aligning with the EU Code of Conduct, EFFOP members can demonstrate their commitment to reducing their environmental footprint, fostering a culture of responsibility, and contributing to a more sustainable future. Marine ingredients are in competition with other alternative protein sources. However, the growing preference for sustainable, low-carbon, traced-origin feed ingredients could favour fishmeal and fish oil. To this end, EFFOP works with its members to highlight the sustainable advantages of marine proteins: responsibly sourced and traceable throughout the chain, highly nutritious for aquaculture species and with a low carbon footprint.

Indeed, compared to plant-based alternatives such as soy and rapeseed, marine ingredients used in aquaculture feeds have a significantly lower carbon footprint. This can be measured using a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA), a robust and transparent method of assessing the environmental impact of the entire production chain. The Danish LCA database shows that fishmeal has an average carbon footprint of 0.912 kg CO<sub>2</sub> eq per kg. Compared to the carbon footprints of soy protein (meal and protein concentrate) or insect meal, fishmeal has a carbon footprint that is 3-6 times lower. Similarly, fish oil has a carbon footprint of 1.535 kg CO<sub>2</sub> eq per kg, which is almost half the emissions of rapeseed oil. We compare fishmeal and fish oil with soybean meal and canola oil because they are among the most widely used protein feed ingredients globally.

In collaboration with the International Fishmeal and Fish Oil Organisation (IFFO), EFFOP is pursuing its project to enhance the Global Feed LCA Institute (GLFI) database with accurate Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) profiles for European fishmeal and fish oil. Thanks to EFFOP members' commitment to provide up-to-date data, we expect to deliver accurate PEF profiles for European marine ingredients by the end of 2025, or in 2026.

Moreover, EFFOP works to remove regulatory barriers that hinder the use of trimmings from the fish processing industry to produce fishmeal and fish oil. A significant portion of our raw materials, approximately 40%, comes from recycled trimmings generated during the processing of fish intended for human consumption. This effort not only promotes resource efficiency but also supports the circular economy by reducing waste and making better use of available resources.

EFFOP has taken proactive steps to ensure that its members are well-positioned to align their business practices with the EU Code of Conduct's aspirational objectives. These aspirational objectives are an integral part of EFFOP's strategy.

Although EFFOP members do not voluntarily adhere to this Code, many are certified to voluntary industrial environmental certification standards, such as [MarinTrust](#), the latest version of which contains requirements similar to the objectives of this Code.

Sustainability and circularity have been the key focus of the EFFOP Conferences in [June 2024 in Estonia](#), reflecting the organisation's commitment to these principles. Over 160 participants discussed sustainable fisheries management, environmental challenges, and the role of marine nutrients in global food security.

- **explore the possibility of developing sector-specific tools and resources in support of this Code**

Our association is also a forum for sharing knowledge and expertise between our members.

Every two years EFFOP organises a conference dedicated to its members. During 2 or 3 days, combining factory visit, thematic and technical presentations by experts, the managers of our European industry exchange best practices and advice, allowing everyone to improve their overall skills.

Other formats led by EFFOP Secretariat, such as workshops, webinars and working groups, enable good practice on a specific subject to be shared in greater detail.

EFFOP is involved in environmental footprint for several years. The collaboration with IFFO to update the PEF profiles for fishmeal and fish oil, as explained above, is a sector-specific tool directly linked to the [aspirational objective 3. "A climate neutral food chain in Europe by 2050"](#).

EFFOP is constantly emphasising the need to promote the circularity of feed and food systems. Good management of fish stocks is essential to the survival of our industry, which is why using all parts of aquatic resources must be a priority. This is why, in 2024, EFFOP joined forces with seven industry associations and stakeholder organisations to develop a catalogue of actions aimed at improving feed circularity. The catalogue provides decision-makers with recommendations on how to design a regulatory framework that supports feed circularity while maintaining feed safety. We presented two specific case studies that demonstrate how our industry can enhance feed circularity: lifting the ban on using fishmeal in feed for ruminants (following EFSA approval) and expanding the definition of fishmeal and fish oil. In addition, although the primary destination for our members' products is the feed market, EFFOP is working to make it possible for fish oil from its members' factories to be placed on the EU food market. Fish oil produced from fish and trimmings from the filleting industry certainly deserves a place in the healthy, sustainable diets of European consumers. By working on an industry guide to food grade fish oil and a catalogue on feed circularity, EFFOP fully supports [aspirational objectives 1. "Healthy, balanced and sustainable diets for all European consumers"](#), [2. "Prevention and reduction of food loss and waste"](#).

4. “An optimised circular and resource-efficient food chain in Europe” and 6. “Sustainable value creation in the European food supply chain through partnership”.

Finally, it must be remembered that EFFOP is committed to working in collaboration with the scientific community, whose opinion is central to determining fishing quotas. We advocate that the management of fish stocks should follow scientific advice, which is entirely in line with the [aspirational objective 7. “Sustainable sourcing in food supply chains”](#). In particular, we closely followed the negotiations between the coastal states on the allocation of pelagic stocks for 2025, taking part in the final round held in London in October 2024. Furthermore, in 2024, EFFOP became a full member of the North Atlantic Pelagic Advocacy (NAPA) initiative. NAPA is a coalition that lobbies for a sustainable, science-based agreement among coastal states for the management of mackerel, herring and blue whiting. EFFOP now represents the fishmeal and fish oil industry within NAPA, actively participating in the Steering Committee and each species' working group.

- **continue to engage in dialogue with other food chain/systems actors and EU and international policymakers to forge (new) relationships, exchange good practices and discuss challenges encountered, learn from each other (studies, projects) and create better mutual understanding, and identify opportunities for collaboration and potential partnership**

As a representative for the European fishmeal and fish oil industry, EFFOP maintains a regular dialogue with European stakeholders and policymakers. The Secretariat has been invited to several conferences and events and has set up meetings with industry associations and policy makers to discuss some of the most pressing regulatory issues as we have developed our legislative monitoring in areas such as feed, food, fisheries and environment. This leads to strengthening partnerships and building new ones.

In November 2024, the EFFOP Board met with the European Commission's DG MARE in Brussels to discuss ways of strengthening European aquaculture and improving circularity, as well as the potential role of marine nutrients in an EU protein strategy. Further discussions with the UK and Icelandic Missions to the EU centred on sustainable resource management in the North Atlantic. The Board also met with AIPCE-CEP, a signatory to this Code representing the European seafood processing industry, to discuss the importance of seafood in meeting the growing global demand for high-quality, low-carbon proteins.

EFFOP also collaborates closely with FEFAC, another signatory to the Code, particularly on matters concerning the enhancement of sustainability and circularity within the feed industry.

Moreover, EFFOP is a member of several Advisory Councils (ACs), including the Market Advisory Council (MAC) and the Aquaculture Advisory Council (AAC), which work on responsible food production, sales and marketing practices. Pursuant to the Common Fisheries Policy, the ACs advise the European Commission and EU Member States on matters relating to aquaculture production and the market of fishery and aquaculture products. They bring together stakeholders from across the seafood value chain and other interest groups. EFFOP has contributed to several advices released in 2024 dealing with

subjects closely related to the objectives set out in this Code, such as: [MAC advice on Product Environmental Category Rules \(PEFCR\) for Marine Fish for Human Consumption](#), [Joint-AC Advice \(NSAC, MAC, AAC, and CCRUP\) on valorisation of fisheries and aquaculture by-products](#), [AAC Code of Good Practices on Fish Welfare among Aquaculture Producers](#).

At the international level, EFFOP naturally works closely with IFFO, MarinTrust, Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) but also with the Global Organization for EPA and DHA Omega-3s (GOED). EFFOP is also a member of the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI), which is a partnership of public and private sector organizations that are working to improve the sustainability of seafood supply chains.