

# Aquatic Life Institute's Reporting of Programs, Financials, Leadership, and Culture (2022)

*This document contains responses written by the charity. ACE has made no content changes other than the removal of confidential information.*

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## **PROGRAM 1**

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**Program name:** Coalitions – Aquatic Animal Alliance (AAA)

**Date commenced (approximate month & year):** January 2020

**Program description:**

Operating from effective altruism principles, the AAA was formed to specifically advance animal welfare globally for nearly 500 billion farmed fish and shrimp, and 2-3 trillion wild aquatic animals. The AAA focuses its activities on strengthening policy, seafood certification standards, and leading effective interventions when egregious activities are being proposed that will bring suffering to aquatic animals.

The AAA has representation from over 100 groups across 6 continents. Several prominent global seafood certification schemes have elevated their animal welfare standards since our advocacy endeavours began, including the Aquaculture Stewardship Council and GlobalG.A.P. Legislation has also advanced with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, Canadian Salmonid standard and more.

Presently, we are launching a targeted octopus farming ban campaign which will leverage the power of the AAA to influence policy makers, permitting agencies and rally citizens against this new threat to the welfare of a highly sentient aquatic species.

**Do you collaborate with other organizations for this program? yes/no [if yes] Which organizations do you collaborate with, and what is the nature of their involvement?**

Yes. 101 organizations from 65 countries and 6 continents. See the full list here:

<https://aquaticanimalalliance.org/> Member organizations range from start up, small entities ex. Animal Law Reform South Africa, to some of the largest animal welfare organizations, including The Humane League, Compassion in World Farming, and ASPCA who employ hundreds of staff spanning various geographies. Members are able to network with each other, are invited to regular AAA webinars, invited to participate and present at the annual Aquatic Life Conference,

receive monthly newsletter with calls to action, and relevant updates on new publications, research and policy engagement opportunities.

**Program achievements:**

See Aquatic Life Institute's Program Outputs document.

**Program expenses: Please indicate the currency you are referring to here:**

USD

*For the projected numbers in this section, please answer under the assumption that your ACE recommendation status (and therefore the amount of ACEinfluenced funding your organization receives) will stay the same. If you have not yet produced detailed plans, simply provide your best estimates.*

	First 6 months of 2021	Last 6 months of 2021	First 6 months of 2022	Projection For entirety of 2022	Projection For 2023	Projection For 2024
Expenses	50,805	76,759	72,528	145,056	202,556	260,056

**Program plans: Do you plan to maintain, expand, or shrink this program between now and the end of 2024? Please elaborate, and include any plans to bring on new hires.**

We plan to significantly grow our coalition work. In order to continue scaling efforts and increasing the collective global call to action for advancing aquatic animal welfare, we require an additional 2-4 team members over the course of the next 2.5 years, as we aim to launch a Corporate Initiative targeting large scale seafood buyers and retailers using our recently released Certifier Benchmark, and launch the full scale Octopus Farming Ban campaign.

In July 2022, we secured a critical EA Funds grant, to bring on board an Engagement Coordinator for the AAA. This role will allow us to expand programming, provide one on one coordination with dozens more Alliance members, recruit and on-board new members from neglected regions, as well as provide an additional lift for our campaign efforts.

We share feedback opportunities, reports and research with AAA members, requesting their review, input, and amplification.

## PROGRAM 2

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**Program name:** Global Policy Reform

**Date commenced (approximate month & year):** January 2020

**Program description:** Approximately 100 billion fish, including trout, salmon, tilapia, carp, catfish, and 350-400B shrimp (whiteleg and tiger prawns) are reared in aquaculture facilities every year. Additionally, 2-3 trillion aquatic animals are harvested in the wild.

It is imperative for global policy to incorporate aquatic animal welfare at the EU, UN, FAO, UNFCCC, Global Compact and country level, into livestock, food systems, climate change and sustainable development goals. ALI has been gaining access to many of these forums and effecting change through the Koronivia submission, UNFCCC task force, EU consultation feedbacks, and presenting at UN conferences.

ALI is driving a multi-pronged and collaborative approach through deep partnership with organizations such as 50by40, World Federation for Animals, and Eurogroup for Animals on EU and UN policy change opportunities. Additionally, we conduct our own policy landscape analyses, produce unique feedbacks, and rally the AAA to increase impact within these forums.

**Do you collaborate with other organizations for this program? yes/no [if yes] Which organizations do you collaborate with, and what is the nature of their involvement?**

Yes. Through our Global Aquatic Animal Law and Policy committee (GAALP) we aim to bring together the foremost, expert voices in aquatic animal law and policy across the globe as both a "think-and-do tank". Presently, we have 15 members in this committee: Center for Animal Law Studies & Clinic UCLA Animal Justice Canada Lawyers for Animal Protection in Africa Sibanye Animal Welfare and Conservancy Trust Animal Law Europe Advocates for Animals Richman Law and Policy Global Food Partners Fish Welfare Initiative The Humane League UK Animal Law Italia Mercy for Animals Humane Society CAAWO. At this crucial initial juncture in the aquatic welfare movement, we can ensure that all stakeholders are in communication, collaborating, and uplifting each other's efforts, rather than risking redundancy or contradiction. We facilitate a free exchange of research, ideas, and expertise in order to advance the interests of farmed and wild caught aquatic animals worldwide through our legal and governmental systems.

**Program achievements:**

See Aquatic Life Institute's Program Outputs document.

**Program expenses: Please indicate the currency you are referring to here:**

USD

*For the projected numbers in this section, please answer under the assumption that your ACE recommendation status (and therefore the amount of ACEinfluenced funding your organization receives) will stay the same. If you have not yet produced detailed plans, simply provide your best estimates.*

	First 6 months of 2021	Last 6 months of 2021	First 6 months of 2022	Projection For entirety of 2022	Projection For 2023	Projection For 2024
Expenses	44,670	84,503	68,110	136,220	193,720	251,220

**Program plans: Do you plan to maintain, expand, or shrink this program between now and the end of 2024? Please elaborate, and include any plans to bring on new hires.**

We plan to grow our engagement and leadership in the Global Policy Reform program, both through expanding GAALP membership, which will include designing 2 targeted global policy campaigns, as well as further engaging existing hugs of policy activity that are leading on aquatic animal reform initiatives.

In order to grow effectively, we will need to secure at minimum, an additional 1-2 team members to cover neglected areas (ex Africa), and or areas of significant opportunity (South American and Asia).

### **PROGRAM 3**

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**Program name:** Seafood Certifier Campaign

**Date commenced (approximate month & year):** January 2020

**Program description:** Seafood certifiers can act as a powerful lever of change in the global seafood trade. Thus, partnerships with these certifiers can catalyze welfare improvements for billions of individual animals simultaneously. For the past 2 years, ALI has been working with 6 of the world's largest aquaculture certifiers, providing guidance, strengthening existing standards, and helping to introduce new modules addressing aquatic animal welfare.

Our unique engagement with certifiers, helps differentiate progressive producers from those lagging behind, and influences the activities of thousands of farms, producers, seafood brands and major buyers.

These certification schemes impact all farms under their purview, and all animals within them. Accountability and compliance with the standards is ensured through regular 3rd party audits. The most commonly certified aquatic species include finfish (salmonids, tilapia, carp), whiteleg shrimp, and tiger prawns.

**Do you collaborate with other organizations for this program? yes/no [if yes] Which organizations do you collaborate with, and what is the nature of their involvement?**

Yes. Collaboration in this program is with the certifiers themselves; Global Animal Partnership, RSPCA, Naturland, Friend of the Sea, Global GAP, BAP, ASC, as well as with all AAA members <https://aquaticanimalalliance.org/> whenever there is a feedback opportunity to strengthen standards language. ALI writes the standard language recommendations, shares them with the AAA members, then requests sign on, or independent submissions from the members.

**Program achievements:**

See Aquatic Life Institute's Program Outputs document.

**Program expenses: Please indicate the currency you are referring to here:**

USD

*For the projected numbers in this section, please answer under the assumption that your ACE recommendation status (and therefore the amount of ACEinfluenced funding your organization receives) will stay the same. If you have not yet produced detailed plans, simply provide your best estimates.*

	First 6 months of 2021	Last 6 months of 2021	First 6 months of 2022	Projection For entirety of 2022	Projection For 2023	Projection For 2024
Expenses	14,153	21,153	36,475	73,950	131,450	188,950

**Program plans: Do you plan to maintain, expand, or shrink this program between now and the end of 2024? Please elaborate, and include any plans to bring on new hires.**

There is significant opportunity, and need, to expand into new areas of improvement through our certifier campaign. Priorities for the next 2.5 years include:  
expanding into shrimp recommendations as per our Shrimp Welfare Guide <https://ali.fish/shrimp-welfare-recommendations> released in June 2022

expanding the number of partnerships to include 5 more by end of 2023 and 2 more in 2024  
introducing additional insect farming bans on feed standards  
Creating year over year comparisons of our novel certifier benchmark  
<https://ali.fish/aquaculture-certification-benchmark> in both 2023 and 2024  
We require at minimum, 2 additional staff members to grow this important and impactful work.

**(Optional) Is there anything else you would like us to know about your programs?**

All of our programs were intentionally designed to operate in a tightly interconnected manner with each other. ALI's advocacy is rooted in existing, or novel, EA research, which is then translated into various formats depending on our intended audiences with the aim of creating the necessary change at scale for aquatic animals.

A good example of this programmatic interconnection is as follows: all policy and certifier feedback is first produced internally by ALI staff, then shared with AAA members for review and feedback, before sign-on is requested.

Thus, the AAA acts as a hub of alignment on aquatic animal welfare around the globe, is democratic, open, non-binding and allows us to collectively source input and glean insights from most corners of the globe. This allows us to deliver a unified, aligned call aimed at transforming legislation, certification standards, and industry practices as related to aquatic animal welfare.

**Where are your headquarters located?**

New York City, NY, USA

**Do you have any subsidiaries in other countries? yes/no [If yes] Which countries?**

Yes. France

**Are your subsidiaries financially independent? yes/no/other (elaborate)**

No.

**Do your subsidiaries have independent boards of directors? yes/no/other (elaborate)**

Other. ALI France is a subsidiary office of ALI global. It is a legal French entity with its own Board of Directors, bank account and business number, but it receives funds from ALI global's main account. In order to operate as a legal French entity, ALI France is mandated to have its own Board of Director, which is presently comprised of 2 Directors (1 ALI staff member and and ALI's founder). They do not meet, have their own bylaws, or make any independent decisions regarding ALI France.

**Who are the decision makers for local programs carried out by your organization’s subsidiaries?**

All programmatic and financial decisions are centralized at ALI global. The primary decision maker for all daily operations is Sophika Kostyniuk, Managing Director. There are no local programs being directed by our French subsidiary.

**Which accounting method do you use or did you use in the following years?**

2020	Accrual accounting
2021	Accrual accounting
2022	Accrual accounting

**[If other] Please elaborate, if possible:**

**Please indicate the currency you are referring to here:**

USD

**Please complete the following table about your organization’s annual financials.** If available, attach the corresponding tax forms (e.g., Form 990 in the U.S.) for each year. For all projected numbers, please answer under the assumption that your status with ACE (Top Charity, Standout Charity, or not currently recommended) will stay the same. If you project a sizable increase or decrease in revenue in 2023 and/or 2024 that may appear to diverge from your current trajectory, we ask that you briefly comment with an explanation below. These figures will assist us in understanding the overall health of your charity’s financials, such as revenue diversity and sufficiency of reserves, as well as your existing plans for expansion.

	2020	2021	MidYear 2022	Projection For 2022	Projection For 2023	Projection For 2024
Total Revenue (sum of the 4 below)						
- Revenue from donations	169,843.49	294,752.03	270,922.43	575,922	795,000	1,020,000
- Revenue from own work (earned income)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
- Revenue from capital investments (investment income)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

- Revenue (other)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Total Expenditures	153,960.41	357,112.46	227,047.63	Unknown	NA	NA
- Expenditures specifically for starting new programs				NA	NA	NA
Financial Assets (i.e., cash, savings, investments, etc.)	67,000	82,884	20,523	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Nonfinancial assets > \$10,000 USD	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Liabilities (if any)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

**If available, attach the corresponding tax forms (e.g., Form 990 in the U.S.) for each year.**

**What is the total share of funding sources from large donations (>20% of funding)? Specify the funding source, if possible.**

None.

**Do you have any significant restricted donations? [If yes] Please elaborate.**

Yes. Several grants that have been issued to ALI are time bound:  
 \$80K USD was awarded in November 2021 - to support the salaries of the Director of the AAA and our Senior Researcher for 6 months  
 \$80K USD was awarded March 2022 to support existing staff salaries over a 6 year period (Director of the AAA, Senior Researcher, and Managing Director)  
 \$80K USD was awarded in July 2022 to fund an Engagement Coordinator for the AAA (including benefits) for a 1 year term, along with some support for overall operations.  
 \$100K USD was awarded in June 2022 by Open Philanthropy to support general operating funds (salaries) for a 1 year term

**If you reported expenditures specifically for starting new programs in the table above, please elaborate.**

None.

**If your expenditures reported in the table above include significant costs that are not directly related to programs (e.g., administration expenses, wages, or training), please elaborate.**

Does not apply.

**Do you have a significant percentage of assets that would be difficult to liquidate to meet cash needs within one year? [If yes] Please elaborate.**

No.



**(Optional) Is there anything else you would like us to know about your financial situation?**

Please note that the Form 990 is for Meridian Institute's (ALI's fiscal sponsor) overall finances. Please contact Jackie Manguso, Chief Financial Officer, with any questions

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Please note that ALI had a retainer balance of \$67,000.97 at the end of Dec. 2019

ALI is presently funded through a combination of individual unrestricted donations (\$20-\$50K/year from several donors), philanthropic contributions from ex. EA Funds and Open Philanthropy, the Tipping Point (\$50-\$100K), and are beginning to explore opportunities outside of the traditional animal welfare space, though these relationships will take time to foster, then a year or two before funding may come to fruition.

**If you received additional, unexpected funding of \$200,000 USD, how would you allocate it across each of your current programs, any new programs, and/or other plans for expansion, on top of the projections submitted in the previous section?**

ALI's management philosophy is to prioritize growth in a thoughtful and stepwise manner, as well as invest heavily in existing staff members so that we are able to enrich and retain our talent. As such, if \$200K in unexpected funding came our way, we would allocate it to:

Organizational Growth and Maturity:

Introduce a comprehensive health care benefits package for all staff (15% on top of existing salaries (\$352K) = \$52K)

Upgrade every staff person's home office and provide current technology (\$2Kx9staff = \$18K)

Policy Pursuits Hire 1 new policy staffer (\$55K)

Coalitions Hire 1 new researcher (\$55K)

Hire a Contracted development officer (\$20K)

**If you received \$1,000,000 USD of additional, unexpected funding, how would you distribute it among i) each of your current programs, ii) any new programs, and/or iii) other plans for expansion, on top of the projected expenditures reported in the previous section?**

Organizational Growth and Maturity:

+15% benefits for all existing staff and new staff listed below (payroll \$352+295K = \$647K) = \$97K in benefits

Promote 2 staff and give salary increases to the other 5 staff (\$35K)

Hire 1 administrative staffer (\$50K)

Secure new payroll system (\$5.5K/12 staff/year = \$66K)

Subscriptions to open access journals (\$15K)

Standardized home office for all staff (\$2.5K x 12 staff = \$30K )

Travel budget to engage in industry and policy events (8x\$10K + 4x\$5K = \$84K)

Annual membership fees to various networks, hubs and coalitions = \$15K

Annual in person retreat (\$2.5K x 12 staff = \$30K)

#### Coalitions

Hire 1 additional AAA staff (Asia and Africa coordinator) to help us accelerate global coordination (\$50K)

Hire 1 more researcher to conduct novel EA research on species specific aquatic animal welfare as well as additional research on environmental enrichment and fish meal and fish oil alternatives. (\$50K)

#### Policy Pursuits

Hire 1 more policy staffer to lift up our global policy work outside of Europe (primarily focused on North and South American opportunities) (\$50K)

#### New Expansion Plans

Hire 1 Campaign Manager to synthesize and drive our work effectively both internally and externally: Certifier Campaign, Octopus Farming Ban Campaign, Corporate Initiative (\$60K)

Invest in Website revamp to improve functionality, make it current, build out our donations and reporting pages (\$16K)

#### **Please list the key members of your organization's leadership team, including i) their name, ii) their role, and iii) the number of years they've worked at your organization.**

Sophika Kostyniuk, Managing Director, Aquatic Life Institute, 10 months

Catalina Lopez, Director, Aquatic Animal Alliance, 1 year 2 months

#### **Have you had a leadership transition in your Executive Director role (or equivalent) since the beginning of 2021? [If yes] Please describe the transition process.**

Yes. ALI's former Executive Director, Becky Jenkins, was in place from Aug 2020 to Jan 2021.

A lengthy recruitment process ensued until the present Managing Director, Sophika Kostyniuk, was hired, commencing her placement on Oct. 25, 2021.

Between November 2021 and February 2022, Sophika was mentored by ALI's founder, William Bench. Vital documents detailing funder relationships, strategic plans, policies, job descriptions, roles and responsibilities, objectives and key results and many more were developed during this period.

As of February, 2022, Sophika has been solely responsible for all daily organization activities, including, but not limited to, hiring and managing staff, leading the strategic planning process, being accountable for all objectives and key results as laid out at the beginning of the year,

managing the budget, leading fundraising efforts, and acting as the public face of the organization in various forums and networks.

William Bench is the President of ALI's Board.

**Please provide a complete list of your organization's current board members. If this information is available online, you may simply provide a link to the web page.**

<https://ali.fish/our-team>

William Bench, Founder and President

Arturo Garcia, Board Member

Dr. Kikiope Oluwarore, Board Member

**What kind of legal entity is your organization?**

ALI is a registered US not for profit that is in the process of securing its 501(c)(3) status. All legal paperwork for our charitable status was filed at the beginning of July 2022. We anticipate that the application will be approved by mid-Fall 2022.

Since our inception, and until our charitable status is secured, ALI has been working through a 3rd party fiscal sponsor that has allowed us to issue charitable tax receipts for donations and grants, pay our employees, and manage our finances.

**How would you describe the organizational structure of your organization?**

We are a lean, start up minded organization where staff enjoy a great deal of autonomy and authority over their areas of work.

Everyone directly reports to ALI's Managing Director, who in turn, periodically reports to the President of the Board.

The Board of Directors is comprised of 3 people from diverse backgrounds, and is in the process of arranging their first meeting to discuss priorities for the next year of operations.

We strive to be democratic, non-hierarchical, and equitable in the majority of our activities. All team members treat each other with respect, are open in our communications and jointly plan activities along with our overall annual timeline. The timeline supports our Objectives and Key Results.

1 Managing Director

1 Director of the Aquatic Animal Alliance

1 Senior Researcher

1 Head of Strategic Initiatives

1 Global Policy Lead

1 Communications & Marketing Coordinator

1 AAA Engagement Coordinator (Sept 19 start date)

**How many full-time staff, part-time staff, and contractors are currently employed/contracted by your organization? Please specify staff numbers by country subsidiary, if applicable.**

6 full time staff, 1 part time staff

Catalina Lopez, Full time, Mexico

Christine Xu, Part time, Spain

Giulia Malerbi, Full time, Italy

Livia Schonenberg, Full time, Bermuda

Sophika Kostyniuk, Full time, Canada

Tessa Gonzalez, Full time, USA

\* Sept 19 start date, AAA Engagement Coordinator, Full Time, remote

**How many volunteers working at least five hours per week are currently affiliated with your organization?**

None

**What strategies do you use to learn about staff morale and work culture (e.g., staff surveys, in-person check-ins, suggestion boxes, etc.)?**

Weekly 1:1 confidential check ins between the Managing Director and each employee. Regular barometer checks included (30-45min) Weekly full team meetings on Mondays (share outs, troubleshooting, planning, updates, weekly priorities) (1hour) Weekly full team wrap up meetings on Thursdays (run through completed tasks, barriers, troubleshoot and notify of any necessary changes) (30min) Monthly Star Awards – anonymous nominations of our colleagues recognizing their contributions to work products, team culture, or anything else work related. Monthly team social hours - no work talk allowed. We play games, celebrate each other, share stories, and talk about food, pets and anything else under the sun. DEIJ anonymous culture surveys, and feedback from our consultant, Joshua Barr We will be hosting our first ever in person full team strategic retreat and bonding session Sept 20-22 in Miami!

**Please indicate the following policies for which your organization has a written commitment:**

Have partial policy / informal policy	A formal compensation policy to determine staff salaries
Have formal policy	Paid time off
Have formal policy	Sick days and personal leave
Have formal policy	Healthcare coverage
Have formal policy	Paid family and medical leave
Have partial policy / informal policy	Clearly defined essential functions for all positions, preferably with written job descriptions
Have formal policy	Annual (or more frequent) performance evaluations
Have formal policy	Formal onboarding or orientation process

Have partial policy / informal policy	Training and development available to each employee
Have partial policy / informal policy	A simple and transparent written procedure for employees to request additional training or support
Have formal policy	Flexible work hours
Have formal policy	Remote work option
	Paid internships
Have formal policy	A clearly written workplace code of ethics/conduct
Have formal policy	A written statement that the organization does not tolerate discrimination on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, or other irrelevant characteristics
Have formal policy	A simple and transparent written procedure for filing complaints
Have formal policy	Mandatory reporting of harassment and discrimination through all levels, up to and including the board of directors
Have formal policy	Explicit protocols for addressing concerns or allegations of harassment or discrimination
Have formal policy	Documentation of all reported instances of harassment or discrimination, along with the outcomes of each case
Have partial policy / informal policy	Regular training on topics such as harassment and discrimination in the workplace
Have formal policy	An anti-retaliation policy protecting whistleblowers and those who report grievances

**Is there anything else you'd like us to know about your organization's human resources policies?**

We are able to provide you with a copy of the Employee Handbook <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yZJGgycU7izuFI4UjzT54EqdeeE7LSfl/view?usp=sharing> which is reviewed and signed by each member of the team upon hiring, and are also able to provide you with our Policies document <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hTgd1kbCSYqzX3d6I7OPcR6Y1YGskSYd/view?usp=sharing> most recently updated April, 2022.

As with every other aspect of ALI, staff feedback is taken very seriously, and we strive to address everyone's concerns, and suggestions in a timely and thorough manner.

We prioritize a model of continuous improvement, and organizational leadership is committed to always be accessible, open to constructive feedback, and to lead with humility and humour.