



Seafood Sustainability in the Marketplace Report

Executive Summary

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Project Objective:

Project Seafood Sustainability in the Marketplace (SIM) investigates what sustainability means to seafood processors from a market perspective. Project SIM endeavours to uncover existing trends in the marketplace, consumer insights on the area of sustainability, as well as investigating the existing sustainability accreditations and certifications and investigating their benefits within the marketplace.

The outcome of Project SIM is to develop an investigative tool and a sustainability database. The investigative tool will allow Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) to understand a company's sustainability status. The database allows for the collation of up-to-date sustainability information on leading grocery retail chains and food service providers in the market which will aid seafood processors make strategic business decisions.

Introduction:

Sustainability has become an integral part of business today. Companies are now being expected to report on both financial and non-financial aspects of their business which has led to a re-focus on business activities which affect sustainability within companies. With changing global trends, increased consumer awareness of the environment, and global climate commitments, all players along the value chain cannot afford to ignore sustainability.

Some sustainability areas of focus within a seafood company include sourcing, packaging, energy, emissions, waste, water, biodiversity, ethical supply chain, external reporting and wellbeing/diversity and inclusion. All large retailers are actively reporting on these sustainability areas in the form of ESG reporting (environmental, social, and governmental) and CSR reporting (corporate social responsibility). In addition to this, retailers are publishing their company sustainability plans and actions on social media platforms to reach a wide public audience.

Sustainability is increasingly becoming a necessity for companies to implement due to changing consumer perspectives around the world. Increased consumer knowledge and policy implementation is creating a healthy pressure for sustainability change and is building momentum around the need for companies to become more sustainable. Public awareness has also been piqued by increased exposure of climate crises on platforms such as news and media.

Key Acronyms:

MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
ASC	Aquaculture Stewardship Council
FIP	Fisheries Improvement Project
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CSRD	Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive
SBTi	Science Based Target Initiative
ESG	Environment Society Governance

Key Sustainability Trends:



Consumers

- 80% of Irish consumers are willing to make changes to become more sustainable
- 61% say it will be more important to buy more sustainably-produced products in the next 3 years
- 42% associate sustainability with sustainable packaging more than any other sustainability attribute (Bord Bia, 2021)



Retailers

- Retailers are actively reporting on their sustainability commitments through CSR/ESG policies
- Commitments have been made to packaging, from packaging to be used as well as reducing the amount of packaging being used
- Retailers have published comprehensive sourcing policies which highlight their sourcing requirements. Many policies require suppliers to have MSC or ASC certification, or FIP participation
- Retailers are committed to reducing food waste along the supply chain
- Retailers are actively working with suppliers to achieve sustainability goals



Trade Buyers

- 2 in 5 trade buyers say sustainability is one of the most crucial factors when choosing a supplier
- 3 in 4 trade buyers say sustainability is important to their business, with 51% of buyers saying sustainability was “integral” to their business
- The importance of having suppliers with strong sustainability credentials is 72% higher amongst European businesses (Bord Bia, 2021)



Policy/Reporting

- National and international policies are being implemented to reduce climate change which are driven by the EU Green Deal, COP 26, and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
- On 21 April 2021, the European Commission adopted a proposal for a Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), whose purpose is to make corporate reporting of sustainability information more consistent and easier to compare by financial firms, investors and the general public (Origin Green, 2022)

Conclusion:

Project SIM has highlighted the significant role that sustainability plays in business activities. Sustainability has become a prominent issue and consumers and buyers are well informed and alert to sustainable and unsustainable practices being undertaken by companies. Policy is also driving a positive change to counteract climate change. As a result, retailers, and food service providers, along with other industry players, are making changes to their businesses to become more sustainable in the activities they undertake.

For further information on the importance of sustainability in the marketplace please contact cathriona.mccarthy@bim.ie.

References:

Bord Bia, 2021 *Global Sustainability Insights Report*

Origin Green, 2022 *Pathways to Enabling ESG Strategy Development and Reporting*

