



Strategic Opportunity 8



Explore opportunities to enhance national sustainability reporting

Verification of the fishing and aquaculture sector's sustainability credentials is essential to increase ocean outcomes and community benefit. Sector performance currently centres on monitoring fish stocks and economic benefits. However, markets increasingly require traceable evidence of Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) indicators such as provenance, safety, diversity, animal welfare, carbon and biodiversity to inform decisions. To meet this need, FRDC is investing in opportunities that seek to increase sustainability reporting.

Enhanced national reporting will provide reliable means for the fishing and aquaculture sector to verify sustainability credentials through consistent data standards, critical for Australia's future market access and economic growth. This capability is vital to access domestic and international markets that increasingly require evidence of sustainability when making seafood purchasing decisions.

FRDC has invested in projects that uplift Australia's fishing and aquaculture sector's ability to demonstrate sustainability by addressing stakeholder prioritised data gaps and making information accessible and traceable through national and international data exchanges.

Key projects include:

- The Status of Australian Fish Stocks (SAFS), that brings together available biological, catch and effort information to determine the status of Australia's key wild catch fish stocks and inform progress against UN Sustainable Development Goal 14.4.1 (proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels)
- WhichFish (2019-087), a project that provides risk assessments of key Australian commercial species to inform seafood sourcing decisions
- CSIROs 'Healthcheck' (2016-060) ESG fishing and aquaculture data system that engages industry, managers and researchers to identify data gaps and prioritise/collect essential indicators to allow more comprehensive ESG reporting. Data will inform recognised sustainability frameworks (e.g. Status of Australian Fish Stocks, UN SDGs)
- Natural capital accounting, including working with the Task Force on Nature-Related Financial Disclosures (TFND) to make it accessible, interoperable and reusable. This project received investment from the Australian Research Data Commons (ARDC).

