Request for Letters of Interest

Defining Incentives and Claims for Improvement Projects

4 January 2022

Overview
Aquaculture Stewardship Council, Sustainable Fisheries Partnership, and Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch are teaming up in an effort to streamline the path to sustainability for aquaculture producers, engaging more stakeholders in the process, and delivering improvements in farming practices and management at zonal level. As a critical aspect to driving improvements is to further understand the potential (market) incentives that can be created for products coming from improvement projects (verified performance and progress). Often, these incentives are processor driven, in cases where this is not the case, it becomes more difficult to incentive farms to participate. This consultancy will examine variables in building the right incentive models, defining the drivers for engagement in the improvement space and understanding who sees what benefits.

This work should consider the jurisdictional theory of change (https://jaresourcehub.org/theory-of-change/) that identifies incentives and enabling conditions of actors engaged in improvement projects. There are likely various lessons across sectors on products in “transition” that can be incorporated here in a review and summary of incentives and their utility across actors.

This work is a subset of a larger project “Integration of seafood certification and jurisdictional assurance models” granted by the ISEAL Innovations Fund and supported by Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). Information on the broader project can be found on the ISEAL website (https://www.iselalliance.org/innovations-standards/innovations-projects/streamlining-path-towards-sustainability-aquaculture) and ASC website (https://www.asc-aqua.org/what-we-do/how-we-make-a-difference/data-sharing/the-standards-and-data-mapping-study/).

Scope
In this review, incentives may not be limited to financial gain, but may include improved working conditions or flexibility, and other social or environmental gains that are perceived as benefits. Additionally, improvement projects may be geographically isolated, but it is the intent of this work that there would be incentives for regional improvements that would encourage larger uptake of improvement activities. This work should result in a white paper summarizing examples both within and external to the seafood sector for comparison and aim to address the following questions.

1. What are the enabling conditions that can incentivize different stakeholder groups engaged in aquaculture (or other sector) improvement projects? And what are the key hurdles to successfully using those incentives? Based on this, further review may consider:
   a. What types of stakeholder groups should play a role in regional improvement (that could facilitate product recognition for products originating from improvement projects)? What are their roles and various self-interests?
b. What are some typical incentives applied to the various stakeholder groups? Recognizing this may vary, and that the most substantial enabling conditions may be governance, financial, etc., may differ by those scales and regions. Examples from other sectors are encouraged to help learning about what worked and what didn’t.

c. What structures and activities may need to be in place, so each stakeholder sees the need to engage and has the success?

d. Are there examples where we can learn whether enabling conditions led to any particular strategies and outcomes?

e. Where are there still gaps in understanding how to incentivize uptake into an improvement-type programme?

If sufficient time and learnings permit, the following additional questions regarding claims in the supply chain may be considered under the consultancy.

1. Are there distinctions in the supply chain that can be made to identify and distinguish a product resulting from a producer making improvements versus one that has achieved a credible certification (e.g., products in transition)?
   a. What claims can we make at what level in the supply chain?
   b. What do companies want to say about their products, what are they saying? And what does the market want to know?
   c. Is there interest/need for a distinction between products transitioning to certification and those certified?
   d. Specific to aquaculture, does the trading timeline of shrimp supply chains permit such a distinction?

This work is likely to include a combination of desktop research and interviews. Along with players in both aquaculture and fisheries sectors, we encourage learnings from other sectors. The ISEAL Alliance (https://www.isealalliance.org/) has conducted work in this area that may be consulted. The resulting report should be fully referenced and include a summary of all contacts interviewed. Interviews and management of results will be managed in compliance with GDPR rules and contacts anonymised when the respondents ask to do so. The final deliverable will be a public facing report.

**Timeline**
About 3 months including review and final deliverable. Final deliverable must be submitted by 1st June 2022.

**Budget**
Not to exceed 25,000 CHF.

**To Apply**
Interested individuals or teams should submit a letter of interest along with summarized understanding of the work, their approach, CVs, timeline and budget linked to project activities. Letters should be submitted electronically to Jill Swasey (jill.swasey@asc-aqua.org) by 28th January 2022. The successful submission will be awarded by 4th February 2022.