



Vereniging van Importeurs van Visproducten

**Vereniging van Importeurs van Visproducten**  
**Dutch Association of Fish Importers (VIV)**

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## **VIV Code of Conduct**

This code of conduct is an initiative of the Dutch Association of Fish Importers (VIV)

### **Introduction**

As the world population keeps growing, the importance of and demand for fish for human consumption is increasing. Over-fishing, wrong fishing techniques, illegal catch and pollution however currently threaten many aquatic species and ecosystems. Growing public expectations regarding the role of our business, have led to an increasing demand for socially responsible behaviour of the VIV members and its business partners, along the whole sourcing chain. In order to meet and / or exceed the public expectations while remaining successful, VIV recognises the need for its members and partners to be socially responsible in their business. Beside the ongoing engagement of VIV in different sustainable sourcing projects, VIV members at the annual meeting in 2007, have adopted this Code of Conduct.

“VIV Code of Conduct” sets out principles and standards for social responsibility of its members and business partners. These practices are aimed at ensuring the conservation of biodiversity, management and development of living aquatic species (hereafter called fish) resources. Our members will participate and contribute to programs that will identify and correct unacceptable conditions.

The Code is also a contribution to a series of initiatives by the Dutch Fisheries Sector (Productschap Vis) to ensure it continues to operate in an ecologically sustainable manner.

### **Vision**

All VIV members and business partners seek to provide high quality and safe fish products to the consumers with respect for social responsibility, employee’s welfare, and protection of environment and ecosystems, while striving for economic viability and competitive power.

### **Scope**

The VIV Code of Conduct will have general application to all the individual members and their business partners in the whole supply chain covering the wild-catch fishing sector, and the aquaculture.

The VIV is aware that this code as such remains a guideline and is voluntary, except where parts of the code refer to legislation. The members of the VIV have own responsibility to implement, as far as it is reasonably possible, the code in an effective way and use the code to make binding clauses as part of the buying conditions. Also practical help by joining Private Public Partnerships could scale up the impact of this code.



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The VIV may review and revise this Code following new insights based on sound scientific evidence.



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## VIV CODE OF CONDUCT

### General principles

Underlying this Code of Conduct are general principles applying to the whole supply chain of the VIV members. The VIV members and their business partners, as far as it is reasonably possible:

- Will comply with all applicable laws and regulations in the country of origin as well as in the countries of destination of the fish products;
- Organize their supply chain with business partners who commit themselves to work in accordance to the VIV Code of Conduct or practise in compliance with internationally recognized standards ( EurepGAP, FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, International Principles for Responsible Shrimp Farming, MSC or other Codes of Conduct);
- Will collect objective evidence that their products are sourced and produced according to practices which are in line with the VIV Code of Conduct;
- Will contribute to transparency and open communication regarding the supply chain and characteristics of fish products;
- Will actively promote the use of certified sustainable species as an on-going process to ensure the optimal use of these resources;

### Objectives

The objectives of the Code are to help the VIV members in addressing the following issues:

- Quality and Food Safety
- Transparency
- Environment
- Fishing practices
- Aquaculture practices
- Social and ethical practices.

#### a) Quality and Food Safety

All VIV members care that:

- A complete HACCP analysis is conducted and a HACCP plan is implemented by every supplier;
- Verification measurements are in place to guarantee that the fish products (- ingredients) are safe and comply with applicable legislation;
- Recall systems are in place when the safety of the products is at stake;

#### b) Transparency

VIV members and their business partners will deploy a pro active policy of openness. . In that respect, all VIV members and their business partners, as far as it is reasonably possible, care that:



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- All fish products comply with legislation. Information regarding origin, traceability codes, the fish species, ingredients, gross and net weight is available;
- Only fish products proved to be in compliance with all applicable (fishery) conservation law and regulations are marketed;

### **c) Environment**

VIV members strongly encourage the use of environmentally sound methods in production, transportation and storage of fish products by facilitating the development and transfer of appropriate technologies.

VIV members and their business partners are aware that certain fishing and aquaculture practices may result in irreversible ecosystem degradation.

Therefore, VIV members and their business partners, as far as it is reasonably possible, care that:

- All business activities are designed and constructed in ways that minimize environmental damage and are in compliance with local legislation;
- Good aquaculture and fishing practices are encouraged in support of practical and cost effective strategies to ensure that relevant environmental performance standards are monitored and met;
- Appropriate incentives for responsible environmental performance are promoted and sanctions for non-compliance are advocated
- If possible, certificates, for example Eurepgap, ISO 14000 or similar, are available;
- Where no certification is in place, other records of inspection or assessment are encouraged.

### **d) Fishing practices**

VIV members and their business partners, as far as it is reasonably possible, care that:

- No fish from any illegal source(s) or fished over legal quota is traded within its supply chain;
- If possible, certificates of MSC or similar, as a result of independent inspections or audits are available;
- Where no certification is in place, other records of inspection or assessment are encouraged;
- Conservation and management measures must be in place to ensure the sustainability of fish resources at optimal levels;
- There is active support for the conservation of essential fish ecosystems and the rehabilitation of fish populations and ecosystems;
- Initiatives for more selective fishing gear and methods are promoted, including those that reduce unwanted by-catch and discards
- The use of new technologies, methods and applications that can contribute to minimising the loss of fishing and the ghost fishing effects of lost or abandoned fishing gear is encouraged;
- All partners in the chain have access to information on new developments and requirements (Legislation);



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## e) Aquaculture

Where possible, the VIV members and their business partners stimulate good aquaculture practices. All fish should be cultured according to FAO or other available related codes. Special care will be taken for the following points:

- Fish health and welfare are looked after and monitored using carefully planned measures to make sure that fish is properly treated and medicine used is in accordance with the veterinarian prescription ;
- No GMO fish or fishproducts are traded in the whole supply chain;
- All chemicals used must be in the approved lists by competent authorities in production and consumption countries;
- All chemicals are subjected to a strict controlling mechanism in order to assure the fish welfare, quality and safety. The strict control of chemical use needs to take into account the issues like workers health and safety as well as environmental protection;
- Fish feed is used in accordance with legislation and regulations of the countries of origin as well as importing countries;
- Water is regularly monitored to make sure that it is not contaminated and untreated water is not discharged to the neighbouring communities;
- If possible, Eurepgap certificates or similar, as a result of independent inspections or audits are available;
- Where no certification is in place, other records of inspections or assessment are encouraged.

## f) Social and ethical practices

VIV members will not knowingly conduct trade with companies which do not respect ethical, social, environmental, financial and humanitarian responsibilities.

Therefore, VIV members, as far as it is reasonably possible, recommend that their business partners respect the following:

- All business partners in the fish supply chain provide a safe and healthy working environment to their employees and workers. The national and local legislation in this regards must be observed;
- Employees and workers throughout the whole supply chain are adequately trained in order to perform their tasks as expected and in line with this code of conduct;
- If possible, certificates of SA 8000 or equal, as a result from an independent inspection or audit are available;
- Where no certification is in place, other records of inspection or assessment are encouraged;
- No forced labour is used in the whole chain (ILO Conv; 29 and 105);
- The rights of employees and workers to freely join any labour organizations of their choice (ILO Conventions 87 and 98) are respected;
- Child labour is prohibited in the whole chain (ILO Conventions 138 and 182);
- No discrimination is tolerated in the fish supply chain (ILO Convention 111);
- Contract arrangements in the fish supply chain are mutually fair and transparent;
- Local laws and regulations on workers' wages and benefits are adhered to.