

United Nations commits to serving only sustainable fish in its catering for meetings and events

In March 2011, the United Nations (UN) issued ‘Sustainable Procurement Guidelines for UN Cafeterias, Food and Kitchen Equipment’ as part of a thorough review of their sustainable procurement guidelines. Details of this process, and guidelines for all products and services can be found at: www.greeningtheblue.org/resources/procurement

The UN’s food procurement guidelines include a commitment to buying only sustainable fish for its meetings and events, by excluding the worst (not buying threatened species) and buying the best (for wild caught, Marine Stewardship Council certified; for farmed fish, Soil Association organic certified). These important measures were described by the UN as “basic sustainability [whose] criteria address the most significant environmental and social impacts, and are designed to be used with minimum additional verification effort or cost increases”.

This UN catering policy decision was welcomed by the Sustainable Fish City campaign as showing leadership on an issue of global sustainability concern.

The UN’s full guidelines on sustainable seafood are shown below.

Sustainable Procurement Guidelines Product Sheet		Basic and Advanced Requirements All Regions	
UN CAFETERIAS, FOOD AND KITCHEN EQUIPMENT			
Sustainability criteria	Verification	Basic	Advanced
1. Fish and Seafood			
Organically farmed fish to Soil Association certification standard or equivalent.	Soil Association standards are available at http://www.soilassociation.org/ .	•	
Traceable / source assured.	The bidder should indicate the species and origin of fish to be supplied.	•	
Not a threatened species.	Threatened species available to the European consumer are listed on the ‘fish to avoid’ list http://www.fishonline.org/advice/avoid/ .	•	
From sustainable fisheries as defined by the Marine Stewardship Council (http://www.msc.org/documents/scheme-documents/msc-standards/MSC_environmental_standard_for_sustainable_fishing.pdf)	For other markets, threatened species are listed on http://www.iucnredlist.org/ . The bidder is required to submit appropriate proof that these conditions are met, either through written declaration, supported by information as to the implementation and verification of this fact.	•	

Explanatory note for table: Two sets of sustainability criteria are presented in the UN’s Sustainable Procurement guidelines:

- Basic sustainability criteria address the most significant environmental and social impacts, and are designed to be used with minimum additional verification effort or cost increases.
- Advanced sustainability criteria are intended for use by procurers who seek to purchase the best environmental and socially-responsible products available on the market, and may require additional administrative effort or imply a certain cost increase as compared to other products fulfilling the same function.

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