



FWI 2020 Plan

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Plan Summary

Fish Welfare Initiative's goal is to improve the welfare of fish as much as possible. During 2020, we will do that by achieving the following:

- **Research:** Conduct and publish field and secondary research to determine the most promising species, countries, welfare improvements, and approaches for fish advocacy (FWI's four main questions).
- **Country:** Establish a presence and a team in our pilot country.
- **Corporate/Governmental outreach:** Identify partner(s) with whom to collaborate on a pilot program.
- **Pilot:** Design and begin a pilot program with our partners, implementing the findings of our research.
- **Culture:** Create an intensely dedicated, goal-oriented, kind, and fun team culture.

Disclaimer

This plan will almost certainly change. We will update the plan as this occurs, while maintaining a copy of the original.

The Team

As of June 2020, our team consists of the following:

- Co-founders
- Fish Welfare Specialist
- Research and Project Strategist
- Communications Specialist (part-time)
- Board of Advisors

We expect to expand our team by a couple roles in 2020, primarily focusing on hiring people in the country of our pilot program.

The Budget

See [here](#).

Theory of Change

FWI aims to impact change for fish via the following avenues:

Fish Welfare Initiative 2020 Plan

Priority	Impact Category	Outcome	Examples of Work We've Done
1	Initiative	Direct impact via improved welfare for fish impacted by well-researched welfare improvements and corporate/governmental commitments	• Welfare Improvements Research • Country Scoping Reports • Species Research • Calling experts to gain feedback on our plan • Outlining pilot program strategy
2	Movement Building	A more impactful movement for fishes	• Building a connection with someone at another animal advocacy organization • Speaking at an EA or AR conference • Giving advice or feedback to another organization
3	Influencing Institutions	More pro-fish policies and standards	• Giving feedback to the EU Commission • Giving feedback to a seafood certifier • Working with a government to improve policies
4	Influencing Public Opinion	A more pro-fish public	• Social media • Op-eds • Blog posts
(multiplier)	Organization Building	A more impactful FWI	• Performance reviews • Legal incorporation • Fundraising • Attending a webinar or taking an online class

Plan Updating and Evaluation

Our previous plan quickly became outdated and useless, largely due to the fact that we rarely looked at it and evaluated our progress against it. We pledge not to make the same mistake twice. We will thus do the following for plan M&E:

1. Review the plan in each week kickoff meeting, and evaluate our progress.
2. Mark items as completed, delayed, or abandoned as becomes relevant.
3. Schedule a time once a month to update the plan as needed.

Long-Term Plan

See [Three Year Plan](#).

2020 Goals

We chose the most important goals from [our previous plan](#). We will evaluate our progress monthly.

1. Conclude initiative research and publish reports with preliminary answers to our 4 questions (priority country, species, welfare improvement, and approach).
2. Be implementing welfare improvements on 1-4 farms and measuring and evaluating this.
3. Gain some early impact wins (i.e. somewhere we can find a relatively simple lever to reduce fish suffering, such as collaborating with policymakers or certification schemes).
4. Establish in country (evaluation criteria: have at least 1 in country staff).
5. Establish a strong positive team culture that is intensely dedicated, goal-oriented, kind, and fun (evaluation criteria: On a survey question "How would you rank FWI's overall team culture?", the average score is at least a 4 out of 5).
6. Register as a legal charitable organization.
7. Have strong industry connections (evaluation criteria: There are at least 10 people in industry that FWI knows well and could reasonably ask a favor of).

Pilot or No Pilot? A note on India

This plan is currently centered around FWI doing a pilot program to gain a proof of concept of the welfare improvement, that we will then scale up to a macro level. I have mentioned this plan to several groups working in India, and 2-3 have said the same thing: "Doing a pilot like that is a bad idea, because:

- A. No farmer would be inclined to work with you (lack of interest and incentives)
- B. This would not make macro level change any easier (due to decentralized Indian aquaculture industry)"

Rather, two different groups independently proposed a different model, one without a pilot but one that had been tried and proven successful:

1. Gather observational data (ie investigations, but not exposé style) and draft objective reports on actual aquacultural conditions.
2. Present findings to the government, with a list of specific asks/improvements.
3. Either the government or the courts will likely approve some of the recommendations, providing the many producers that rely on government subsidization incentive to comply.

So, where does this leave us? Our strategy needs to be flexible to the country in which we choose to work. If this country turns out to be India, we will likely need to readjust our strategy to one that will be more effective.

What strategy is the most effective in India? We suspect it is probably still worth attempting to run at least one pilot, because in the worst case scenario we fail to gain any traction and just waste time. However, in the best case scenario we not only improve the welfare of a number of fish, but we also gather more data for our policy work, and further evidence to the government that we are an ally worth partnering with. We believe that gathering this data to build the evidence base for aquaculture welfare work will prove critical.

Lastly, we want to note that **we view our pilot primarily as an enabler of other work**. If upon establishing in a country it seems like we could have a greater impact by going straight to policy or corporate outreach work, we will happily do that.

Impact of COVID-19 on Plans (updated June 12, 2020)

Before the coronavirus disrupted all normal life, we had been doing scoping work in India (~70% finished). Unfortunately, it is now impossible for our team to visit other countries, and we are unsure when it will be possible again. We are thus canceling all future country visits.

Instead, we are considering hiring local people (largely dependent on if we can find promising candidates) on a temporary basis to conduct farm visits and draft the report themselves. This may also lead to future welfare work in multiple countries, which is a possibility we are considering.

Month by Month

This is not everything we intend to do. Rather these are a few activities that we believe are overwhelmingly important for the achievement of our goals. Note that this plan is updated monthly.

See our [project status doc](#), [Strategy Updates blog post](#), and [Research Plan](#).

January

- Finish hiring process for Research Analyst and Animal Welfare Specialist
- Conduct Vietnam visit

February

- Onboard new hires
- Begin India visit
- Complete Vietnam scoping report
- Publish Approach research report

March

- Begin welfare improvements research
- Begin charity registration process in US or UK
- Begin priority species research

April

- Begin priority species research
- Begin fundraising if project still looks promising
- Work on charity registration process
- Begin searching for in-country hire in most promising countries

May

- Finish priority species research
- Continue work on welfare improvements research
- Work on charity registration process
- Establish volunteer network

June

- Hire part-time communications staff
- Attend and speak at EAGx
- Continue welfare improvements report
- Complete Fish Welfare Definitions report

July

- Complete re-evaluation point
- Continue welfare improvements report

- Finish India field research and begin scoping report
- Complete majority of hiring process for Director of Country Operations
- Publish results of survey of fish advocacy plans across the animal protection movement

August

- Hire Director of Country Operations
- Hire contractor(s) to complete country report in 1-2 other countries
- Continue work on India scoping report
- Publish Aquaculture in Asia report
- Set future year research agenda

September

- Contractors continue work on other country reports
- Begin onboarding Director of Country Operations
- Begin 3 year plan
- Publish India Scoping Report
- Start Measuring Fish Welfare Report

October

- Publish Welfare Improvements Report
- Director of Country Operations begins in-country registration and research
- Identify partners and site for possible pilot, and begin forming proposal
- Begin corporate/governmental outreach to lay groundwork to scale to macro level
- Finish India State Research
- Publish initiative report to identify the country(ies) we will be working in, and why
- Begin Foundational Questions in Fish Welfare research
- Have a working beta version of the system for measuring welfare in a CEA
- Finish Marco's project for measuring welfare in-field

November

- Enable and participate in Aquatic Animal Welfare Conference
- Begin 2021 fundraising
- Contractor publishes China scoping report
- Further corporate/governmental outreach to lay groundwork to scale to macro level
- Set 2021 strategic plan
- Establish a ranked list of asks
- Begin top species welfare needs research

December

- Finish 2021 fundraising
- Contractor publishes Philippines scoping report
- Build survey and establish longlist of fish farm ponds that can be partners in pilot study

Key Uncertainties

1. How many reports should we publish? To what extent should these be made for the use of FWI vs. for the use of external organizations?
2. Can we actually begin the pilot program on time? Can we identify the right industry and governmental partners?
3. Can we find a talented Director of Country Operations?
4. Is a pilot program definitely the way to go? For instance, in India it seems to work best to work with the government immediately.

Deliverables

See [research page](#).