



# ARTESMAR®

POLICY AND ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Sourcing Program for Seafood from Community-  
Based Fisheries and Aquaculture in the Philippines



blueYou

# ARTESMAR® Program

## Policy & Assessment Methodology

<b>Scope of Policy</b>	Seafood origins and products under the Artesmar® program by Blueyou and Meliomar
<b>Applicability</b>	Seafood products sourced in the Philippines, manufactured and commercialized by Meliomar
<b>Version</b>	V 1.0 September 2024
<b>Revision Frequency</b>	Annually
<b>Policy Author</b>	Fabian Mollet   Head of Fisheries Programs   Blueyou Consulting LTD.

# 1. Background & Objective

As an island state surrounded by the ocean, the Philippines and its people have always relied on harvesting seafood as an important contribution to their daily diets. Unfortunately, - and like in most other places across Asia -, increasing fishing effort without effective control and management measures led to the overexploitation of marine resources, dwindling fish stocks, and diminishing returns for coastal fishing communities across the Philippines.

**To restore fish stocks and create healthy marine ecosystems which can provide seafood harvested at sustainable levels, there is an urgent need for fisheries reform and the introduction of effective fisheries management systems which apply to both industrial and the community-based artisanal fleet sector.**

On global level today, 190 Mil. tons of seafood species are harvested by more than 60 Mil. fishermen and farmers and manufactured into an estimated 100 Mil. tons of seafood for consumers worldwide. At the bottleneck of this global business worth 300 billion USD work a few Thousand companies which source harvested raw materials and distribute seafood to retail and food service channels. **The commercial actors in this competitive market-bottleneck are the critical decision makers which either actively drive or passively prevent the transformation of the sector towards planetary health, community wellbeing and thriving oceans.**



**BLUEYOU and MELIOMAR are aware of their role and responsibility in being in between the primary producers and the final consumers – and decided to take an active driver seat for change:** As impact-first and purpose-driven seafood companies, BLUEYOU'S and MELIOMAR'S theory of change is to establish a viable blueprint for best practices to follow and drive change and improvements through the value chain to realize sustainable and responsible practices at the producer level, which lead to the recovery of aquatic ecosystems, promoting biodiversity in our oceans, rivers and lakes and mitigating climate change impact.

Fisheries reform should be implemented in a stepwise approach and applied on local seafood supply chains, where local market actors take an active role in supporting the transition towards sustainable seafood sourcing by incentivizing and rewarding fisherfolks and coastal communities for applying more responsible and sustainable practices, compliant with existing regulations.

**The mission of MELIOMAR is to drive change and reform in the Philippines seafood sector, supporting local initiatives and improvement programs in both the fisheries and aquaculture sector in their transition towards compliance, responsibility and sustainable outcomes.**

For facilitating and supporting the transition of fisheries and aquaculture in the Philippines towards sustainability, BLUEYOU and MELIOMAR developed the **ARTESMAR® program**, consisting of the following main components:

#### **Framework for Compliance**

Identification of seafood harvesters and communities producing in line with local legislation, not subject to Illegal, Unreported, or Unregulated (IUU) practices.

#### **Verification and Assessment**

Assessment of fishery or aquaculture origins against basic criteria of environmental and social concern. The Unit of Origin is given by the species under assessment, the production method (fishing or farming method), and the area of production (catch and landing for fisheries, rearing and harvest for aquaculture).

#### **Traceability and Transparency**

Implementing and securing effective traceability for all seafood harvested and commercialized under the ARTESMAR® program from catch to final packaging.

#### **Branding and Consumer Messaging**

Active communication, awareness creation and consumer messaging for seafood commercialized under the ARTESMAR® program, creating recognition for the brand and its underlying improvement program on b-to-b and b-to-c level.

#### **Movement for Change**

Creating alliances and partnerships along seafood supply chains, involving seafood buyers and consumers in local food service and retail sector and foster a joint movement for change and reform in the Philippines seafood sector, focusing on supporting coastal communities in their efforts to become active stewards of local marine resources.

## 2. Unit of Origin (UoO)

The compliance against local regulations and the sustainability performance of a given seafood species is assessed by its Unit of Origin (UoO). The UoO defines the scope of the assessment under the ARTESMAR® program and contains the following attributes:

- Species name
- Origin type (wild capture, aquaculture)
- Method of production (capture gear, harvesting method, farming method)
- Catch area (fishery) or farming location

The UoO is defined for each commercialized seafood species under the ARTESMAR® program. Every UoO is assessed against the ARTESMAR® criteria for either wild caught or farmed seafood origins. The UoO is therefore equivalent to the Unit of Assessment (UoA).

## 3. Assessment Methodology

The ARTESMAR® assessment methodology for seafood harvested by local communities in the Philippines consists of a two-step approach: The first step is assessing compliance against basic local regulations and the second step is analysing key environmental and social sustainability indicators:

### **Level I: Compliance & Responsibility**

Every Unit of Origin (UoO) must be compliant with a set of baseline criteria assuring i) a minimum set of traceability data and their authenticity, informing on the origin of the commercialized seafood product, ii) compliance with basic regulatory requirements in the Philippines related to the harvesting and commercialization of seafood products, and iii) exclusion of critical social risks.

The compliance and responsibility criteria are aligned with the Responsible Sourcing Standards (RSS) of the Better Seafood Philippines (BSP) initiative. Assessment and verification of these first level criteria are performed by BSP against the RSS standard.

## Level 2: Sustainability

Units of Origin (UoO) which meet the Level 1 compliance and responsibility criteria are assessed by the ARTESMAR® sustainability criteria in a subsequent step, analysing the environmental and social performance indicators by a risk-based approach and classifying the results into three performance categories:

Critical Choice	Critical and not eligible seafood origin due to legal compliance risks, lack of traceability data and critical social or environmental risks
Responsible Choice	Responsible seafood origin from a legally compliant source with acceptable or moderate environmental or social performance
Sustainable Choice	Sustainable seafood origin from a legal source with good environmental and social performance

Table 1: Assessment categories of the ARTESMAR® sourcing methodology

Only seafood origins which are deemed either a responsible or sustainable seafood choice are approved for commercialization by MELIOMAR in the Philippines. Even if the first level compliance criteria are met, a given origin and species might not be approved for commercialization due to critical sustainability performance in the second level assessment (see Figure 1).

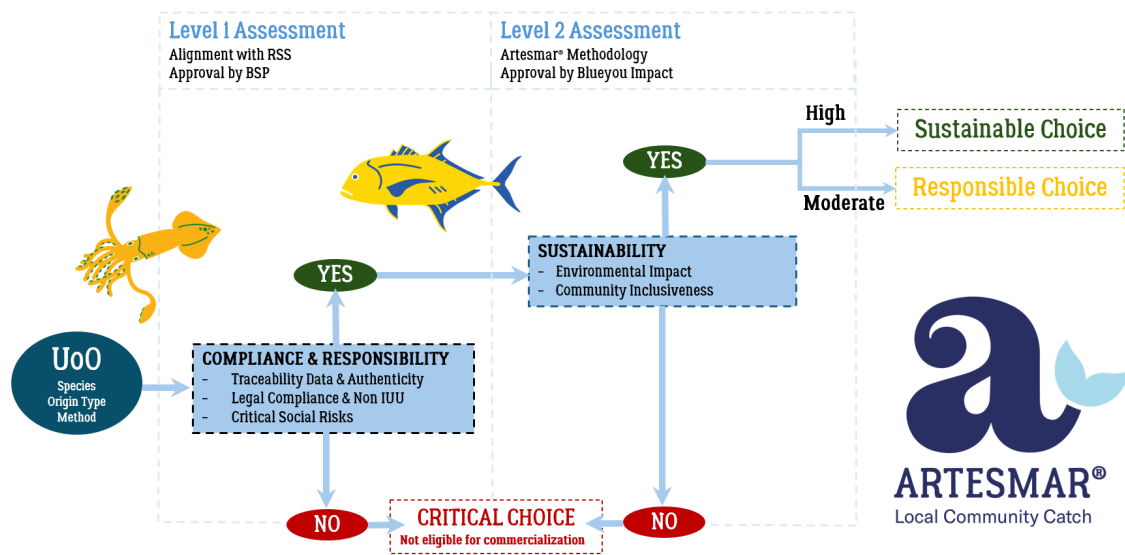


Figure 1: Schematic overview of assessment of compliance and sustainability and resulting scoring under the ARTESMAR® program

## 4. Traceability System

Meliomar operates a digital traceability system which captures the required data based on the normative standards of the Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST) as outlined in Table 2.

For the operation of the digital traceability system, MELIOMAR defines the detailed parameters of the Unit of Traceability (UoT) for every species and origin. The UoT defines the level of granularity of the traceability system and is shared on Meliomar's website for every species under the ARTESMAR® program.



## 5. Compliance Criteria (Level 1)

The compliance and responsibility assessment evaluates the performance indicators given in Table 2. This assessment is aligned with the Responsible Seafood Sourcing Standard (RSS) developed by Better Seafood Philippines (BSP) by SFP1.

Given this alignment, all UoO which are assessed and approved by BSP against RSS, are approved to be eligible under ARTESMAR®, and a corresponding ARTESMAR® level 1 assessment is not required. However, UoO which are not assessed against the RSS and for which a BSP approval doesn't exist, require the corresponding ARTESMAR® level 1 assessment accordingly. The detailed assessment methodology is provided in Annex 1 of this policy document.

<sup>1</sup> Sustainable Fisheries Partnership

Traceability & Supply Chain Integrity	<p>Seafood raw material sourced under the ARTESMAR® program come with Key Data Elements (KDEs) registered at Critical Tracking Events (KTEs) and are captured, stored and shared by MELIOMAR:</p> <p><b>Fisheries</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishing vessel registration number and fishing license</li> <li>• Species and catch data: retained species, catch volumes, capture gear, date of catch, catch area, number of days at sea</li> <li>• Supply chain and catch consolidation data: landing port, date of landing, date of landing and consolidation, consolidator and location</li> </ul> <p><b>Aquaculture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Origin and operation data (aquaculture farm, location, production units)</li> <li>• Farming inputs data (broodstock, hatchery, feed)</li> <li>• Harvesting and species data (species, date of harvesting, volume)</li> </ul>
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Legal Compliance	<p><b>Artisanal*</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fisherfolks are registered by the LGU (FishR)</li> <li>• Fishing vessels are registered by the LGU (BoatR)</li> <li>• Fishing vessels have a valid fishing licence for the applied fishing method, issued by the LGU</li> </ul> <p><b>Commercial*</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishermen have a valid license issued by BFAR</li> <li>• Fishing vessels are registered by MARINA</li> <li>• Fishing vessels have a valid Commercial Fishing Vessel License (CFVL) issued by BFAR</li> <li>• If operating in municipal waters, fishing vessels have a valid CFVL issued by the corresponding LGU</li> <li>• Fishing vessels have a valid commercial fishing gear license (CFGL) for the applied fishing method, issued by BFAR</li> <li>• Fishing operators have a valid business registration and permit</li> </ul> <p><b>If applicable (minimum landing size, closed season, protected areas)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fishing operation respects minimal landing size limits</li> <li>• The fishing operation respects seasonal fishery closures</li> <li>• Fishing vessels don't operate in protected areas or no-take zones</li> </ul>
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Critical Social Risks	<p><b>Artisanal Fishing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No risk for child labour: no children &lt;15 years of age on fishing vessels, help in landing sites &lt;2h per day and not during school hours</li> <li>• Safety and emergency measures at sea: Safety devices are present, and the fishers know how to use them: radio, mobile phone, lights, floating devices, life jackets and whistles.</li> </ul> <p><b>Commercial Fishing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No risk for child labour (active measures in place to prevent child labour)</li> <li>• No risk of forced labour (active measures in place to prevent child labour)</li> <li>• Safety and emergency measures at sea: Compliance to general labor and occupational safety and health standards set by DOLE</li> </ul> <p><b>Aquaculture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No risk for child labour (active measures in place to prevent child labour)</li> <li>• Safety and emergency measures are in place</li> </ul>
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Table 2: Performance indicators for Level 1 assessment (compliance and responsibility)



## 6. Sustainability Criteria (Level 2)

<p>Environmental Impact</p>	<p><b>Carbon Footprint</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Product carbon footprint (PCF) based on full LCA assessment</li> </ul> <p><b>Biodiversity Loss</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stock status of target species</li> <li>Level of by-catch and status of by-catch species</li> <li>Habitat impact of capture gear (fisheries)</li> <li>Habitat impact of farming system (aquaculture)</li> <li>Biodiversity risks through aquafeed ingredients</li> </ul> <p><b>Deforestation and Sensitive Habitats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deforestation risk (farming operations and feed ingredients)</li> <li>Conversion and degradation of sensitive habitats (mangroves, seagrass)</li> </ul> <p><b>Freshwater Depletion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Depletion risk of freshwater through farming operation</li> <li>Depletion risks through feed ingredients (agriculture)</li> </ul> <p><b>Eutrophication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of discharges of N and P into aquatic environment</li> </ul> <p><b>Toxic Compounds</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use and discharge of toxic compounds</li> <li>Direct use by primary operator (fishery or farm)</li> <li>Indirect risks through aquafeeds (agriculture pesticides)</li> </ul>
<p>Community Inclusiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Value participation by fishermen and farmers in the value chain</li> <li>Level of community-inclusiveness in the harvesting activity</li> </ul>

Table 3: Performance indicators evaluated in the sustainability assessment methodology.

## 7. Organisation, Roles & Adaptation

The ARTESMAR® program is developed and managed by Blueyou’s impact team and is locally operated by MELIOMAR. The assessment of the seafood origins according to the criteria of compliance and responsibility (level 1) and sustainability (level 2) is performed by Blueyou’s impact team, based on primary data collected by Blueyou and its local partners on site in the Philippines.

Blueyou and Meliomar continuously develop and adapt the logic of the sourcing policy and assessment methodology for the ARTESMAR® program and actively seek collaboration and alignment with local conservation organisations in the Philippines and scientific research institutions accordingly. The ARTESMAR® responsibility assessment (level 1) is aligned with Responsible Sourcing Standard (RSS) by the Better Seafood Philippines (BSP) initiative and shall be approved by BSP for each UoO. The ARTESMAR® assessment and the RSS might therefore be constantly improved and adapted in mutual alignment between Blueyou/MELIOMAR and BSP.

# 8. Transparency & Accountability

BLUEYOU and MELIOMAR publicly share all relevant information about the ARTESMAR® program on the company's website and upon inquiry by interested third parties, BLUEYOU and MELIOMAR openly share the assessment reports for all UoOs. The results of the assessments are shared publicly on MELIOMAR's website.

# 9. Annex

- Annex 1: Assessment matrix and methodology for level 1 performance
- Annex 2: Assessment matrix and methodology for level 2 performance

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