

## PROJECT OVERVIEW: Mapping the aquaculture engagement and aquaculture literacy landscape

[Seafood Industry Australia](#) (SIA), the national peak-body representing the Australian seafood industry across the wild-caught, aquaculture, and post-harvest sectors, has been funded by the Fisheries Research & Development Corporation ([Project number: 2022-05](#)) to undertake a project to understand the aquaculture engagement and literacy landscape.

The information gathered as part of this project will be used to inform activities designed to strengthen the outreach, communications platforms, and other external engagement from the Australian aquaculture industry to stakeholders.

By building aquaculture literacy across the stakeholder spectrum, the Australian aquaculture industry will be better equipped to communicate their purpose and contribution to the goals of government, consumers, and the wider community.

In late 2021, SIA formed the [Aquaculture Advisory Committee](#) (AAC) for the purpose of creating a united vision for the industry and a shared strategic direction to ensure Australia's aquaculture sectors move forward together. One of the priorities identified by the AAC's Action Plan was the need to strengthen outreach and associated communication, external engagement and ultimately build aquaculture literacy for stakeholders.

### Context

The ability to produce healthy foods whilst protecting the global ecosystems is more important than ever. Not discounting the value and importance of wild fisheries, aquaculture, and specifically Australian aquaculture, has a key role to play in offering consumers and other key stakeholders a healthy, scalable “net-neutral carbon” protein offering, produced in resource-efficient production systems.

Apart from the health, nutrition and sustainability aspects, Australian aquaculture also supports the regional and remote communities in which they operate, boosts the national economy, provides food to feed a growing population, and supports a healthier planet.

Communicating the potential of the industry and its products is often challenging, as key stakeholder groups sometimes have limited understanding of Australian aquaculture, the industry's direction, and its benefits. Furthermore, the information readily available is often out of date, inaccurate, incomplete, misleading, or not produced by a trustworthy source

The challenges in communicating a collective industry narrative and offering value to external stakeholders can often be due to a range of factors, including the complexity of the industry, absence of coordinated government outreach programs, policies, and platforms, a lack of stakeholder awareness on industry priorities and contribution to society, and the absence of effective structures to educate and support knowledge sharing.

As a result, it can be difficult to develop and implement a coordinated and consistent industry message, and to coordinate responses to stakeholders on issues and topics of importance. The outcome can be that mixed or incoherent messages are provided to seafood consumers,

local community groups, supply chain partners, NGOs, researchers, policy makers, international agencies, and local, state, and federal government agencies.

Providing the right resources and an enduring mechanism to share key messages and accurate information in a way that resonates, or results in a change of behaviour (trust) with key stakeholders is seen as critical for development of the Australia aquaculture industry.

## **Project details**

To map the aquaculture engagement and literacy landscape the project will:

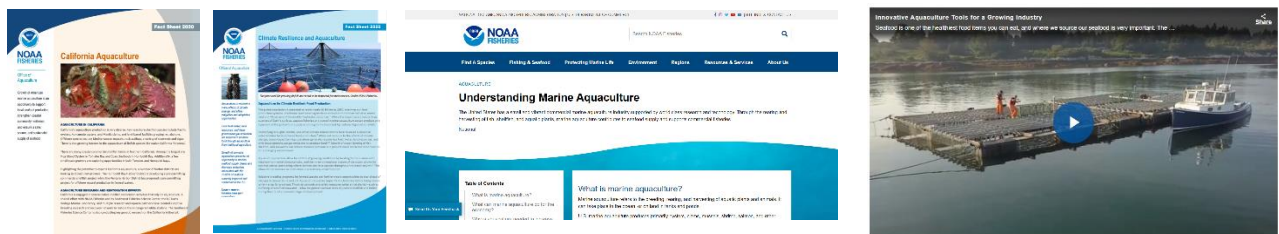
- Develop detailed stakeholder maps for the Australia aquaculture industry;
- Investigate how the main stakeholder groups in the industry are currently communicating with their stakeholders, including the current topics and messages
- Identify the key motivators e.g., issues and interests from stakeholder inquiries;
- Identify who needs to be engaged through outreach and communications programs.

Once collected, data will be analysed and recommendations provided, based on evidence and feedback, including: outreach and communications platforms; key messaging and information that needs to be communicated to different target audiences; and the communications materials/tools and activities, in which the industry might invest. These materials/tools may include fact sheets, deep dive fact sheets, FAQs, videos, podcasts, an aquaculture reference library, and other training initiatives.

The data to inform recommendations will be collected through desktop research, an online survey (this survey), interviews and mini roundtables.

## **Examples of communications materials**

Examples of the types of key communications materials currently used by NOAA Fisheries USA have been provided below:



**Regional fact sheet: California**, [Click here](#).

**Detailed fact sheet: Climate resilience and Aquaculture** (USA), [Click here](#).

**Frequently Asked Question Responses: Understanding Marine Aquaculture** (USA), [Click here](#).

**Video: Innovative Aquaculture Tools for a Growing Industry** (USA), [Click here](#).

SIA is being assisted to deliver this project by P2P Business Solutions, an independent consultancy business, and the Blue Economy CRC. The project is also supported by a Peer Reference Group comprised of representatives from across the industry. The project commenced in October 2022 and will be completed by mid-2023.