

COMMUNITY ADVISORY PANEL RESOURCE GUIDE

HOW TO BUILD TRUST AND CREATE
SOCIAL LICENSE FOR AQUACULTURE



THE CENTER FOR
FOOD INTEGRITYSM



Photo Credit: Blue Ridge Aquaculture

CONTENTS

Introduction 3

Social License in Aquaculture 6

Building Trust and Social License 8

The Value of Transparency 9

Why Community Advisory Panels are Essential 10

Establishing a Community Advisory Panel 11

CAPs in Action 18

CAPs in Aquaculture: Calming Rough Waters 19

CAP Examples from the North American Food Industry 21

Resources and Templates 22

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The Center for Food Integrity



INTRODUCTION

The growth potential for aquaculture in the United States is significant. Consider this: **more than 90% of the seafood consumed in the U.S. is imported.**¹

Americans love seafood. According to National Fisheries Institute calculations based on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) latest "Fisheries of the United States" report, American consumers ate 19.2 pounds of seafood per capita in 2019, an increase of 0.2 pounds over 2018 figures. Shrimp tops the list of most consumed, followed by salmon and canned tuna.

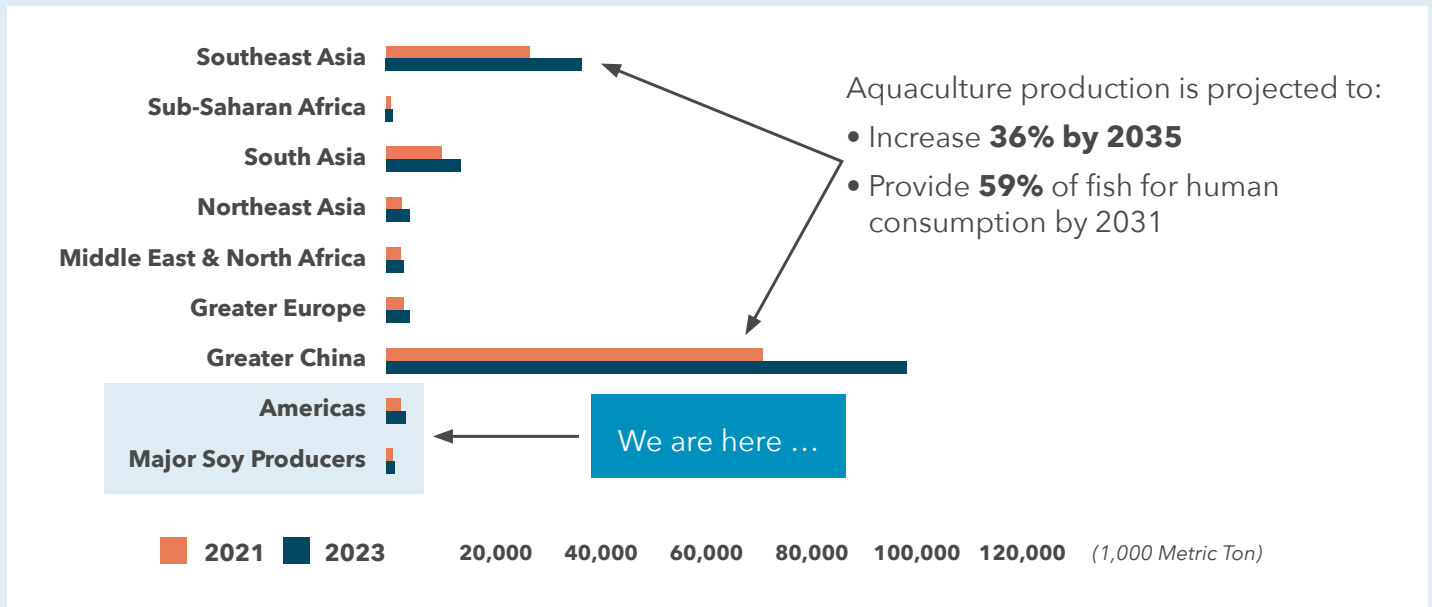
Increasing production of fish and seafood produced in the U.S. would provide clear benefit by satisfying the growing demand for locally produced food with fresh, quality fish and seafood, and by lowering transportation costs, which in turn reduce food miles and decrease carbon footprint.

Aquaculture has numerous other benefits. It creates jobs and brings an economic boost to local communities, including rural, urban and waterfront areas. Growing U.S. fish and seafood production also supports U.S. farmers and rural communities by increasing demand for soybean meal and other grains used in aquafeeds.

¹ Engle et al. 2020 [Potential Economic Value of Growth of U.S. Aquaculture to U.S. Soybean Farmers](#)

Throughout the world, aquaculture is rapidly expanding. USDA projects world aquaculture production to increase 36% by 2035 in China and Southeast Asia, the global leaders. The United States clearly lags behind.

WORLD AQUACULTURE PRODUCTION BY REGION (1,000 MT)



Economic struggles, regulatory constraints, labor challenges, climate conditions, water access and supplies, and environmental concerns are key factors most often referenced as reasons for limited growth and development in the United States.

However, another critical element limiting aquaculture development is the lack of social license.





WHAT IS SOCIAL LICENSE?

The concept of social license reflects the level of support and trust a community of people or stakeholders has in a project, company or industry. It is rooted in public trust, or the belief that companies need to do more than meet regulatory requirements; they must also measure up to the expectations of the public or community in which they reside.

Without a social license, businesses and industries can experience a multitude of issues — overly burdensome regulations, excessive local government controls and oversight, delays or denials of permits to develop or expand operations, lawsuits or protests by citizen groups.

The aquaculture industry has certainly experienced these challenges. Regardless of whether the businesses are in coastal or inland areas, rural or urban, community resistance to aquaculture development has carried into the marketplace where public distrust is further magnified through negative media coverage, social media and nuisance complaints.

A NEW APPROACH IS NEEDED.

The Center for Food Integrity has worked with aquaculture leaders to enhance trust through a proven strategy that is beneficial for both communities and the industry — Community Advisory Panels (CAPs).

CAPs reflect a well-defined process for building relationships, addressing community concerns, sharing information proactively and identifying beneficial outcomes that help align company actions with community expectations.

The purpose of this resource guide is to provide the insight and tools to effectively implement and facilitate a Community Advisory Panel to help build trust and create social license for aquaculture.



SOCIAL LICENSE IN AQUACULTURE

When change is introduced into a community, such as a proposed aquaculture operation or fish farm, it can often result in questions about whether those leading the change share existing community values. This is especially true in communities where shared values are the foundation of community life (think mountain, rural or coastal communities). If there is a belief that those individuals who are bringing change are insensitive or lack similar values, there is no common ground. The lack of established trust may result in conflict and challenges for development.

This is what U.S. aquaculture has experienced.

Even with the resulting nutritional, social, economic and environmental benefits, efforts for aquaculture to expand and grow have been met with resistance from coast to coast. Enhancing social license to operate would help solve this. But without trust in the operation and the industry, no social license is granted. Social control is the opposite of social license. Social control happens in the absence of trust and leads communities to demand barriers to growth, including further restrictions and regulations.

**AQUIFER AT RISK FROM PROPOSED
AQUACULTURE PROJECT**

**RESIDENTS RISE UP AGAINST
INDUSTRIAL-SCALE AQUACULTURE**

**CONSERVATIONISTS, FISHERMEN AND
CITIZENS PROTEST FISH FARM**

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OVERRULE
FISH FARM PERMIT**

**LOCAL CHEF QUESTIONS SAFETY OF
FARMED SEAFOOD**

SOCIAL LICENSE, HOWEVER, IS USUALLY POORLY UNDERSTOOD.

It is not a marketing problem that can be addressed through advertising. Nor is it simply a perception problem that can be overcome with a campaign to counter misinformation in the news or on social media. Earning social license requires getting to the roots of distrust and anxiety about aquaculture and then establishing pathways to authentically address the issues and identify workable solutions.

The long-term benefits of increased social license may include the following:

- Ability to operate with greater community support and confidence
- Time management focused on operations rather than public image issues and crises
- Improved public image as a preferred employer and corporate citizen
- Stronger financial profile to attract/maintain lenders and investors
- Ability to expand operations or site new facilities
- Enhanced confidence from local officials and other stakeholders

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“I’ve asked a lot of questions (at the meetings) and I’ve learned a lot. Communication is really the missing component.”

– CAP Participant

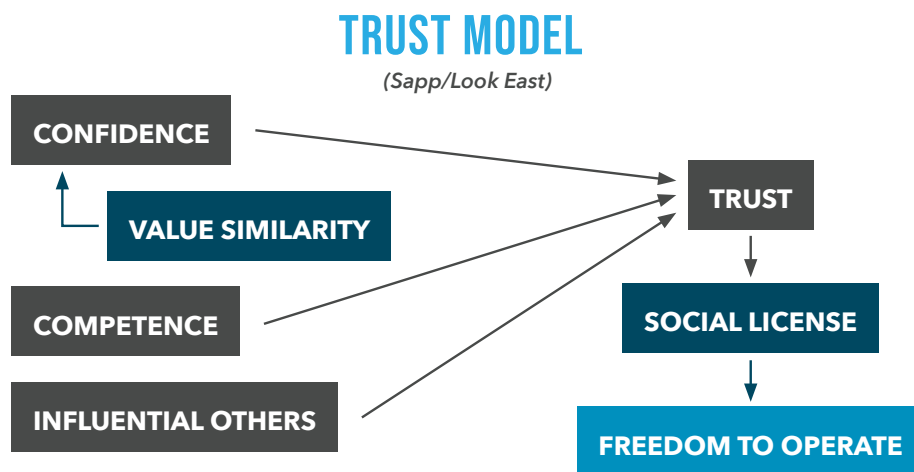
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BUILDING TRUST AND SOCIAL LICENSE

To achieve social license, an entity must first establish trust. Trust consists of three aspects:

- Confidence (shared values)
- Competence (facts, data, technical expertise)
- Influential others (trusted sources)

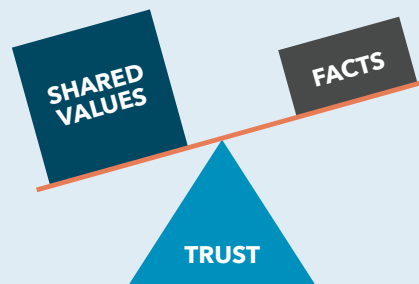
Peer reviewed and published research shows that shared values are three-to-five times more impactful at earning trust than facts or data. Before people listen to or accept facts, data or technical expertise, they must first believe that those conveying the information share their values.



The Trust ModelSM was created based on research conducted in partnership with Iowa State University and published in the December 2009 *Journal of Rural Sociology*.

WHAT DRIVES CONSUMER TRUST?

(Sapp/Look East)



Shared values are 3-5 times more important to building trust than sharing facts or demonstrating technical skills/expertise

THE VALUE OF TRANSPARENCY

Two businesses may experience similar issues in their development process, but the outcome and impact on consumer perceptions could be completely different based on how the business responds and demonstrates transparency.

It's simple: If you increase transparency, you will increase trust. Research released in 2015 by The Center for Food Integrity (CFI) provides proof. The study identified Seven Elements of Transparency as an effective strategy for building trust.²

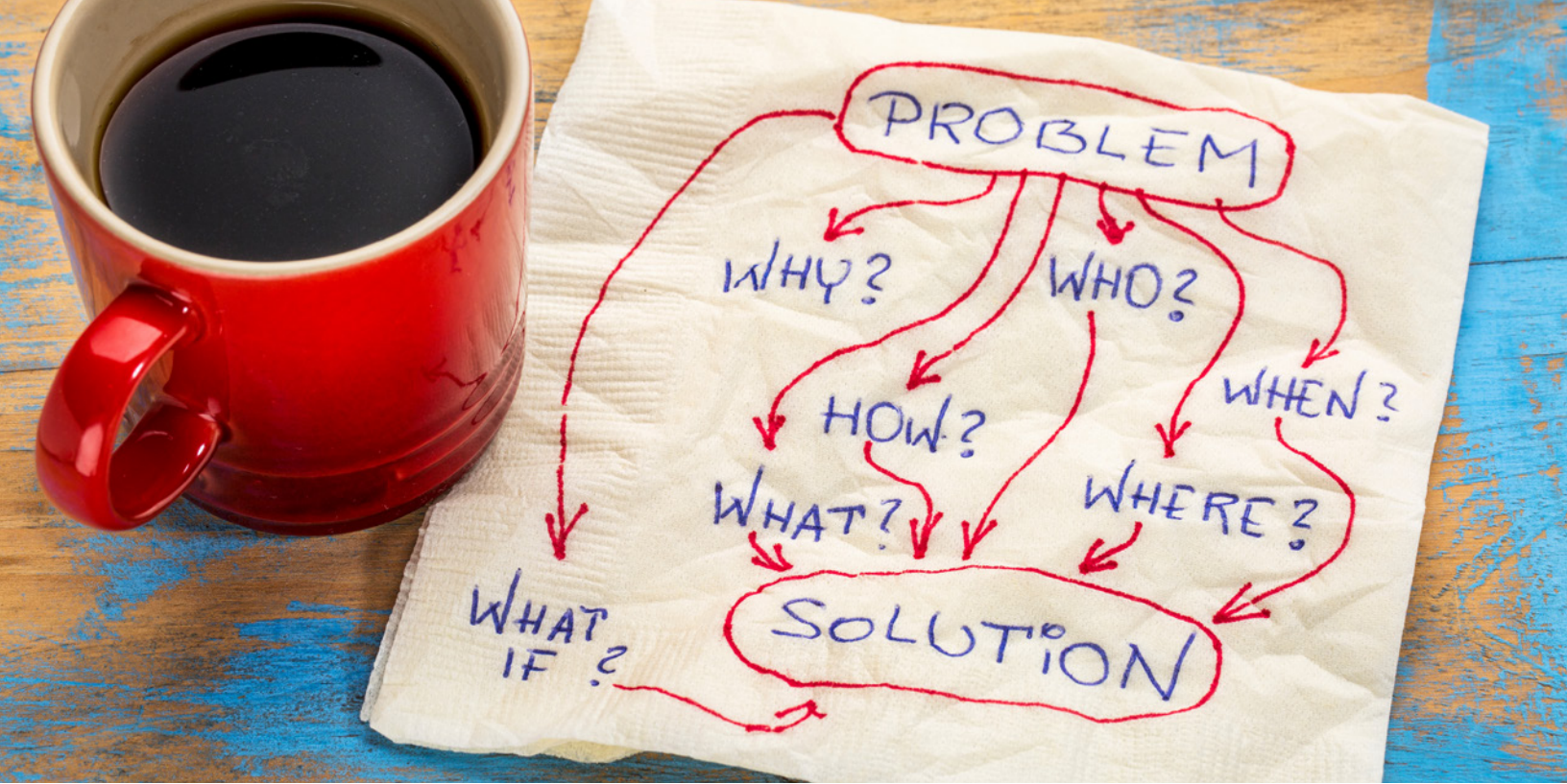
It is also essential to engage in open dialogue with stakeholders. A stakeholder is anyone impacted by a company or project, such as neighbors, employees, customers, suppliers and others. People want a company to listen, acknowledge their questions and feedback, and describe how and why its leaders make decisions. Engaging proactively and consistently is necessary to show transparency and shared values.

This approach builds trust and social license, and it is foundational to why a CAP is effective.

CFI TRANSPARENCY MODEL SEVEN ELEMENTS OF TRUST-BUILDING



² Center for Food Integrity. 2015. [A Clear View of Transparency and How It Builds Consumer Trust](#)



WHY COMMUNITY ADVISORY PANELS ARE ESSENTIAL

Community Advisory Panels involve a tailored and structured process for building relationships, sharing beliefs and resolving concerns that help align company performance with community expectations. If there is a gap between expectations and performance, there is greater opportunity for conflict.

If the information that the community has regarding the business is inadequate, incomplete or not trusted, the information gap is filled with speculation and rumors. The CAP process is designed to replace rumor and speculation with reliable information from trusted sources, reducing the information gap between performance and expectations and helping increase trust.

An additional benefit: Though social license itself has no direct connection to policy or regulation, elected officials may consider public sentiment when making decisions. Through the CAP process outlined in the guide, aquaculture producers and fish farmers will ideally create a business that the community trusts, appreciates, values and supports. That goes a long way when government or market oversight of an industry is being considered.

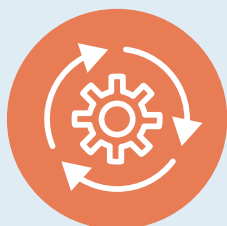
Simply establishing a CAP and using this process does not remove any or all roadblocks that can impede a project. It won't correct a shortage of resources or change state agency regulations, as examples. Businesses need to research their industry and other similar industries to better understand what issues have negatively impacted development. Some are likely community-based, and establishing a CAP can give businesses eyes and ears "on the ground."



ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY ADVISORY PANEL

A CAP is a group that meets regularly for open, candid discussions about a particular issue – it could be a specific facility or a general industry. The CAP brings together community influencers to identify key issues and develop workable solutions.

Steps to a Successful Community Advisory Panel



Commit to the process



Recruit a third-party facilitator



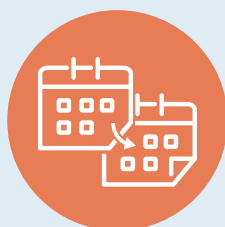
Identify, vet and invite participants



Select a meeting time and location



Host the first meeting



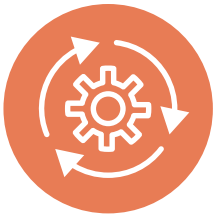
Subsequent Meetings:
Discuss and explore workable solutions



Stay engaged and openly provide information

HOW TO ESTABLISH A CAP

1. COMMIT TO THE PROCESS



For the aquaculture producer, the CAP process can be uncomfortable and even intimidating. Aquaculture operations tend to maintain a low profile. Engaging with those who disagree can feel counterintuitive. This approach usually begins with a certain level of trepidation and discomfort among all participants, but eventually leads to a place of trust, engagement and comradery.

Success will depend upon the sincere engagement and full commitment of the company involved. The company representative must remain authentically engaged - even in those moments of discomfort - to come out the other side in a place of trust that enables freedom to operate.

Especially important for company representatives is understanding their role is to listen and learn from others. Gradually, representatives become more involved in answering the panelists' questions and connecting on shared values. Demonstrating transparency - such as giving the panel a tour of the operation - gives a tremendous boost to building trust. A willingness to listen to ideas and consider changes when possible to accommodate public concerns also builds trust.

2. RECRUIT A THIRD-PARTY FACILITATOR



Create an environment where participants can safely share their beliefs about the company, its leaders/employees and its actions. A third-party facilitator increases the likelihood that discussion can be open and honest. Trained facilitators may be found by connecting with your chamber of commerce, a trade association or other organizations.

3. IDENTIFY, VET AND INVITE PANEL PARTICIPANTS



The ideal Community Advisory Panel includes 10 to 15 participants. The group should be large enough to include a variety of relevant backgrounds and perspectives, yet small enough to allow all participants to meaningfully engage in meetings. Plan for the process to identify and confirm participants to take four-to-six weeks.

Plan for attrition and fallout. Recruit to the high side of your target range (15 participants) so your group is large enough to be representative of the community.



“Keep the door open for community feedback and engagement – at least for listening. I think this project has a very good chance of being successful and beneficial to the community.”

– CAP Participant



3. IDENTIFY, VET AND INVITE PANEL PARTICIPANTS *(cont.)*

Identify prospective participants to represent the various target groups outlined below.

Consider these types of people when recruiting:

- Business leaders/small business owners/professionals
- Neighbors who are active in the community (look for a mix of longtime and newer residents)
- Water/fishing/outdoor and environmental enthusiasts
- Educators (all levels)
- Leaders in community non-profits and civic organizations

Avoid recruiting from these categories of individuals in order to encourage open and honest discussion:

- Media, as there should be no publicity regarding the CAP
- Elected officials, government officials or regulators, as their input will most often be aligned with their positions
- Industry experts, as others often defer to the “expert” in the room
- Community members who are seen as “cheerleaders” or adamantly opposed to your cause, as they resist setting aside their beliefs in order to listen to others

It is important to have diverse backgrounds represented, but avoid recruiting people who are subject matter experts on the topics being discussed. The experts come later. CAP participants should be there because they have an equal stake in the community.



3. IDENTIFY, VET AND INVITE PANEL PARTICIPANTS *(cont.)*



Vet the individuals through personal phone conversations or virtual calls to gauge their willingness to commit and work with others. It may work best to make initial contact through email (see Page 23) but the message should be

brief and encourage a phone conversation to discuss the invitation further. (See Page 23).

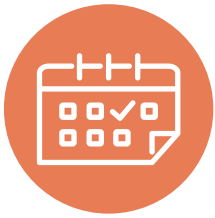
A key role of the CAP is to identify and prioritize areas of interest and concern in the community. While interviewing prospective CAP participants, probe for knowledge of and experience with the aquaculture industry/business. Probe to identify questions or skepticism that may impact their perceptions and public opinion. These insights will offer a starting point for the first and subsequent meetings. (See Page 24 for a list of questions to utilize in your outreach.)

It is essential to include individuals who are skeptical about the project but are open to considering other viewpoints. Weed out those who are so firmly entrenched in their beliefs that they cannot work collaboratively with others. Identify those with the temperament and grace to engage in meaningful discussions for the benefit of the community. Likewise, individuals who are excessively positive/supportive of the industry may not be constructive for similar reasons.

If there is a fit, ask for suggestions on others to include in the group. Lastly, underscore that participation in the CAP is by the facilitator's invitation only. Repeat this process until a cross-section of diverse influencers has agreed to engage in the CAP process and attend the first meeting.

We recommend the meeting room set-up include tables arranged in a U-shape and CAP participants seated around the U. A presentation table, projector and screen would be placed in the center front of the U. Representatives from the company and/or fish farmers should be limited to no more than two individuals. They can be seated at a separate table along with the facilitator and any guest who may be speaking at the meeting.

4. SELECT A MEETING TIME AND LOCATION



Set up a regular meeting schedule, such as a set day and time each month that works best for those involved. Meetings will likely be held monthly initially, but the timing will be determined

by the needs of the panel and broader community. Be respectful of the participants' time - meetings should last no more than 90 minutes.

Meetings could be held at noon beginning with lunch and conclude by 1:30 p.m. Evening meetings could begin at 6:30 with a meal and conclude by 8 p.m. Because socializing over a meal helps break down barriers, start each meeting by serving a meal.

Select a neutral location - such as a community center, hotel or restaurant meeting room or church fellowship hall - where everyone will feel comfortable gathering and participating in the conversation.

5. HOST THE FIRST MEETING



The first meeting will set the tone for the group and future meetings, so prepare diligently. Start with social interaction to help participants get acquainted.

Review the objective of the CAP and process. Here is an example to consider:

The Community Advisory Panel (CAP) will work together to identify and discuss local questions, interests and expectations to help foster a mutually beneficial relationship between the community and the <insert producer/fish farmer/business name>.

The CAP process:

- Identify and prioritize questions/interests/concerns from the community
- Articulate community expectations of a new aquaculture-based business
- Share plans and information on the intended new business with others
- Consider workable solutions and information presented by others
- Enable the new business to make informed decisions that are respectful of the community
- Participation in the CAP meetings are by invitation only



"The other meaningful takeaway is that the developer is accessible and invested. I really appreciated that he showed up to every meeting and engaged with each of us. When an "outsider" with big ideas comes into a small community, it can be very challenging and there are some people who are better suited to navigating the system/personalities than others."

– CAP Participant



5. HOST THE FIRST MEETING *(cont.)*



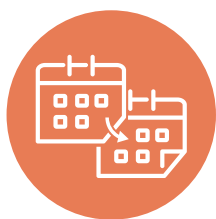
Establish and communicate guidelines for working together. Example guidelines could include:

- All opinions and questions have merit and are respected and appreciated.
- One person speaks at a time.
- Individuals are offering opinions and perspectives, not speaking on behalf of a company/organization/etc.
- Information and insights learned at meetings can be shared with others in conversations, however:
 - Comments are never attributed to an individual in external conversations without permission.
 - There is no communication about the CAP or CAP discussions with media or on social media.

If this CAP has been formed proactively ahead of a proposed project, the aquaculture producer/business should provide a brief 15-minute overview of what is being considered. This overview is followed by a facilitated discussion to prioritize a list of issues, concerns and questions regarding the project. These topics will be addressed in subsequent meetings. An effective facilitator is crucial to successfully complete this exercise. A step-by-step guide to facilitate this discussion to identify issues, topics and questions can be found on page 27 in the Resources and Templates section of this guide.

The aquaculture business/producer should attend this first session as well as follow-up meetings but should sit at a table separate from the CAP participants. This nuance is important. The most important role of the business/producer at CAP meetings is to listen and understand community beliefs and concerns. They should provide company updates and address specific questions only when called upon by the facilitator. As the meetings and the relationship progresses, the shift of including the facilitator and the business representative at the main table with the CAP can occur.

6. SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS: DISCUSS AND EXPLORE WORKABLE SOLUTIONS



The prioritized list from the first meeting will drive the agenda for subsequent meetings, though not necessarily in the same order.

Each prioritized topic should be addressed, dedicating an entire

meeting or more to a topic. It may also be necessary to engage different subject matter experts over multiple meetings given the complexity of some of the topics. The expectations and feedback from CAP participants should help shape the agenda of future meetings.



“I learned that the community members want the business and industry to succeed, nearly as much as I do. They see the need for a more diverse economy. I want their help ... and they want mine. I think that is why we are all so committed to continuing the CAP meetings.”

– CAP Aquaculture Producer



The facilitator and business/producers should consider the best way to address each of the priority topics – it may be a guest speaker, it may be a site visit, etc. Assess any further input and recommendations from the CAP. The goal is to make sure the group understands the issue, feels heard and valued, and that appropriate follow-up by the company is taken.

7. STAY ENGAGED AND OPENLY PROVIDE INFORMATION



Between CAP meetings, the facilitator should talk with members asking for their feedback and recommendations. These conversations between meetings in the early stages of the CAP are especially important for building relationships, listening for feedback and ensuring participants feel they are being heard.

Consistency is Key to a Meaningful CAP

Each CAP will have its own rhythm and life expectancy. In the beginning, it is critical meetings are held consistently on a monthly basis for a period of eight to 12 months. There must be a dedicated effort to address priority topics and engage in meaningful conversations. After this initial period, meetings can be adjusted to every two months and then further down the road, quarterly.

Sometimes the chasm between community beliefs and a proposed business is significant. Patience and a commitment to the process over time are essential, especially in circumstances like this. Other times, rapport and trust can be achieved more easily. While each community will be unique, the diligent approach remains the same. When progress is made on a specific concern, the process will be repeated until all prioritized topics have been addressed.

It is good to reference the top priorities (interests, concerns, questions) at the start of each meeting. It reminds participants that they drove the agenda ... and it shows they were heard.



CAPS IN ACTION

Once established, CAPs can take a variety of forms as they identify and address issues of concern and strengthen relationships with the community. These activities might include correcting misinformation about the operation, inviting industry experts to speak on an issue, providing panelists a tour of a facility and collaborating to develop solutions, as well as holding ground on requests that would negatively affect non-negotiables such as fish welfare or worker safety – and doing this through the lens of shared values.

In general, issues will fall into one of three categories: misinformation, issues that can be resolved and issues that require compromise.

CATEGORIES OF ISSUES AND EXAMPLE RESOLUTIONS

<p>Issues resulting from misunderstandings or misinformation</p>	<p>Example Issue: Some community members believe the operation is polluting a nearby river.</p> <p>Example Resolution: CAP is invited to tour the facility to see for themselves water treatment and sustainability aspects of the operation. If a tour is not feasible, invite a representative to speak at a meeting sharing images and video of their business along with data that addresses misinformation.</p>
<p>Issues that can and should be resolved</p>	<p>Example Issue: Neighbors complain about construction or production equipment parked by the roadside that blocks signage and intersection visibility, creating a traffic hazard.</p> <p>Example Resolution: The business did not know this was causing concern and can move the equipment to a different location.</p>
<p>Issues that the panel sees as a problem but that can't be changed without negative consequences</p>	<p>Example Issue: Neighbors do not like that pyrotechnics go off periodically at the operation.</p> <p>Example Resolution: An explanation is provided to the CAP as to why pyrotechnics are used and their importance. Because of animal predation, the business needs to scare birds and other animals away, so they do not eat the fish or contaminate water. Experts could provide data or show a video about the impact on fish. The producer may agree to schedule pyrotechnics at times that are least disruptive to neighbors.</p>

It is likely that some questions may require simple clarification and communication. Other issues may be highly complex and require more time and persistence to resolve. Each state or community will have unique challenges. While the CAP has no power or authority over the aquaculture operation, the important point is bringing stakeholders together to openly talk through the issues.

The spirit of shared values reframes concerns into productive conversations with the community influencers as part of the solution, making it something they themselves, AND the rest of the community, can embrace.

Over time a successful CAP results in increased trust between community members and those who are introducing a concerning change to the community (i.e. aquaculture development.) The structured process includes both relationship building and information sharing that closes the gap between performance and expectations and results in increased trust and social license.

CAPS IN AQUACULTURE: CALMING ROUGH WATERS

Whenever food production and communities neighbor one another, there is potential for friction. This is no less true in aquaculture.

In 2023, The Center for Food Integrity implemented the CAP process in four locations, opening the lines of communication between aquaculture producers and their communities. While the operations' production systems and development stages varied significantly, the goal of creating an open dialogue with the communities was the same.

The findings? The process works in aquaculture, just as it has for other food-producing industries.

Learnings varied across efforts, but 2023 proved that aquaculture CAPs can deliver exceptional results. For example, one aquaculture producer heard some meaningful input at a CAP meeting that was acted upon immediately to gather more data related to the proposed project. The producer realized the value of that information and took steps to do more assessments.

In another instance, CAP participants expressed early on that the community needed to be more communication from the aquaculture producer. After hearing this discussed, the producer created some additional communication efforts localized for the community. While the business had a website, clearly a workable solution that everyone agreed upon was better communication from the business with the community.

“

“There’s a lot of concern about what the impact will be on the aquifer and our water supply. I think I can address some of the misinformation now based on what I’ve learned at the meetings. I don’t see the company as being as big of a threat as I thought.”

– CAP Participant

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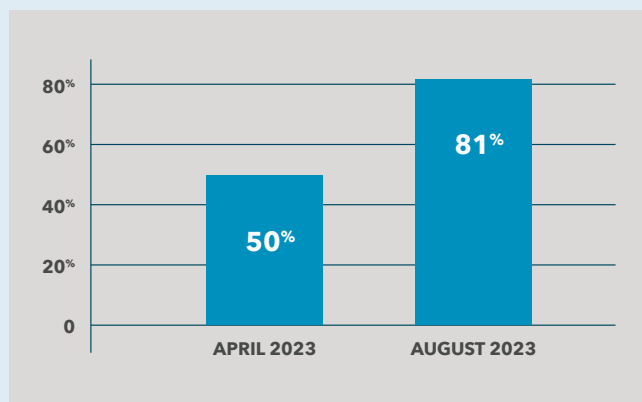
“The fact that they share is wonderful. Gossip runs rampant in our community, so these meetings have been so helpful.”

– CAP Participant

Keys to Success with an Aquaculture Community Advisory Panel

- A commitment to the process and consistent meetings over an extended period of time – from the aquaculture producer/business and the participants
- An authentic commitment to the community by the aquaculture producer/fish farmer
- A diverse group of community-minded citizens, each with different backgrounds/perspectives
- A third-party facilitator to keep the dialogue flowing, constructive and moving forward
- Credible subject matter experts to address community concerns and questions that have been prioritized

BELIEVE FARMED SEAFOOD IS RAISED SUSTAINABLY



CFI conducted pre- and post-surveys with CAP participants to assess any changes in attitudes and beliefs because of the CAP process. The survey questions are available in the Resources and Templates section of this guide on Page 28. The survey should not be a replacement for one-on-one conversations and relationship building. In fact, if a relationship of trust has not been developed with the CAP participants, the survey might be off-putting for some individuals.

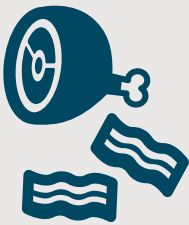
2023 CFI Pre- and Post-Surveys of CAP Participants

CAP EXAMPLES FROM THE NORTH AMERICAN FOOD INDUSTRY

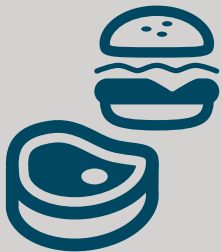
The following are actual instances where core concepts of local community and social license were used to address issues faced by producers and food processors.



In **New York**, a progressive dairy operation faced local opposition, which in turn created concern about the ability of dairies throughout the region to operate and grow. A state dairy organization facilitated a CAP. Once the local farmer and his family engaged in the sessions, misunderstandings were reduced and productive solutions were suggested. The CAP process concluded after broad-based support for the farm and the broader dairy industry were achieved.



In **North Carolina**, new owners of a pork processing facility discovered that, due to a lack of community outreach, trust in the business had eroded. Community beliefs were based on rumors and speculation. A CAP that included opinion leaders carefully selected for both their influence and their ability to engage constructively was convened. All issues were open for discussion and leaders of the packing plant committed to responding to all questions and concerns. The facility was able to generate community support by either addressing concerns or providing transparency that built trust and alleviated concerns.



In **Pennsylvania**, a regional packing plant had planned to expand with an innovative recycling system. Local citizens became concerned about the potential impact on the environment and voiced their opposition to state regulators. A CAP was created as a mechanism for candid monthly discussions. The participants appreciated the opportunity to have their voices heard and to learn more about the plant. Additionally, the company received recommendations regarding communication strategies that it was able to act upon. Two years later, construction of the project is well underway with broad support in the community. Today, the CAP meets quarterly to hear company updates and provide input.



"The meetings have been great. I wouldn't change a thing. I like the updates and it provides me with information I can share when I hear (which I have) misinformation."

– CAP Participant





RESOURCES AND TEMPLATES

- [Sample Email Invitation](#) 23
- [Sample Voice Mail Message](#) 23
- [Conversation Template and Questions](#) 24
- [Sample Agenda for First Meeting](#) 25
- [Sample Agenda for Subsequent Meetings](#) 26
- [The First Meeting: Seven Steps to Identify and Prioritize Issues](#) 27
- [Aquaculture Community Advisory Panel Engagement Survey](#) 28
- [References](#) 32

SAMPLE EMAIL INVITATION

Hello _____,

I'm _____. I'm working with a new business that intends to establish an aquaculture facility in the region. My role today is to organize a community advisory panel, a focus group-like panel of residents and business people. This panel will help the business understand the community's culture and expectations for new businesses in the area.

We kick off the panel next month and I am working to make sure different perspectives are represented. Your name came up during a conversation with _____ at _____ (i.e. Chamber of Commerce) as someone who looks out for the community and would likely be willing to participate in this open and candid dialogue for the benefit of both the business and the community.

I'd like to share more information about the advisory panel and assess your interest in participating. Would you be available for a 15-minute phone call next week? Please let me know what days and times work best for you, and I will schedule a call to connect.

Thank you for your consideration.

Your name and contact information

SAMPLE VOICE MAIL MESSAGE

Hello, my name is _____.

We are helping to put together a Community Advisory Panel in _____ and your name and number were provided by _____. You may recall an email I sent you about this.

We'd like to share more information about the advisory panel with you to determine if you would be available to participate.

Please give me a call at _____.

(Share details about the times you are available for a call back)

Thank you for your consideration.

CONVERSATION TEMPLATE AND QUESTIONS

_____ is developing a Community Advisory Panel (CAP) to help the business understand the community's culture and expectations for new businesses in the area. They welcome input and recommendations related to their business in your community. The CAP will be comprised of a diverse group of participants from a variety of occupations and opinions. It will also reflect the demographics of the area.

I've been engaged to help facilitate these meetings.

Your name has been given to us as a potential participant because you are recognized as a leader in this area that would likely be willing to participate in open and candid dialogue.

The CAP will initially meet one evening each month from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. and meetings will include a meal. The first meeting is tentatively scheduled for _____ .

Does this sound like something you would be interested in attending? (If yes, proceed to the list of questions. If no, thank them for their time and consideration.)

That's great to hear! Thank you for your interest.

May I ask you a few more questions to help get acquainted with you?

1. How long have you lived in the area?
2. How familiar are you with aquaculture/fish farming?
3. Have you read anything recently about the aquaculture industry?
4. Would you say your level of interest in aquaculture/fish farming is - high, medium or low?
5. When it comes to aquaculture/fish farming, do you have any questions or concerns?

As I mentioned before, we are bringing together a Community Advisory Panel to provide members of the community with the opportunity to share advice and perspective on a proposed aquaculture project and we would appreciate your engagement.

The time commitment would be a few hours a month. We are hosting an introductory/kick off meeting on _____. I will send you an email with the meeting details.

The meetings are by invitation only and media will not be invited to the meetings. Do you have any recommendations for others who might be interested in serving on a CAP like this? — *Underscore it is not necessary for them to extend the invitation.*

- a. If yes, gather name(s) and contact information.
- b. Is it okay to tell them you recommended them?
- c. Ask additional questions for each person recommended.
 - i. Why do you think they would be willing to serve on the CAP?
 - ii. What strengths do you think they will bring to the discussion?
 - iii. What issues do you think they will want addressed as part of the CAP?

Great! We are looking forward to working with you. Thank you again for your time and interest.

Confirm email addresses and any alternate phone numbers.

SAMPLE AGENDA FOR FIRST MEETING

(Include a copy of the agenda at each place setting.)

<Organization/Business Name>

<Community Advisory Panel>

<Location>

<Month/Date/Year>

AGENDA

Noon

Welcome — 5 minutes

Add the name of the third-party facilitator/moderator

Introductions — 7-10 minutes depending on the size of the group

Idea: Each person shares their work title and then 2 personal titles to help express other shared interests. For example: Hi, my name is Olivia. I'm a middle school teacher and I'm also a runner and my kids' Uber driver and ATM machine.

Lunch

Allow about 10-15 minutes for people to eat and have informal conversations.

CAP Objective and Process — *See Page 15 for example*

Guidelines for Working Together — *See Page 16 for example*

Project Introduction and Overview

This would be a brief overview presented by a representative from the company of what is being proposed to be pursued/developed in the community (15 minutes).

Community Discussion and Input — *See Page 27 for facilitating this process*

- What questions and concerns do you have about the project?
- Prioritization of the issues and topics identified

Next Meeting Dates

A best practice is to have the series of meeting dates determined prior to the first meeting. Input on when to meet can be gathered when you have conversations with prospective CAP participants. While adjustments can be made, it is best to have a cadence to the meeting day, time and location that everyone can commit to as the process begins. For example, the second Tuesday of each month at noon or the third Thursday at 6:30 p.m.

1:30 p.m.

Adjourn

The Community Advisory Panel is facilitated by <insert contact name and/or business/organization>

For more information contact: <insert contact email and/or mobile number>

SAMPLE AGENDA FOR SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS

(Include a copy of the agenda at each place setting.)

<Organization/Business Name>

<Community Advisory Panel>

<Location>

<Month/Date/Year>

AGENDA

Noon Welcome — *5 minutes*

- Introductions

This is helpful for any guest speaker(s) you have invited.

Lunch *Allow about 10-15 minutes for people to eat and have informal conversations.*

CAP Objective and Process — *See Page 15 for example*

Guidelines for Working Together — *See Page 16 for example*

<Presentation title and Speaker name>

Each follow-up meeting should include a Subject Matter Expert (SME) that provides additional information and perspective for one of the priorities identified by the group.

Community Discussion and Input

The facilitator should use this time to ensure CAP participants get all their questions addressed and that their additional input or requests for information are acknowledged. The facilitator should also assess if another SME is needed to present to the group on the same topic.

Next Meeting Dates

<insert the upcoming meeting dates>

1:30 p.m. Adjourn

The Community Advisory Panel is facilitated by <insert contact name and/or business/organization>

For more information contact: <insert contact email and/or mobile number>

THE FIRST MEETING: 7 STEPS TO IDENTIFY AND PRIORITIZE THE ISSUES

1. Ask each participant to take 5-7 minutes to write down questions and topics that come to mind. Use these questions to initiate this process.

A. What questions do you have?

B. What do you want to learn more about?

C. What concerns do you have?

2. Assess if everyone has had time to write down their comments and questions before starting the next step.
3. Using a large flip chart and paper, capture everyone's feedback starting with A: What questions do you have? Go around the table asking each individual to share what they wrote down.
4. Next ask each person to share one thing they would like to learn more about. Write each of these on the flip chart.
5. Then ask each individual what concerns them about the proposed project. Capture everyone's responses. Individuals may have more than one thing to share. By this time, you have likely used multiple sheets of paper. These should be posted in the room for everyone to see.
6. CFI has facilitated several aquaculture CAPs. Here a a list of some of the topics, questions and concerns we heard:

- Environmental impacts
- Water quality and quantity
- Health and wellbeing of the fish/seafood
- Fish/seafood nutrition and food safety
- Construction and development disruption
- Labor
- Regulations / Who will be monitoring this activity?
- Community involvement and support
- Financial stability of the project
- Location / Why here?

Ensure you have everyone's feedback and all areas of interest and concern have been identified before you move to Step 7.

7. This final step helps prioritize all the feedback and questions you have listed. Give each person 5 red dot stickers and 5 blue dot stickers. The red indicates the topic is a high priority. The blue sticker indicates it is important but not a high priority topic. Individuals are asked to place their dots on the items listed according to what's most important to them using the 10 dots they have been given.

The input gathered through this process should be compiled and used as a reference guide for planning subsequent meetings.

AQUACULTURE COMMUNITY ADVISORY PANEL (CAP) ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

1. When you think of aquaculture, what comes to mind?

2. Is aquaculture the same as fish farming? Yes ____ No ____ Don't know ____

• If no, how are they different?

3. How often do you eat fish/seafood?

- Daily
- More than once per week
- A few times per month
- Rarely
- Never

4. How often do you fish recreationally?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Rarely
- Never

5. How often do you use the ocean/gulf for other recreational uses (snorkeling, diving, sailing, etc.)?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Rarely
- Never

For questions 6-8, place a “1” next to your top choice, “2” for your second, “3” for third.

6. What are your top 3 sources of information about fish farming and aquaculture?

- Media (source _____)
- National newspaper or magazine (source _____)
- National TV (source _____)
- News website (source _____)
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- Friends or family
- Other: (source _____)

7. What do you feel are the top 3 sources of information for others in the community about fish farming and aquaculture?

- Media (source _____)
- National newspaper or magazine (source _____)
- National TV (source _____)
- News websites (source _____)
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- Friends or family
- Other: (source _____)

8. Which do you view as the most credible resources about fish farming and aquaculture?

- Friends or family
- Community leaders
- State officials
- University scientists
- Federal agencies, including NOAA, DNR, EPA and Army Corps of Engineers
- Environmental groups
- Other: (source _____)

9. Please indicate the extent of agreement/disagreement:

Statement	Range 1 to 10 where 1 = Strongly disagree and 10 = Strongly agree
Aquaculture production in the area can help shrink the U.S. seafood deficit.	
It will take years for aquaculture to make any significant impact on the seafood deficit.	
Farmed seafood products are raised sustainably.	
A seafood/fish farm will pollute the (rivers/lakes/aquifer/ocean) and harm native fish and aquatic life.	
A seafood farm will negatively impact the environment.	
Farmed seafood does not contain unsafe levels of contaminants.	
Seafood caught from the wild do not contain unsafe levels of contaminants.	
Seafood caught in the wild is better for the environment than farmed seafood.	
The seafood from this aquaculture facility will be safe to eat.	
I support advancement of aquaculture in the area.	
Most people in our community support advancement of aquaculture in the area.	
Aquaculture/fish farming supports local communities and economies with jobs and tax revenues.	
I have all the information I need to have an informed opinion about aquaculture.	
People in our community have all the information they need to have an informed opinion about aquaculture.	
I trust the management team/fish farmers of the facility to do the right thing.	
NOAA/DNR (i.e. government agencies) care about protecting the (i.e. aquifer/rivers/lakes/ocean) and its resources.	
I trust NOAA/DNR (i.e. government agency) to regulate aquaculture facilities/fish farmers to keep our water, environment and fish/seafood healthy.	

10. What additional questions do you have about the proposed project?

11. Do you have any further recommendations you'd like to provide about the proposed project or this CAP process?

12. Would you be interested in participating in future CAP meetings about this topic/project?

Yes ____ No ____

Thank you for completing this survey. We appreciate your feedback.

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THE CENTER FOR FOOD INTEGRITYSM

The Center for Food Integrity is a not-for-profit organization with the mission of helping today's food system earn consumer trust. CFI members and project partners, who represent the diversity of the food system, are committed to providing accurate information and working together to address important issues in food and agriculture. The Center does not lobby or advocate for individual companies or brands.

CONTACT THE CENTER FOR FOOD INTEGRITY

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