



A ROADMAP FOR ADVANCING AQUACULTURE'S SOCIAL LICENSE TO OPERATE

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Introduction

With the rising demand for seafood, aquaculture has become critically important in meeting global food needs. Growing at a rate of 6.7% annually, aquaculture landings have surpassed wild-catch fisheries, with farm-raised seafood accounting for over 50% of seafood consumed (NOAA 2024; FAO 2022). Aquaculture presents important opportunities for sustainably alleviating food insecurity, combating climate change through nitrogen mitigation, creating economic opportunities, improving wild fish stocks, and more (NOAA 2024)—yet in many places, development efforts are often met with resistance from the public (Flaherty et al. 2019; Fong et al. 2022; Ford et al. 2022; Grunert 2005; Hynes et al. 2018; Knapp and Rubino 2016; Krovel et al. 2019; Schlag 2011; Young and Liston 2010). Opponents have been successful in efforts to delay aquaculture permitting, limit expansion opportunities, and in extreme cases, block aquaculture development altogether (Young and Liston 2010; Bacher 2015; Anderson 2013; Hargreaves 2017; Alexander et al. 2018; Flaherty et al. 2018).

Social license is important for aquaculture farmers.

While reasons for this opposition are varied and depend on both farm and community characteristics and context (Whitmore et al. 2022a), it is clear that securing social license to operate (SLO)—a term describing the informal, ongoing approval or acceptance of a project granted by the community—is important for sustaining future growth. SLO, while complex, is based on earned trust. Farmers earn that trust through communication, responsible operating

practices, and by providing meaningful community benefits (Whitmore et al. 2025). These practices are considered social license work, or the various deliberate practices undertaken by businesses to obtain or maintain their social license (Whitmore et al. 2025).

Considering SLO is dynamic and is constantly reevaluated by community members, farmers must do social license work continuously to obtain and maintain SLO. Lastly, SLO exists on a continuum, ranging from withdrawn or withheld, to full social license, or co-ownership, at which point the community psychologically identifies with the activity, like a “fishing town” (Thomson and Boutilier 2011). It is important to note that lack of opposition is not indicative of having any degree of social license (Owen and Kemp 2013). Social license requires active community support

There are several important benefits for farmers who prioritize earning social license. First, farmers consider social license work an upstream approach to managing social opposition. Considering the general public knows very little about aquaculture (Alexander et al. 2016; Barrington et al. 2010; Mazur and Curtis 2006; Murray et al. 2017; Robertson et al. 2002; Thomas et al. 2018; Whitmore et al. 2022b; Maccaroni et al. 2024), a proposed farm may be the first time many community members are forming opinions about aquaculture. By building relationships, answering questions, and listening to and responding to concerns, farmers are able to reduce potential opposition that can stem from uncertainty

rooted in lack of understanding. Social license also has protective benefits (Thomson and Boutilier 2011; Whitmore et al. 2025). In individual cases, there is evidence that community members who approve of their local farm will actively protect that farm, like alerting the owner if something on the farmsite is amiss (Whitmore et al. 2025). If co-ownership is reached, communities can become advocates and defenders of the industry, like fighting for industry-friendly regulations (Thomson and Boutilier 2011).

Social license work requires significant time and effort from farmers.

While the benefits of gaining social license are clear, it is also clear that the process of social license work requires significant time and effort from farmers—many of whom are already at capacity dealing with the daily challenges of owning and operating a business. Of course, this varies depending on the makeup of the operation, but in all cases, the process of gaining social license requires work that—while necessary—does not instantly result in capital gains for their business, making it difficult to prioritize. Support for farmers in their social license work, then, could be incredibly valuable to business owners. However, it is clear that farmers are the best suited to build their own social license—so how do supporting actors go about providing support? This project seeks to answer this question, highlighting concrete ways that supporting actors can contribute to social license and outlining an industry-wide approach.

Efforts to increase positive public perceptions and how that relates to social license.

Much of the work done by supporting actors aims to increase positive public perceptions of aquaculture. Public perceptions, or social acceptability, refers to broad trends in public opinion, not linked to a specific farm. Social license, on the other hand, is focused on relational elements between a specific farm and their community. While the concepts differ, they are related through individual experience. Positive experiences, generated through individual farm's social license work, can increase both social license and positive public perceptions. Positive public perceptions can, in turn, make it easier for new farms to gain social license if they are entering into a community that is already receptive. Keeping this in mind, it is clear that work to increase positive public perceptions can be a form of social license work.

Several studies in the US highlight that public perceptions are related to aquaculture literacy. Specifically, familiarity with or knowledge of aquaculture has been linked to positive public perceptions (Kaiser and Stead 2002; Robertson et al. 2002; Barrington et al. 2010; Thomas et al. 2018; Bouchard et al. 2021; Shaugnessy et al. 2023; Maccaroni et al. 2024). Thus, advocacy efforts are often centered around increasing aquaculture literacy and raising awareness about aquaculture (NOAA 2024). The need for this is underscored by research that has consistently found low levels of knowledge and awareness of aquaculture (Alexander et al. 2016; Barrington et al. 2010; Mazur and Curtis 2006; Murray et al. 2017; Robertson et al. 2002; Thomas et al. 2018; Whitmore et al. 2022a; Maccaroni et al. 2024). So although these efforts are working to influence public perceptions, they are still important to consider in a sector-wide approach to social license.

An industry-wide approach to building social license



The intention of this project is to outline a sector-wide approach to generating social license. First and foremost, farmers must be invested in building their own social license, and this document presents findings from a corresponding project that outlines practical ways that farmers can go about building trust and earning social license from their communities. Second, this project illuminates how supporting actors can also contribute to building social license and increasing positive public perceptions of the industry. A layered approach that engages a vast array of actors is necessary in gaining both local and broad support for the industry. This roadmap will provide a high-level approach to addressing social license for the aquaculture industry based on input from hundreds of stakeholders and farmers on the east and west coast of the US.

Methods

This roadmap is a compilation of several data streams, the first of which is from a Social License to Operate Knowledge Exchange Panel. The Knowledge Exchange Panel was created to help inform the development of the roadmap, and included key aquaculture industry leaders, stakeholders, and researchers who have experience with social license. Participants with biographies are listed in Appendix A. The group met virtually in July 2020, April 2021, and May 2021. At these meetings, members of the panel were asked to identify key actors related to social license, their target audiences, and specific action items that could help advance social license. Additionally, they were tasked with identifying any tools, resources, and support that the actors would need to carry out action items. Notes from each meeting were compiled and summarized to be incorporated into this report.

The second data stream was from a related, but independent project investigating how Maine shellfish and seaweed farmers build social license. We conducted 30 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with aquaculture farmers from across the state. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and then thematically coded. Results from this project were integrated into an industry guidebook that outlines practical ways of earning community support.

Results were also incorporated in this Roadmap. For more detailed methods for this project, see [A Guide for Shellfish and Seaweed Farmers in Maine: Working towards social license to operate](#).

Lastly, this Roadmap was informed by a series of workshops held in 2023 and 2024. The workshops are outlined in Table 1. In total, there were an estimated 415 participants. At each workshop, participants were seated in small groups and given a set of prompts to discuss. In some cases, there were designated facilitators who also took notes on the provided worksheets. In other cases, we asked that each group designate a participant to facilitate and another to take notes.



For most workshops, small groups were assigned a supporting actor (eg. municipalities, retailers, aquaria) and were asked questions about how that group could help to generate social license both directly and indirectly. Groups were asked to identify specific tasks. While most of the discussion questions for each workshop were similar, there was some variation depending on the composition of participants. For example, the Sea Grant Aquaculture Academy Workshop was primarily composed of Sea Grant extension agents. For this reason, all discussion questions focused on the role of extension agents in building social license for aquaculture.

All worksheets were collected at the end of the workshop and results were summarized. In several workshops, participants provided contact information and were sent the resulting summaries. These participants were also encouraged to provide feedback or additional details. The summaries and any additional feedback from participants informed this roadmap.



Table 1. SLO Workshops

Workshop Host	State	Year	Est. Participants
Seaweed Symposium	Maine	2023	200
Maine Aquaculture Summit	Maine	2023	35
Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association Meeting	Oregon	2023	50
California Sea Grant Aquaculture Industry Meeting	California	2023	80
Northeast Aquaculture Conference and Exposition	Rhode Island	2024	25
Sea Grant Aquaculture Academy	New Hampshire	2024	25

Results

Direct vs. Indirect Social License Work

Once results from all three datastreams were compiled, it was evident that there are two forms of social license work undertaken by aquaculture stakeholders. One form influences SLO directly, where the actions seek to increase social license for a specific project/farm. The other form influences SLO indirectly, where the actions seek to increase positive public perceptions of aquaculture, which can in turn, make it easier for aquaculture farmers to gain social license (see Figure 1). Examples of direct social license work include advocating for a specific farm (by the farmer or others), amplifying farmers' voices, and connecting farmers to community members by coordinating events or establishing partnerships. Examples of indirect social license work include aquaculture education, abiding by all food safety standards (for restaurants, distributors, wholesalers, etc.), providing funding for social license activities, and building trust in regulatory agencies. The following sections will outline both direct and indirect social license work for aquaculture farmers and other key social license agents in an effort to provide a layered, multi-stakeholder approach to building social license for aquaculture.

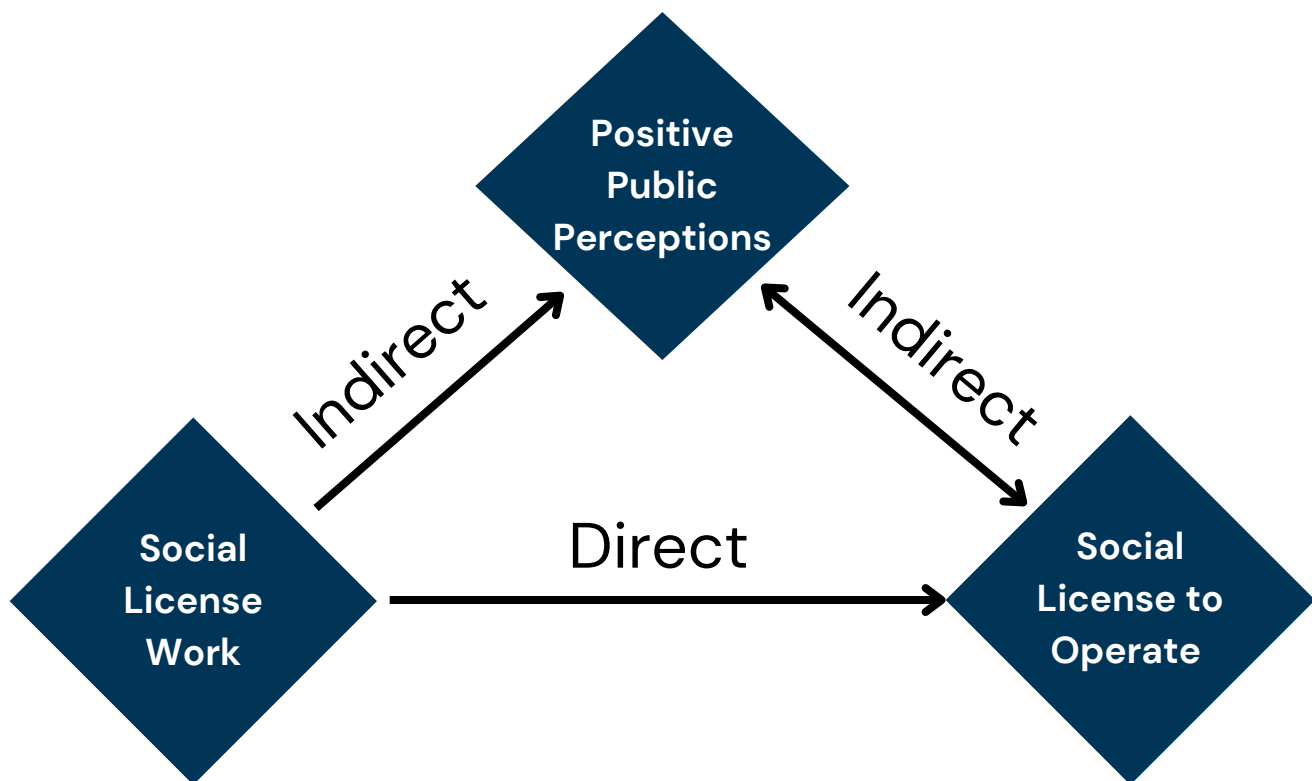


Figure 1. Direct vs. Indirect Social License Work

Primary SLO Actor

Aquaculture Farmers

For aquaculture, farmers are the primary social license actor—meaning that they are the most effective at building their social license. So how do farmers go about building social license with their communities?



Getting started in 3 steps

1 Determine your stakeholders

Farmers should cast a wide net when determining their stakeholder network. Neglecting groups, whether intentional or not, can be detrimental to gaining a community's trust (Thomson and Boutilier 2011). Identifying stakeholders is easier when you are from the community you are sitting in. If the farmer is new to the area, rely on gatekeepers—or members of the community who are well connected and can provide guidance on who to connect with—in helping identify stakeholders. Common gatekeepers identified by farmers are other aquaculture farmers, harbormasters, and fishermen.

2 Stakeholder outreach

Farmers should reach out to stakeholders BEFORE any formal notices are sent out. It's important to establish the line of communication early, so that if community members have questions, they can approach the farmer directly. This reduces the spread of misinformation and prevents community members from feeling like plans were made without their input. Though flying under the radar is tempting, it is not worth the risk. Social license requires active support, so the public should be informed and engaged. Farmers should tell their story, be transparent with plans, and show that they are thinking about how their operations will affect the community.

3 Two-way communication

It's important that farmers show that they are listening, rather than just informing stakeholders of plans. Farmers should never be dismissive of stakeholder concerns, even if they feel that their concerns are unwarranted. In fact, responding to concerns and making reasonable accommodations can help generate trust with stakeholders. Changes made based on public input is tangible evidence that a farmer cares about other users and is going to be a good neighbor. Even small changes can make a big difference.

Primary SLO Actor

Aquaculture Farmers

Generating Trust

Earning social license is a result of ongoing efforts to build trust with your stakeholders (Thomson and Boutilier 2011; Lacey et al. 2012; Moffat and Zhang 2014). According to Maine shellfish and seaweed farmers, there are three main avenues for trust building: communication efforts, operational farm practices, and providing meaningful community benefits. For communication, trust building occurs when farmers are consistently honest and transparent with community members, when they make reasonable changes to their farm based on community feedback, and when they communicate with the community beyond what is legally mandated by the permitting process.

Operational practices that help to build trust are keeping a tidy farm, which includes being mindful of hazards to others and keeping track of lost gear; being visible in the community, whether that be through the use of shared access points, being seen working hard on the farm by riparian landowners, or being out in the community at events; and abiding by regulations, like properly marking the farm site. Farmers can also try to reduce impacts through gear choice, noise reduction strategies, and site layout.



Communication

- Voluntary communication
- Consulting & making accommodations
- Honesty & transparency



Operational Practices

- Keeping a tidy farm
- Reducing impacts
- Being visible
- Abiding by regulations



Community Benefits

- Using product to connect
- Filling community needs
- Helping others
- Being a good employer

Lastly, providing meaningful community benefits—in ways that are unique to the community's needs—is an important trust generating practice. One practice widely used by farmers in Maine is to connect with community members through the product itself. This included selling to local businesses, selling at community events, or providing discounted or free product to neighbors. Other trust generating community benefits include filling community needs, including serving on committees or getting involved in local schools, being willing to help others out on the water, like giving someone a tow or returning lost beach toys to neighbors, and being a good employer.

Supporting SLO Actors

Supporting SLO actors are non-farmer aquaculture stakeholders who can play a role in generating social license. Social license work for supporting SLO actors is primarily indirect, meaning that they can help farmers generate social license within their communities by raising positive public perceptions of aquaculture. Yet in some cases, as identified in the following sections, certain supporting SLO actors can contribute to social license directly. Table 2 outlines key supporting SLO actors as identified by workshop participants. The following sections outline specific tasks for each supporting SLO actor/group that can help to build social license.

Supporting SLO Actor/Group	Examples
Value-chain	Restaurant owners, chefs, distributors, wholesalers, processors, suppliers
NGOs (non-industry)	Environmental NGOs, community groups, Aquaria
Educators	Secondary and post-secondary educators, science educators,
Municipalities / tribes	town government, tribal government
Researchers/Research Institutions	Universities, independent researchers
Trade Associations	National, regional, state, or local growers association
Regulatory Agencies	Federal, state or municipal agencies charged with regulating aquaculture operations
Extension Agents	Sea Grant, Cooperative Extension

Value-Chain Groups: Food Service Industry

The food service industry can play an important role in bolstering social license and in raising awareness about farmed products more generally. Considering the local food movement has brought with it increased public attention to how and where food is produced, restaurants that offer local seafood are uniquely positioned to bridge farms and consumers. Workshop and knowledge exchange panel participants outlined several ways that the food service industry can build social license and increase positive perceptions of the aquaculture sector:



Tasks

Amplify Farmers' Voices

Restaurant personnel can help build social license for farms by amplifying farmer's voices. This can be accomplished through social media (i.e. sharing farmers' posts), by hosting events where the farmer is present and is able to interface with the public about the product, or by including QR codes, table hats, or other resources for customers that connect them with the farms that they feature.

Education

The food service industry can also help to educate the public on farmed products through events with chefs, or tableside conversations with wait staff. Workshop participants suggested that messages be focused on quality of product and how it is locally produced. Restaurants could make sure to highlight farmed products on the menu.

Food Safety

Restaurant personnel can follow best practices for food safety to prevent illnesses resulting from improper handling of seafood products.

Value-Chain Groups:

Distributors, Wholesalers, Grocery Stores

Markets or grocery stores of any size can also help build social license and raise aquaculture literacy by connecting the farm to the consumer and by providing signage or educational materials with digestible information for the greater public. Distributors and wholesalers can also provide information and materials to their buyers who can pass that information along to consumers.



Amplify Farmers' Voices

Distributors/wholesalers/grocery can help build social license for farms by amplifying farmer's voices. This can be accomplished through social media (i.e. sharing farmers' posts), or by including QR codes or other resources for customers that connect them with the farms that they feature.

Education

Distributors and wholesalers can provide information to their buyers on where the product comes from, how it was grown, and the producer. The buyer can then provide that information to the consumer.

Food Safety

Distributors/wholesalers/grocery can follow best practices for food safety to prevent illnesses resulting from improper handling of seafood products.

NGOs (non-industry)

Non-government Organizations (NGOs) can be a powerful advocate for aquaculture because they often have wide-reaching, diverse audiences.

Tasks



Education

The primary avenue through which NGOs can contribute to improved public perceptions is education. NGOs can develop resource materials, industry training, public demonstrations, media content (including film and social media content), and curricula. NGOs can also be a resource for information, translating and communicating research to those seeking information about aquaculture. Lastly, NGOs have the ability to coordinate events that can bring aquaculture to the public.

Advocacy for Farms

NGOs can provide letters of support for proposed farms that align with their priorities.

Amplify Farmers' Voices

NGOs can help to amplify farmers voices by sharing farmers' social media content and featuring farmers voices in their own media.

Funding

NGOs can be a funding source for farmers, organizations, and researchers for social license related projects/initiatives.

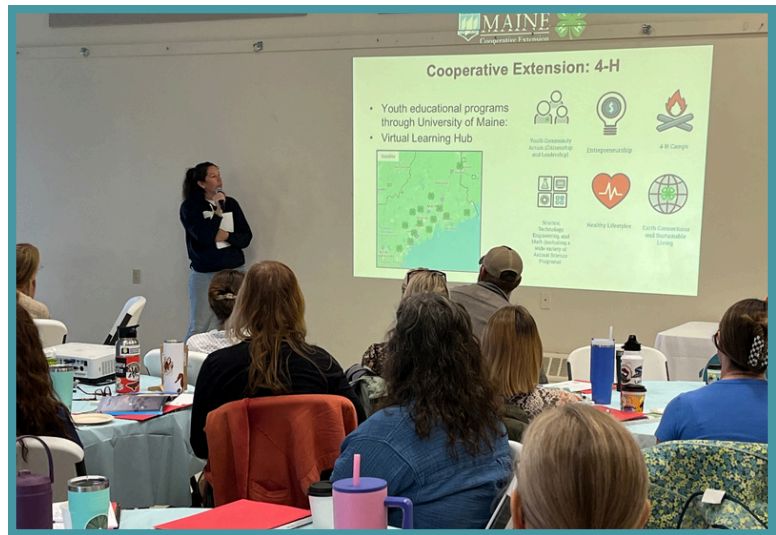
Partnerships

A key role of NGOs is to facilitate partnerships between industry members, tribal leaders, educators, researchers, and other stakeholder groups. They can also help facilitate industry collaboration/ cooperatives.

Educators

K-12, college & technical schools

Educators have an important role to play in raising awareness about aquaculture, which can in turn, help farmers earn social license from their communities. Community members who are aware and informed can better participate in meaningful conversations about aquaculture in their area, and will have a foundation of knowledge that can reduce the formation of fear-based opinions. Classroom education can diffuse into the broader communities when students bring home what they learn and talk to their families about aquaculture.



Education

Educators can incorporate aquaculture programming for any age group to increase knowledge and awareness. They can incorporate hands-on-experiences like farm visits, or bring farmers to the classroom to speak. They can also help facilitate or support internship or volunteer opportunities at the high school level.

Partnerships

Educators can create partnerships with farmers to provide internship or research opportunities.

Municipalities

Coastal municipalities can help to increase awareness of aquaculture by facilitating community discussions about aquaculture planning and development, and planning community events that incorporate aquaculture. They can also support aquaculture businesses or businesses that carry aquaculture products.



Event Coordination

Municipalities play a convening role between the general public and aquaculture farmers. Specific events that could help boost awareness of farms and aquaculture more broadly are chamber of commerce events, tours, festivals, and farmers markets.

Business Support

Municipalities can actively support aquaculture businesses or businesses that carry aquaculture products.

Education

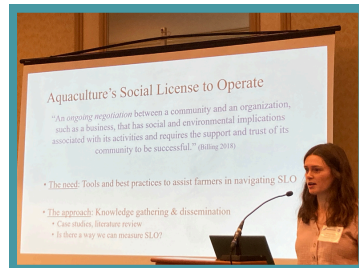
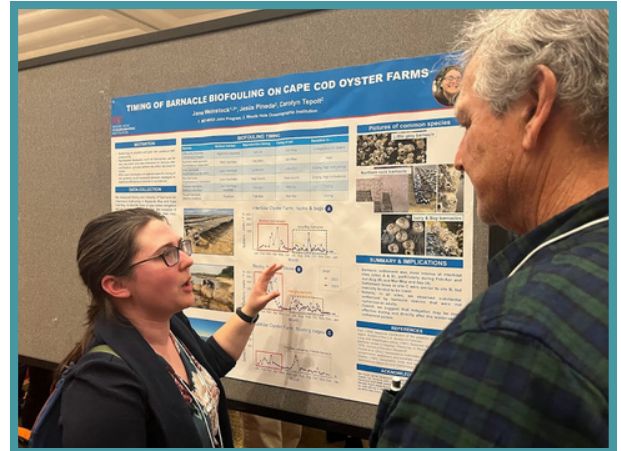
Municipalities can help to passively educate the public through coastal signage that has information about aquaculture activity. They can also hold workshops and encourage industry participation.

Facilitate Discussions

Municipalities can also help to facilitate community discussions surrounding aquaculture planning and development. Coastal communities in particular can facilitate discussion about aquaculture during comprehensive planning exercises.

Researchers & Research Institutions

Researchers and Research Institutions play an important role in knowledge formation, research communication, and working with industry members and community members to identify research needs.



Knowledge Production

Researchers can work with industry and community members to identify areas of research and lead research projects. They can also contribute to the body of research investigating social license to operate for aquaculture, which is still limited.

Research Communication

Researchers can put effort into communicating results to the industry and the general public. They can connect with extension, tribes, communities, do presentations, and utilize social media. "Science on tap" events are effective. Results need to be translated for broader audiences. Researchers can contribute to conversations about aquaculture without being "advocates" by delivering science objectively.

Partnerships

Researchers should collaborate with farmers and communities in their research to identify barriers/solve problems/address gaps.

Industry Trade Associations

Aquaculture industry trade associations are well versed in supporting industry members. They can play a key role in building social license for individual farms and in increasing positive perceptions of the aquaculture industry more broadly.



Tasks

Advocacy for Farms

Trade associations can advocate for farmers by providing comments and letters of support during the leasing process.

Amplify Farmers' Voices

Trade associations can spotlight farm profiles on social media, share media content posted by farmers, and tell farmers' stories.

Funding

Trade associations can work to provide grant funding for farmers to help cover costs associated with social license, or they can assist farmers in applying for grant funding.

Partnerships

Trade associations can help facilitate collaboration and partnerships between groups (examples included realtors, local safety and permitting, tourism boards, food service industry, and tribes).

Education

Education – Farmers

Trade Associations can provide education to farmers so that they are better equipped to engage with their communities and build social license. Specific examples included providing farmers with social media training, giving guidance on navigating social situations, educating farmers on engaging with tribal communities, and promoting best practices to help prevent bad actors.

Education – Community

Trade Associations also play a role in educating communities about aquaculture. Associations can do this by creating educational materials catered to different groups (eg. handouts for realtors), by creating educational resources that can be distributed to the community by farmers, by putting aquaculture gear and signage in accessible areas that are visible to the public, by posting on social media channels, and by hosting/attending events. Trade associations can also help to educate local and state-level officials so that they make more informed policy decisions.

Regulatory Agencies

Regulatory agencies can play a role in building social license for aquaculture. Research has shown that places with higher trust in regulating agencies are more likely to issue social license (Mazur and Curtis 2006; Moffat et al. 2016). Regulating agencies can build trust by increasing transparency, streamlining messaging, and educating the public on regulatory requirements.



Education

Regulatory agencies can play an active role in public education about aquaculture and aquaculture regulations. It is important that Agencies remain objective and follow the data, but Agencies could also expand the focus beyond just negative impacts to incorporate documented ecosystem benefits. This engagement and education could be accomplished via listening sessions or other methods of outreach. This engagement would help to decrease uncertainty and dispel myths. Agencies could also provide more information about the permitting process and how to get involved as a member of the public and clarify mitigation measures, as well as monitoring and reporting requirements associated with an aquaculture operation. Finally, regulatory agencies could play a proactive role in educating farmers about good social license practices or referring farmers to organizations that can. Regulatory Agencies can also play a key role in encouraging industry development by

Increase Transparency

Agencies can help improve social license for farmers by increasing public confidence in regulations. To do this, agencies should publicize the ways that they are ensuring public and environmental safety, and clearly communicate regulations and requirements to demonstrate how producers are vetted. They can also build industry and public trust by consistently relaying the science that new and existing regulations are based on.

Partnerships

Agencies can increase inter-agency collaboration and can also help to facilitate interactions between farmers and the public.

Consistent Messaging

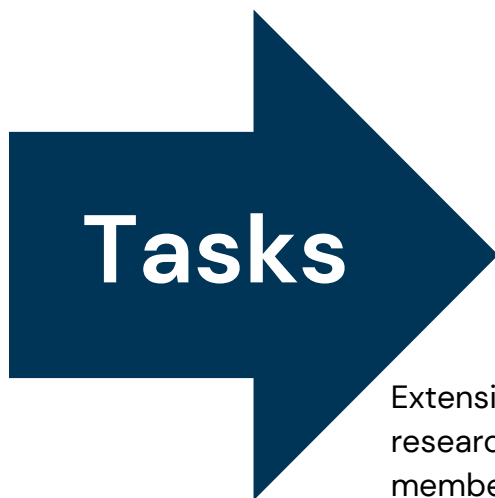
Regulatory agencies can work to streamline messaging across agencies. This would help with building a consistent public image of the industry, which could improve public perceptions and awareness.

Aquaculture Extension

Extension agents are key supporting SLO actors. They can be trusted arbiters of information, can help form connections between farmers and their stakeholders, can be community organizers, and can help raise awareness about the potential of aquaculture.

Partnerships

Extension agents can connect growers to community members, researchers, state agencies, and other resource users in an effort to forge partnerships and build relationships. They should be intentional when connecting groups, making sure to reach out to underserved communities, underrepresented groups, and provide opportunities for all farmers.



Education

Extension agents can help train new farmers on effective ways to build social license and can be a resource for farmers who need guidance navigating community dynamics. They can also provide education to the broader public to help raise awareness about aquaculture.

Produce Knowledge

Extension agents can help identify areas of research and lead research projects that are important to industry and community members.

Event Coordination

Extension agents can help organize community events to raise awareness about aquaculture, industry events to encourage knowledge sharing, or other events that can help raise social license for farmers like beach clean ups. Within these events, extension agents can help facilitate important conversations between farmers and their communities.

Research Communication

One major role of extension agents involves communicating scientific information to industry members and the broader public in a way that is digestible, clear, and objective. Extension agents should be seen by both the public and the industry as trusted brokers of information. A well-informed public is better equipped to participate in meaningful dialogue about aquaculture development in their community, and well-informed industry members are better able to communicate their impacts (both positive and negative) with the public, which is key to building social license. Extension agents can also produce science-based communications products that farmers can distribute to their communities.

Amplify Farmers' Voices

Extension agents can help to amplify farmers voices including farmers in community outreach—providing a platform for the farmer to get their story out to the public.

Identified Needs & Gaps

Supporting SLO Actors

Supporting SLO Actor/Group	Needs
Value-chain groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intermediaries connecting farms to restaurants • Assistance creating resources that farmers will provide to restaurants with product. Distributors need to be looped into this process. • Training for restaurant staff on safety • Training for restaurant staff on aquaculture & how to describe products to patrons
NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need increased communication between farms and organizations so the organization knows who needs support
Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization that could facilitate farm/educator connections • Curricula and teacher education on aquaculture • Toolkits, web access to lesson plans
Municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding and staff capacity
Researchers/Research Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations who can organize events for research dissemination (conferences, “science on tap” events) • Funding for research
Trade Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding and staff capacity
Regulatory Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitation strategy so that officials are able to engage with the public meaningfully and have informative, civil conversation • Staff capacity
Aquaculture Extension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff capacity

Discussion & Conclusion

While unquestionably important, social license remains a challenge for the industry. There are no shortcuts, so farmers, the primary SLO actor, must work diligently to gain and maintain their social license. Most of the work that farmers do helps to generate social license directly, like when farmers communicate with their community about farm plans. However, farmers can also engage in education initiatives to raise awareness about aquaculture more generally, which helps to increase positive public perceptions (indirect).



To help farmers in their social license work, supporting SLO actors can undertake a variety of actions. In some cases, this work can directly build social license for farmers, including when supporting actors amplify farmers voices, or feature farmers at events. However, much of the work of supporting SLO actors involves building positive public perceptions of aquaculture, and this is done through raising awareness and educating the public about aquaculture. Communities who are aware and informed and feel positively about aquaculture will be more receptive to proposed farms, as long as the farmer is taking all appropriate steps to gain acceptance. So this work helps to create an environment that is socially conducive to aquaculture.

While there are limitations to this research, including geographic representativeness (workshops were held only on the east and west coast of the US), and methodological limitations (relying on notes sheets that did not capture the richness of small group conversations), this roadmap provides a high-level, sector-wide approach to building social license for the aquaculture industry. This is a living document, so it will be continuously updated as we continue to learn more about building social license.

SLO Knowledge Exchange Panel Members

MEMBER	ORGANIZATION
Bob Rheault	East Coast Shellfish Growers Association
Megan Sorby	Kingfish Maine
Kim Thompson	Aquarium of the Pacific
Chris Vonderweidt	Gulf of Maine Research Institute
Sam Belknap	Island Institute
Sebastian Belle	Maine Aquaculture Association
Suzi Billing	Scottish Association for Marine Science
Joth Davis	Hood Canal Mariculture
Bill Dewey	Taylor Shellfish Farms
Paul Dobbins	World Wildlife Fund
Sue Farquharson	Atlantic Canada Fish Farmers Association
Don Kent	Hubbs-Seaworld Research Institute
Andrew Lively	Cooke Aquaculture
Jeanne McKnight	Northwest Aquaculture Alliance
Thomas Mumford	Marine Agronomics, LLC
Marcy Nelson	Kennebec River Biosciences
Margaret Pilaro	Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association

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