

Tuna 2020 Traceability Declaration Traceability Traceability

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About The Global Tuna Alliance

The Global Tuna Alliance is an independent group of retailers and tuna supply chain companies, who are committed to realising harvest strategies for tuna fisheries, avoidance of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) products, improved traceability as well as environmental sustainability, and progressing work on human rights in tuna fisheries and to implementing the objectives laid out in World Economic Forum's Tuna 2020 Traceability Declaration as championed by Friends of Ocean Action.

They work collaboratively with member and non-member organizations to find industrywide solutions to efficiently implement actions to address Alliance and Tuna 2020 Traceability Declaration commitments on:

- Tuna Traceability
- Socially Responsible Tuna Supply Chains
- Environmentally Responsible Tuna Sources
- Government Partnership

In the summer of 2019 Stichting **Global Tuna Alliance** was incorporated as a foundation under the laws of the Netherlands.

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Purpose of toolkit



The aim of these toolkits is to provide support to Tuna 2020 Traceability Declaration signatories in meeting their commitments.

Each toolkit explains what each commitment seeks, the purpose of the commitment and how progress in achieving the commitment can be demonstrated. Where available, examples from companies that have met the commitment are presented.

The Tuna 2020 Traceability Declaration

The Tuna 2020 Traceability Declaration is a nonlegally binding declaration that grew out of a dialogue among governments, companies, and civil society, spurred by The Ocean Conference in June 2017 at the United Nations Headquarters that will focus on implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14).

Sixty-six companies, including retailers and other tuna supply chain businesses, signed the Declaration with the aim of stopping illegal tuna getting to market, and promoting improvements in the environmental sustainability and human rights in tuna fisheries. The declaration was supported by six national governments and 21 civil society organizations.

The Commitments of the Forum's Tuna 2020 Traceability Declaration are based on the following four pillars:

- Tuna Traceability Commitment
- Commitment to a Socially Responsible Tuna Supply Chain
- Commitment to Environmentally Responsible Tuna Sources
- Government Partnership





As the name suggests, traceability is a key component of the Tuna 2020 Traceability Declaration. We believe that improving traceability will significantly improve existing sustainability initiatives and shows the greatest promise for scalability into mainstream commercial activities.

The Tuna Traceability Commitment of the Declaration asks signatories to commit to the following action by 2020:

"We pledge that all tuna products in our supply chains will be fully traceable to the vessel and trip' dates, and that this information will be disclosed upon request at the Point of Sale either on the packaging or via an online system."

¹Recognizing the need for aggregated vessel and trip information from small-scale tuna fisheries.

What is traceability?

The ability to track and verify information about the origin and journey of seafood products as they pass through the supply chain is called traceability. Seafood is one of the most heavily traded commodities around the globe, often passing through many hands. This long and complex journey from bait to plate makes it difficult for product information to be recorded accurately, consistently, and shared openly throughout each step in the supply chain.

For companies that buy and sell seafood, the lack of product origin information and supply chain transparency can pose significant risks. These businesses can use traceability as a tool to collect seafood product details and leverage this information to reduce the risk of illegal and unethical activities in their supply chains.

The benefits of traceability

Moving towards electronic traceability throughout the entire supply chain creates a path to efficiently share standardized data. Ultimately, a verified and traceable supply chain can improve product recalls and give greater confidence that products are accurately labelled, legally harvested, and comply with responsible labour standards.

The Seafood Alliance for Legality and Traceability (SALT) is a five-year public-private partnership between USAID and the Walton Family, Packard, and Moore Foundations, and is implemented by FishWise, a non-profit sustainable seafood consultancy. SALT is a global alliance for knowledge exchange and action to promote legal and sustainable fisheries through improved transparency in seafood supply chains, has published two blogs synthesizing lessons gleaned from pilots around the globe which demonstrate examples of potential economic, environmental, and social return on investment (ROI) from traceability:

- Indirect Business Benefits of Electronic Traceability
- Economic Benefits of Electronic Traceability





Haven't we already got traceability in the seafood industry?

Many seafood companies have proprietary traceability systems (see SALT/FishWise's Seascape Map, which breaks down traceability initiatives and efforts around the globe), but unless the seafood industry adopts shared data communication standards and practices, proprietary traceability systems will often remain unable to communicate with each other. Moreover, there remains a range of inconsistent practices regarding the data to be collected, the degree to which that data is verifiable, and the degree to which the data is made readily available in electronic form to supply chain partners (and consumers).

Furthermore, when it comes to the collection of KDEs, both the gathering and transmission of the information should be interoperable in order to reduce the costs of traceability and improve data verifiability. A lack of interoperability also results in higher costs for acquiring new suppliers or customers, and can lead to companies becoming trapped within the systems designed by traceability vendors – a situation known as "vendor capture." In addition, the costs of getting good traceability information, or of forming new business relationships, can be unacceptably high without interoperability.

Many industries already operate full interoperable traceability including globally interoperable phone systems, banks and package delivery services etc. As the most globalized of all food commodities, the seafood industry needs traceability practices that deliver the same kind of globally successful results already present in these other industries.

The lack of interoperability of information collection practices and technology systems within the sector has far reaching consequences, as it affects the collaboration of businesses along the value chain and weakens businesses' ability to partner with other members of their value chain. The problem lies with the fact that the data is collected inconsistently and then lives across multiple providers and institutions, with the industry yet to fully conquer the challenge of exchanging and integrating this information, due to the use of multiple vocabularies, formats, and systems by all the players in the chain.

What is needed

To achieve this, and to help ensure that tuna is sourced from demonstrably legal fishing activities, globally agreed standards are needed to make traceability more affordable, more reliable, and universal. To begin with, efficient and effective traceability needs a set of standardized key data elements (KDEs) related to seafood production that meet the needs of processors, traders, and retailers across geographies and market subsectors. With standardized KDEs, it will be much easier to meet growing commercial and regulatory demands to demonstrate product legality, contribute to sustainability, and/or avoid costly scandals.

In addition, the seafood industry needs to adopt shared data communication standards and practices, otherwise proprietary traceability systems will remain often unable to communicate with each other even if standarized KDEs are in use.

The Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability

(GDST) (Box 1) has brought together industry and stakeholders to address both these needs through identification of a universal set of basic KDEs and a set of IT standards for interoperability. The result is the **GDST** Standards and Guidelines for Interoperable Seafood Traceability Systems, v1.0 (the 'Standards'). The Standards themselves, along with an executive summary, explanatory materials, and an introductory webinar are available on the **GDST** website.

Box 1.

The Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST)

The **GDST** is an international, business-to-business platform established to advance a unified framework for interoperable seafood traceability practices. After three years of intensive work among more than five dozen companies across the seafood industry worldwide, in March 2020 the **GDST** released the first-ever global industry standards to support interoperability among traceability systems.

- The GDST standards are intended to:
- Improve the reliability of seafood information
- Reduce the cost of seafood traceability
- Contribute to supply chain risk reduction, especially by eliminiating IUU products from supply chains

Contribute to securing the long-term social and environmental sustainability of the sector.

- The **GDST** Standards create an aligned global framework for seafood traceability which includes:
- Internationally agreed key data elements (KDEs) to be routinely associated with seafood products;
- 2. Technical specifications for interoperable traceability systems that are tailored for use across the entire seafood supply chain while being platform and vendor-neutral.

This framework will also support ongoing work towards agreed benchmarks for verifying data validity and harmonisation of business-smart national regulations to help reduce compliance burdens.

Many companies and industry collaborations (including the **GTA** and **SeaBOS**), as well as NGOs and technology and traceability systems providers have already endorsed the **GDST** Standards.

Performance of Tuna 2020 Traceability Declaration signatories

An online survey was developed by the Global Tuna Alliance and circulated to Declaration signatories to find out how they have been addressing the declaration's four commitments. The results have been used to generate a progress report which highlights examples of best practice, where commitments have been met, and the methods or systems used to develop plans for improvement.

The survey found that significant progress has been made by signatories on meeting the traceability commitment. All fishery, distributor and food service companies reported that tuna products in their supply chains are traceable to vessels and trip dates, as did all processors save one. The remaining responses, from retail and 'other' categories, reported that tuna products in company supply chains are traceable to fisheries but not to vessel or trip dates.

No company stated that tuna products in its supply chain are not yet traceable although two retailers noted that they are in the process of making tuna products in their supply chain traceable. When asked if the traceable information is disclosed to the consumer at point of sale the responses were positive with the majority of answers being 'yes' or 'working on it'. The further away the respondee from point of harvest (i.e. retailers and food service companies), the lower the proportion of product that meets the commitment.

The traceability commitment was found to have little or no obstacles reported by respondees which may reflect the length of time companies have been working on seafood traceability systems that are required under general food laws. When the responses to this question are analysed by sector it is noticeable that the earlier steps in the chain reported little or no obstacles more frequently. This is possibly due to the shorter distance from the vessel and/or that several of the respondees are participating companies in the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) which has a specific traceability conservation measure (Box 2). The later segments of the chain found lack of personnel to be a more frequent obstacle.

When asked what support is required to meet the traceability commitment, responses were few which aligns with the generally high performance of respondees meeting this commitment and the initiatives underway in this area. However, four separate companies requested standardisation of data, also known as interoperability.



Box 2.

ISSF & Traceability

ISSF Participating Companies (25) represent a majority of the global canned tuna processing capacity. The **ISSF** system includes the following elements:

- Traceability as a foundation: Any tuna processor, marketer or trader that commits to comply with science-based conservation measures that are adopted by the ISSF Board of Directors, commits to an independent compliance audit process and to abide by a compliance policy, and successfully completes an initial audit of its traceability system, may become an ISSF participating company. The traceability audit is to assess a company's ability to implement the full suite of ISSF Conservation Measures.
- Public Conservation Measures & Commitments: ISSF Conservation Measure 2.1 requires processors, traders and marketers to demonstrate traceability from vessel to final buyer. Such traceability procedures must record the vessel name, flag, UVI, species, ocean of capture, fishing trip dates, fishing gear employed, date company took ownership of the fish and each species by weight. This ISSF system meets the GDST Standard 1.0 minimum key data elements (KDEs), and goes beyond the GDST by requiring independent verification. In addition, ISSF has Conservation Measures on transparency of sourcing information (CMs 2.2, 2.3, 2.4).
- Annual independent and transparent audits of compliance: ISSF participating company conformance with all ISSF Conservation Measures is annually and independently audited. Individual compliance audit results, and their updates, are published transparently.
- Credible Compliance Policy: All ISSF participating companies must also adhere to a Compliance Policy, which is publicly available. The policy outlines the process and responses for failures of companies to cooperate with the audits, respond to requests for documentation, provide access to the auditors, or if untrue statements or material facts are submitted, among other things. The Policy also prescribes a schedule of actions for non-conformances, failure to remediate such non-conformances and repeated instances of non-conformances, including more frequent audits, referral to the Compliance Committee, and termination.

This system is already broadly in use in the tuna supply chains of Retailers, Wholesalers and Foodservice operators:

Leading global and regional
Retailers, Wholesalers and Foodservice operators, etc. have adopted the ISSF Conservation Measures and/or the ProActive Vessel Register (PVR) into their supply chain requirements.

Those who've adopted this

 system comprise a large portion of global food retail sales, including 14 of the top 20 retailers, foodservice operators, and wholesalers.

The ISSF ProActive Vessel Register (PVR) is a public Web database that tracks detailed information. including with respect to certain fishing activities, of tuna fishing and support vessels. A third party, independent auditor audits all vessels that join the PVR including how these vessels comply with science-based best practices designed to improve responsible practices in tuna fishing, thereby enabling transparency in vessel operations. The PVR provides validated information to tuna purchasers and interested stakeholders about each vessel's implementation of specific best practices. There are more than 1300 vessels of all gear types registered on the PVR. For example, Purse Seine vessels on the PVR account for >80% of largescale purse seine capacity



What you can do to meet the traceability commitment

The Global Tuna Alliance has determined that companies should do the following to assist in meeting the traceability commitment:

- Endorse the Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST) Standards and Guidelines for Interoperable Seafood Traceability Systems (Version 1.0) as the minimum industry-wide standards for seafood traceability and commit to specific timelines for implementation and verification. This can be achieved by companies joining the GDST 'adoption statement' which declares your support for the GDST 1.0 standards to be accepted as the new global industry standard for seafood traceability.
- 2. Conduct internal and supply chain assessments to map a path towards full

implementation of the GDST standards.²

- Make a public, time-bound commitment to meet or exceed GDST standards (including use of the minimum Key Data Elements (KDEs).³
- 4. If a company has already been implementing a verifiable traceability scheme that meets or exceeds the **GDST** Standard, share lessonslearned and advocate for wider industry adoption of the **GDST** as a minimum standard.
- Ensure that for those already meeting and verifying GDST minimum KDEs⁴ there is interoperability via the GDST IT standards

These actions can be achieved by working collaboratively with the **GDST**.

To further support companies, the GTA has organised a series of educational webinars on each commitment. For the traceability commitment, the following webinars have been hosted.





² This step should include (i) engaging and informing key operational staff; (ii) using the GDST's "Rapid Initial Assessment" and "Supplier Assessment Survey" tools (available from the GDST Secretariat) to assess internal systems and supply chains for readiness to alignment with GDST standards; and (iii) determining steps required to implement and verify the achievement of the GDST 1.0 standards. ³ Enabling products to be traceable to a vessel or groups of vessels, trip dates, catch method, catch area and the ability to disclose those data to end customers. ⁴ ISSF Conservation Measures and Commitments 2018

Implementing Full Chain Traceability – Where Industry Can Start

SALT's traceability resource repository: Dive Deeper

GDST		
Document title	Contents	Translations
Guide to the GDST 1.0 Materials	Overview of GDST 1.0 packet contents + "How to use these documents"	
Executive Summary	Two-page description of GDST 1.0	Chinese & Japanese
Core Normative Standards	The GDST 1.0 standards themselves	Chinese & Japanese
Basic Universal List of KDEs (spreadsheet)	e-spreadsheet of Appendices to Core Normative Standards	Japanese
Explanatory Materials	Non-technical background and introductory materials	Chinese
Technical Implementation Guidance	Additional technical materials to facilitate implementation	Chinese

ISSF Traceability Resources

ISSF Conservation Measures & Commitments

1.1 Vessel on RFMO Authorized Vessel Record

1.2 Vessel is Flagged to RFMO member or cooperating non-member

2.1 Product Traceability (From Vessel to Finished Product, includes name, flag, UVI, species, ocean of capture, fishing trip dates, fishing gear employed, date company took ownership of the fish and each species by weight)

2.2 Quarterly Catch Data Submissions to RFMO

2.3 Product Labeling by Species and Area of Capture

2.4 Supply Chain Transparency

ISSF Compliance and Verification Tools

Annual Compliance Reports

Participating Company Audit Reports

Audit Process and Protocols

ISSF ProActive Vessel Register (PVR) and other Information Resources

Proactive Vessel Register

Proactive Vessel Register audit process and protocols

Proactive Vessel Register application process

ISSF ProActive Vessel Register (PVR) Information Resources

Vessel Databases

Proactive Vessel Register

Unique Vessel Identifier Database

IMO Database

Record of Large-Scale Purse Seine Vessels

Resources



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