UNIVERSITY POLICY NO. 043, SERIES OF 2025

POLICY ON SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD PROCUREMENT, RESPONSIBLE AQUATIC FOOD SOURCING, AND PROTECTION OF MARINE AND FRESHWATER ECOSYSTEMS

SECTION 1. POLICY DECLARATION

Quezon City University (QCU), in fulfillment of its commitment to environmental sustainability, responsible consumption, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable development, hereby adopts this Policy on Sustainable Seafood Procurement, Responsible Aquatic Food Sourcing, and Protection of Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems.

The University recognizes that marine and freshwater ecosystems are essential to biodiversity, food security, livelihoods, climate resilience, and ecological sustainability.

The University further acknowledges that unsustainable fishing practices, illegal harvesting, habitat destruction, overfishing, pollution, and irresponsible aquaculture threaten the long-term health and productivity of aquatic ecosystems.

As a public higher education institution, QCU recognizes its responsibility to promote environmentally responsible food procurement practices that contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of aquatic resources.

Consistent with Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Life Below Water), the University shall require that seafood and other aquatic food products procured for official University activities originate from legal and responsibly managed fisheries or aquaculture operations.

QCU shall promote responsible sourcing, supplier accountability, product traceability, biodiversity protection, and compliance with applicable fisheries, food safety, environmental, and government procurement regulations.

The University shall discourage the procurement of seafood products associated with illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, destructive harvesting practices, unlawful trade in protected aquatic species, and other activities that threaten marine and freshwater ecosystems.

Where feasible and legally permissible, QCU shall encourage procurement from suppliers that demonstrate compliance with recognized sustainable fisheries or aquaculture standards.

This policy establishes the institutional framework for ensuring that aquatic food products served, sold, or distributed within University-controlled food service operations are sourced responsibly and sustainably.

SECTION 2. LEGAL AND POLICY BASES

This policy is anchored on the following legal, regulatory, and international frameworks:

2.1. The 1987 Philippine Constitution, Article II, Section 16. Recognizes the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology.

2.2. Republic Act No. 8550, or the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998, as amended by Republic Act No. 10654. Establishes the national framework for fisheries management, conservation, and protection against illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.

2.3. Republic Act No. 10611, or the Food Safety Act of 2013. Establishes requirements for the safety and quality of food products.

2.4. Republic Act No. 9147, or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act. Establishes protections for wildlife resources, including covered aquatic species.

2.5. Republic Act No. 7586, as amended by Republic Act No. 11038, or the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act. Provides for the conservation and management of protected areas and associated biodiversity.

2.6. Republic Act No. 9275, or the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004. Establishes relevant measures for protecting water quality.

2.7. Republic Act No. 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000. Establishes requirements for responsible waste management.

2.8. Republic Act No. 12009, or the New Government Procurement Act, and its applicable implementing rules and regulations. Establishes the legal framework for transparent, accountable, competitive, and sustainable government procurement.

2.9. Republic Act No. 3019, or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act. Prohibits corrupt practices involving public transactions.

2.10. Republic Act No. 6713, or the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees. Establishes ethical standards for public service.

2.11. Applicable Department of Agriculture–Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) regulations. Provide relevant fisheries conservation, licensing, product handling, and aquatic resource management requirements.

2.12. Applicable Department of Environment and Natural Resources regulations. Provide relevant requirements concerning protected species, biodiversity, and environmental conservation.

2.13. Food and Agriculture Organization Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. Provides internationally recognized principles for responsible fisheries and aquaculture management.

2.14. United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 12. Promotes responsible consumption and production.

2.15. United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14. Promotes the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas, and marine resources.

All references shall be interpreted according to their current legal effect and applicability to University operations.

SECTION 3. OBJECTIVES

3.1. General Objective

To institutionalize sustainable and responsible procurement practices for seafood and other aquatic food products served, sold, or distributed through University-controlled food service operations and activities.

3.2. Specific Objectives

This policy aims to:

1. Establish institutional standards for sustainable seafood and aquatic food procurement.
2. Promote sourcing from legal and responsibly managed fisheries and aquaculture operations.
3. Prevent procurement of aquatic food products originating from illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.
4. Protect threatened, endangered, and legally protected aquatic species.
5. Encourage suppliers to demonstrate product origin and responsible sourcing practices.
6. Promote compliance with applicable fisheries and food safety regulations.
7. Integrate appropriate sustainability requirements into University food procurement specifications.
8. Encourage the participation of qualified responsible seafood suppliers.
9. Establish supplier assessment and monitoring procedures.
10. Promote awareness of sustainable seafood consumption.
11. Support biodiversity conservation and the protection of aquatic ecosystems.
12. Monitor institutional compliance with sustainable seafood procurement requirements.
13. Strengthen QCU's contribution to SDG 14 and related sustainability objectives.

SECTION 4. SCOPE AND COVERAGE

This policy shall apply to seafood and other aquatic food products procured, served, sold, or distributed through University-controlled activities and food service arrangements, subject to applicable laws and contractual authority.

4.1. University-Funded Food Procurement

The policy shall cover seafood and aquatic food products purchased for:

a. Official University meetings and activities.

b. Academic conferences, seminars, and workshops.

c. Training and capacity-building programs.

d. University-sponsored student activities.

e. Research and extension activities.

f. Other authorized institutional events.

4.2. Catering Services

The policy shall apply to catering contracts involving seafood and aquatic food products.

4.3. Campus Food Concessionaires

Campus cafeterias, canteens, kiosks, and other food concessionaires shall comply with applicable legal and contractual sustainable sourcing requirements.

Relevant provisions shall be incorporated into new or renewed concession agreements where legally permissible.

4.4. Covered Aquatic Food Products

The policy shall cover applicable food products originating from marine and freshwater ecosystems, including:

a. Fish and fish products.

b. Shrimp and prawns.

c. Crabs and other crustaceans.

d. Shellfish and mollusks.

e. Seaweed and other edible aquatic plants.

f. Other edible aquatic organisms lawfully harvested or cultivated for human consumption.

4.5. Responsible University Offices

The policy shall apply to University offices responsible for procurement, food service management, supplier evaluation, contract administration, and environmental sustainability.

SECTION 5. DEFINITION OF TERMS

5.1. Sustainable Seafood refers to seafood originating from fisheries or aquaculture operations managed in ways that support the long-term conservation of aquatic resources and minimize adverse environmental impacts.

5.2. Responsible Aquatic Food Sourcing refers to procurement that considers the legality, environmental sustainability, traceability, and responsible production of aquatic food products.

5.3. Sustainable Fisheries refers to fisheries managed to maintain fish populations, protect ecosystems, and support long-term resource availability.

5.4. Responsible Aquaculture refers to aquatic food production practices that comply with applicable laws and appropriately manage environmental, animal health, and social impacts.

5.5. Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing (IUU Fishing) refers to fishing activities falling within the categories recognized under applicable Philippine fisheries laws and relevant international frameworks.

5.6. Product Traceability refers to the ability to identify and document relevant information concerning the origin and movement of seafood products through the supply chain.

5.7. Protected Aquatic Species refers to aquatic organisms subject to applicable legal restrictions on harvesting, possession, transport, sale, or trade.

5.8. Sustainable Seafood Certification refers to independent certification or assessment under an established fisheries or aquaculture sustainability standard.

5.9. Supplier Compliance refers to adherence to applicable legal, technical, environmental, food safety, and contractual requirements.

5.10. Aquatic Ecosystem refers to a marine, coastal, freshwater, or other water-based ecological system supporting aquatic organisms and related environmental processes.

SECTION 6. GENERAL POLICY GUIDELINES

6.1. Commitment to Sustainable Seafood Procurement

QCU shall promote the procurement of seafood and aquatic food products originating from legal and responsibly managed fisheries or aquaculture operations.

6.2. Prohibition of Illegally Sourced Seafood

The University shall not knowingly procure seafood products originating from illegal fishing, prohibited harvesting activities, or unlawful trade.

6.3. Protection of Threatened and Endangered Species

QCU shall prohibit the procurement of aquatic species whose commercial harvest, possession, transport, or sale is prohibited by applicable laws.

Where restrictions or conservation concerns are identified, the University shall require appropriate verification before procurement.

6.4. Responsible Supplier Selection

Suppliers shall comply with applicable fisheries, food safety, environmental, and procurement regulations.

6.5. Product Origin and Traceability

Where appropriate and proportionate, seafood suppliers shall provide relevant information concerning:

a. Species or product identification.

b. Source or place of origin.

c. Whether the product is wild-caught or farm-raised.

d. Relevant supplier or distributor information.

e. Applicable permits, licenses, or certifications.

f. Other information necessary to verify legal and responsible sourcing.

6.6. Sustainable Wild-Caught Fisheries

The University shall encourage seafood procurement from fisheries operating in accordance with applicable conservation and fisheries management requirements.

6.7. Responsible Aquaculture

QCU shall encourage the procurement of farm-raised aquatic products from aquaculture operations demonstrating appropriate environmental and food safety practices.

6.8. Recognition of Sustainability Certifications

Where relevant and legally appropriate, the University may recognize credible sustainability certification frameworks, including:

a. Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification for eligible wild-caught fisheries.

b. Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) certification for eligible aquaculture products.

c. Other credible fisheries or aquaculture sustainability standards.

Equivalent evidence of responsible sourcing may be accepted where appropriate and consistent with applicable procurement rules.

Certification shall not automatically be required where doing so would be disproportionate or unlawfully restrict competition.

6.9. Environmental Responsibility

The University shall encourage suppliers to minimize adverse impacts on aquatic ecosystems, including habitat destruction, pollution, excessive resource use, and other harmful practices.

6.10. Sustainable Seafood Menu Planning

University-funded catering activities shall be encouraged to use responsibly sourced aquatic food products.

Where seafood origin cannot be adequately verified, the requesting office may consider alternative products that meet the University's nutritional, operational, and procurement requirements.

6.11. Food Safety and Quality

All aquatic food products shall comply with applicable food safety, handling, storage, transportation, and sanitation requirements.

6.12. Fair and Transparent Procurement

Supplier selection shall follow applicable government procurement laws and regulations.

Sustainability requirements shall be objectively defined, relevant, proportionate, and verifiable.

6.13. Supplier Accountability

Suppliers shall be responsible for complying with approved technical specifications and contractual sourcing requirements.

6.14. Prevention of Misleading Sustainability Claims

Unsupported claims that seafood is sustainably harvested, responsibly farmed, environmentally friendly, or certified shall not automatically be accepted as evidence of compliance.

6.15. Continuous Improvement

QCU shall periodically review seafood procurement practices and identify opportunities for strengthening sustainable sourcing.

SECTION 7. SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD PROCUREMENT STANDARDS

QCU shall establish appropriate sourcing requirements for covered aquatic food products.

7.1. Legal Source Verification

Suppliers shall demonstrate compliance with applicable fisheries and trade regulations.

7.2. Species Identification

Where relevant, procurement specifications shall identify the seafood species or acceptable product categories.

7.3. Source Documentation

Suppliers shall provide appropriate information concerning the origin of seafood products when required by approved procurement specifications or contracts.

7.4. Fisheries Sustainability

Wild-caught products shall originate from lawful fisheries and should, where feasible, be sourced from operations demonstrating responsible fisheries management.

7.5. Aquaculture Sustainability

Farm-raised products shall originate from lawful aquaculture operations that comply with applicable environmental and food safety requirements.

7.6. Protected Species Exclusion

Products originating from prohibited harvesting or unlawful trade in protected aquatic species shall not be accepted.

7.7. Food Safety Compliance

Suppliers shall comply with relevant food safety, sanitation, storage, and transportation requirements.

7.8. Supplier Ethical Conduct

Suppliers shall comply with applicable anti-corruption, labor, environmental, and procurement requirements.

SECTION 8. SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES

8.1. Identification of Procurement Requirements

The requesting office shall identify the type, quantity, quality, and intended use of seafood products.

8.2. Development of Procurement Specifications

Appropriate legal sourcing, product identification, food safety, and sustainability requirements shall be incorporated into procurement specifications.

8.3. Supplier Evaluation

Suppliers shall be evaluated using applicable government procurement criteria and approved technical requirements.

8.4. Verification of Relevant Documentation

The responsible office shall verify required supplier documents, permits, product information, and other relevant compliance records.

8.5. Contract Award

Procurement contracts shall be awarded according to applicable procurement laws and institutional procedures.

8.6. Delivery and Inspection

Delivered aquatic food products shall be inspected for compliance with approved specifications, food safety requirements, and relevant sourcing documentation.

8.7. Supplier Performance Monitoring

The designated office shall monitor supplier compliance with relevant contractual obligations.

8.8. Corrective Action

Identified noncompliance shall be addressed through appropriate contract administration, rejection of nonconforming products, or other lawful remedies.

8.9. Procurement Review

The University shall periodically review sustainable seafood procurement implementation and identify opportunities for improvement.

SECTION 9. CAMPUS FOOD CONCESSIONAIRE REQUIREMENTS

9.1. Sustainable Sourcing Commitment

Campus food concessionaires shall be required, through applicable concession agreements and implementing guidelines, to observe relevant legal and responsible seafood sourcing requirements.

9.2. Compliance with Fisheries and Food Safety Regulations

Concessionaires shall not knowingly purchase or serve illegally sourced aquatic food products.

9.3. Product Traceability

Where appropriate, concessionaires shall maintain reasonable supplier and product sourcing documentation.

9.4. Protected Species Compliance

Concessionaires shall not serve aquatic species whose commercial sale or consumption is prohibited by applicable law.

9.5. Environmental Responsibility

Concessionaires shall be encouraged to minimize seafood waste, packaging waste, and other avoidable environmental impacts.

9.6. Monitoring

The designated University office shall conduct appropriate monitoring of concessionaire compliance.

9.7. Corrective Action

Violations shall be addressed in accordance with applicable concession agreements and institutional procedures.

SECTION 10. SUPPLIER CODE OF RESPONSIBLE AQUATIC FOOD SOURCING

QCU shall establish appropriate supplier commitments addressing:

1. Compliance with fisheries laws.
2. Prohibition of illegal seafood sourcing.
3. Protection of legally restricted aquatic species.
4. Appropriate product traceability.
5. Food safety and sanitation.
6. Responsible aquaculture practices.
7. Environmental protection.
8. Ethical business conduct.
9. Accurate product representations.
10. Cooperation with authorized compliance verification.

These commitments shall be incorporated into relevant procurement or contractual documents where legally appropriate.

SECTION 11. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

11.1. Office of the University President

The Office of the University President shall provide overall institutional leadership, policy direction, and oversight.

11.2. Office of the Vice President for Administration or Equivalent Office

The designated administrative office shall oversee implementation and coordination of sustainable seafood procurement requirements.

11.3. Procurement Office

The Procurement Office shall:

a. Support the integration of authorized sourcing requirements into procurement documents.

b. Maintain relevant procurement records.

c. Coordinate supplier compliance documentation.

d. Support procurement monitoring and reporting.

11.4. Bids and Awards Committee

The Bids and Awards Committee shall perform its functions in accordance with applicable government procurement laws and regulations.

11.5. Requesting Offices

Requesting offices shall identify appropriate seafood requirements and prepare relevant technical specifications.

11.6. Campus Food Concessionaire Management Office

The designated office shall monitor relevant concessionaire compliance with food safety, sourcing, and contractual requirements.

11.7. Sustainability or Environmental Management Office

The designated sustainability office or focal unit shall support environmental education, monitoring, and sustainable seafood awareness initiatives.

11.8. Finance and Budget Office

The designated finance office shall support appropriate financial planning and compliance with applicable government financial regulations.

11.9. Legal Office or Equivalent Unit

The designated legal office shall provide guidance concerning applicable procurement, fisheries, environmental, and contractual requirements.

11.10. Suppliers and Concessionaires

Suppliers and concessionaires shall comply with applicable laws and approved contractual obligations.

SECTION 12. MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

QCU shall establish appropriate indicators for monitoring sustainable seafood procurement.

Performance indicator	Measurement or monitoring requirement
Sustainable seafood procurement policy	Approved and publicly accessible institutional policy
Covered seafood procurement activities	Number and percentage assessed against applicable sourcing requirements
Supplier legal compliance	Number of suppliers with verified required documentation
Product traceability	Number or percentage of covered purchases with appropriate sourcing records
Sustainable sourcing provisions	Number of contracts containing relevant sourcing requirements
Protected species compliance	Documented checks for applicable legal restrictions
Campus concessionaire compliance	Number of concessionaires reviewed
Supplier corrective actions	Number and disposition of identified sourcing deficiencies
Sustainable seafood awareness	Number of educational or information activities
Annual implementation review	Completion of annual sustainable seafood procurement review

Monitoring results shall distinguish verified compliance from supplier declarations and unverified sustainability claims.

SECTION 13. ANNUAL SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD PROCUREMENT REVIEW

The designated coordinating office shall conduct an annual review of implementation.

The review shall examine:

1. Seafood procurement activities.
2. Supplier compliance documentation.
3. Product origin and traceability records.
4. Applicable fisheries and food safety compliance.
5. Campus concessionaire practices.
6. Identified sourcing risks.
7. Corrective actions undertaken.
8. Sustainable seafood awareness initiatives.
9. Opportunities for strengthening procurement requirements.
10. Recommendations for institutional improvement.

An Annual Sustainable Seafood Procurement Implementation Report shall be prepared for institutional review.

SECTION 14. DOCUMENTATION AND RECORDKEEPING

QCU shall maintain appropriate documentation demonstrating implementation of this policy.

Relevant records may include:

1. Approved Sustainable Seafood Procurement Policy.
2. Relevant procurement plans.
3. Seafood procurement technical specifications.
4. Supplier eligibility and compliance records.
5. Product origin and traceability documentation.
6. Applicable fisheries permits or certifications.
7. Supplier declarations of responsible sourcing.
8. Catering contracts.
9. Campus concessionaire agreements.
10. Delivery and inspection reports.
11. Supplier performance evaluations.
12. Sustainable seafood awareness materials.
13. Annual Sustainable Seafood Procurement Implementation Reports.

Records shall be maintained in accordance with applicable government procurement, auditing, records management, and data privacy requirements.

SECTION 15. EDUCATION, AWARENESS, AND CAPACITY BUILDING

QCU shall promote awareness of sustainable seafood consumption and aquatic ecosystem conservation.

Activities may include:

a. Sustainable seafood procurement orientation for relevant personnel.

b. Environmental sustainability seminars.

c. Awareness campaigns concerning illegal fishing and aquatic biodiversity conservation.

d. Student educational activities supporting SDG 14.

e. Responsible consumption campaigns.

f. Collaboration with appropriate fisheries and environmental organizations.

g. Integration of relevant sustainability concepts into research, instruction, and extension activities.

SECTION 16. INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Where appropriate, QCU may coordinate with relevant government agencies, educational institutions, and environmental organizations to strengthen sustainable seafood procurement practices.

Potential partners may include:

a. Department of Agriculture–Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

b. Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

c. Quezon City Government.

d. Appropriate fisheries and aquaculture organizations.

e. Recognized environmental and sustainability organizations.

f. Other relevant public and private institutions.

Such partnerships shall comply with applicable laws and institutional procedures.

SECTION 17. FUNDING AND RESOURCE SUPPORT

Implementation of this policy shall be supported through appropriate University resources, subject to approved budgets and applicable government financial and procurement regulations.

Relevant sustainable sourcing measures shall be incorporated into procurement planning and budgeting where appropriate.

SECTION 18. COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

All concerned University offices, personnel, suppliers, and concessionaires shall comply with applicable laws and approved contractual requirements.

Noncompliance shall be addressed through appropriate administrative, contractual, or legal procedures.

No provision of this policy shall authorize procurement practices inconsistent with applicable government procurement regulations.

SECTION 19. POLICY DISSEMINATION AND PUBLIC ACCESS

Upon approval, this policy shall be disseminated to all relevant University offices, procurement personnel, campus food concessionaires, and stakeholders.

The policy shall be made publicly accessible through the official Quezon City University website and other appropriate institutional communication platforms.

SECTION 20. POLICY REVIEW AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

This policy shall be reviewed at least once every three (3) years, or earlier when warranted by changes in applicable fisheries laws, procurement regulations, environmental standards, or institutional sustainability requirements.

The designated coordinating office shall conduct an annual implementation review.

Proposed amendments shall be submitted through appropriate University approval procedures.

SECTION 21. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE

If any provision of this policy is declared invalid or unenforceable by competent authority, the remaining provisions shall continue in full force and effect.

SECTION 22. REPEALING AND AMENDING CLAUSE

All existing University policies, memoranda, guidelines, and procedures inconsistent with this policy shall be reviewed and, where appropriate, amended or superseded in accordance with applicable institutional procedures.

SECTION 23. EFFECTIVITY

This policy shall take effect upon approval by the University President, subject to any additional approval requirements under applicable laws, University governance rules, and institutional procedures.

All concerned University offices shall undertake the necessary measures for its dissemination, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

APPROVED BY:

DR. THERESITA V. ATIENZA
University President

Date Approved: July 07, 2025

Cc: *Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs*
Office of the Vice President for Administration and Finance
Records Management Office