

Our ethical statements & policies



Ethical statement on using decapods for food

We recognize along with many world-leading health, environmental and animal welfare organisations that a reduction in meat consumption has benefits for people, animals and the planet. However, we as an organisation do not call for the end of eating shellfish or other animals. We simply argue that they should be treated as humanely as possible and with respect.

Where we host events, we are committed to serving food that meets the widest possible animal welfare, environmental health and sustainability criteria, where economically viable to do so. Under most circumstances this will be vegan food. Attention will also be paid to sourcing of products such as palm oil and soya to ensure ethical provenance.

In certain circumstances, Crustacean Compassion may come to believe that non-consumption of certain species of decapod is the only ethical choice where humane practices are not possible. We may make our position on this public, and if so, we will do this in accordance with our Ethical Policy on Working with Industry.

Ethical policy on welfare research

As a scientifically informed organisation, we recognise that scientific research can contribute positively to the better welfare protection of decapods. We therefore use decapod welfare research to inform our welfare policies, reviewed by a suitably qualified person.

We also recognise, however, that welfare research often causes harm in order to study how to reduce that harm. At present, decapod crustaceans do not receive even basic legal protection under the Animals in Scientific Procedures Act. Therefore:

We campaign robustly for the full legal protection of decapods in animal research, and we call publicly for welfare research to be ethically rigorous. At a minimum, welfare research should apply the 3Rs (reduce, refine, replace) in their fullest capacity regardless of whether this is mandated by law in their country. We further encourage researchers to go beyond minimum legal standards, with the fullest possible culture of care. We believe that welfare research should be entirely necessary, with direct expected benefit to the welfare of the animal. It should use positive, not negative welfare indicators where possible. It should follow the highest standard of scientific research with the expectation of peer review and be published with open access.

However, Crustacean Compassion does not currently have the capacity to review and monitor animal research applications, policy or practice. We therefore do not currently advise upon, fund, or support specific research projects. To help avoid the needless repetition of research, we make our literature reviews and welfare policies publicly available for review and use by scientists and ethical bodies, but we do not respond to specific requests for the identification of research gaps.

This does not prevent us from stating the reasons for the absence of certain technical solutions, which may include the lack of research. However, this shall not amount to advice, support, or an implied endorsement of any future project.



Ethical policy on working with industry

Working with the food industry can have significant benefits to our purpose of protecting the welfare of decapod crustaceans. Industry is often able to find technological and economic solutions much faster than the public or third sector. They also have the potential to willingly adopt higher standards than the legal minimum. There are also many principled people in business who wish to promote decapod welfare, and we have a wider social responsibility to understand and acknowledge the economic and human social effects of our policies. However, at times, there will also be conflicts of interest.

Crustacean Compassion will support and guide businesses willing to improve decapod welfare in their practices. This includes the provision of policy advice. It may also, in the future, include on-the-ground training. However, it is important that we always retain our independence as an organisation and can pursue other campaign tactics and engage with other stakeholders without conflict of interest.

Accepting money from industry for certification represents a clear danger of conflict of interest. Moreover, ethical certification would require qualified inspectors to monitor supply chains to avoid reputational risk. Therefore, whilst we may advise partners who do provide certification, we will ensure this does not result in a conflict of interest. We do not currently accept payments for a Crustacean Compassion certification.

If this was to change in future, so that Crustacean Compassion was to manage a scheme where a license fee was charged for certification, a separate, affiliated trading entity with a separate, affiliated name would be established. Five targets would have to be achieved before this was considered:

1. Crustacean Compassion should be financially sustainable for at least five years into the future to absorb any resulting reputational risk and should have demonstrably achieved its existing campaign goal (currently the 2026 campaign goal).
2. The entity should have the capacity to investigate and monitor standards and hold businesses to account.
3. Crustacean Compassion's "training" entity should be financially and legally separate from the "certification" entity, to avoid self-review threat.
4. A successful pilot project should be undertaken first, with a sufficient resulting pipeline to at least break even over the first three years of operation.
5. We will never let industry prevent us from lobbying for legal and political changes.

A note on employees and Board Directors

Board members, consultants and staff may have industry backgrounds that are useful to Crustacean Compassion's purpose and mission. However, any such appointments should be referred to the Board who will satisfy themselves, on record, that there is no conflict of interest. In some circumstances, an Advisor or Ambassadorial role may be more appropriate.



Ethical policy on campaigning for industry changes

Crustacean Compassion's primary approach is to work constructively and positively with industry wherever possible, to achieve the best outcomes for decapod welfare. Crustacean Compassion may campaign against a particular practice to see the result that's needed from particular food businesses or other corporates and conduct, or commission, investigations. This may include the naming of individual businesses. For example, The Snapshot will have clear expectations around progress to ensure that scores improve on an annual basis. Crustacean Compassion will actively and positively support Snapshot businesses to make changes where possible but will also act where progress is not being made.

However, we will only do so having given businesses a reasonable opportunity to respond to clear campaign asks. Potential red lines should be considered well in advance, with plans in place for the management of the best possible outcomes early in the relationship. Corporate stakeholders should understand, in advance, the expectations for the relationship and its parameters. Companies we have a relationship with should always be informed of an expected campaign targeting practices that they employ or may be associated with.

Campaigns against particular practices should always build in clear, concise welfare-friendly asks, which allow progress to be made within industry.

Confidential information shared by businesses in exchanges with Crustacean Compassion should never be shared in the public domain without prior permission.

Related documents: “Rules of Engagement with corporate stakeholders” (internal)

Ethical statement on working with external organisations to deliver campaigns or related materials

Crustacean Compassion recognises the benefit that working in partnership with other organisations, including other NGOs, can bring, in order to achieve the best welfare outcomes for decapods. However, occasionally there may be cases where collaborating with an organisation, whether publicly or otherwise, would put our mission at risk, be detrimental to the purposes set out in our Articles of Association, harm our reputation, or conflict with our wider social responsibilities. We reserve the right to decline any partnership that we believe may undermine these commitments.

For the purposes of this policy, 'working with' includes, but is not limited to:

- Memorandum of Understanding
- Contractual arrangements to deliver services
- Organisations whose work we depend upon to achieve a campaign outcome
- Organisations whom we might want to be in a coalition with

This policy does not include alliances whose wider membership comprises of organisations whose values we may disagree with, and with whom we may occasionally be required to communicate. In such cases, good ethical judgement must be used and any cases for concern raised to the Board (see below).



Due diligence

There are circumstances where a partnership would be rejected outright; these are specified in 'Partnerships we will not accept'. Where a partnership is not rejected outright, but is perceived to be high risk, the Crustacean Compassion Board of Directors should be made aware and will be responsible for due diligence and deciding whether to accept or refuse the partnership.

They will take a risk-based approach, weighing up the potential for the partnership to further Crustacean Compassion's mission against the risks to Crustacean Compassion's campaigns, brand, financial position, staff, reputation and/ or ethical values. For instance, they may consider whether there is a conflict with the mission of the organisation which is likely to result in reputational damage with current and potential supporters, or a conflict with our values of social responsibility which would damage the integrity of our Ethical Framework, either internally or externally. Due diligence will be proportional to the scale of the relationship and the nature of the partnership.

Partnerships we will not accept

We will not knowingly accept partnerships with organisations whom we are aware, or should reasonably be aware, promote violence, hate, or discrimination against any living being, including humans. This includes organisations who promote or conduct acts of violence against those who use animals. It also includes, but is not limited to, organisations whose communications and practices promote racism, misogyny, homophobia, or who otherwise discriminate against those with protected characteristics under the UK Equalities Act 2010.

