

Buyer Engagement Strategy Team Working Group

*'Common Ground'
for Buyer Engagement
in support of
Tuna Sustainability Improvement*

September 30, 2014

Discussion Topics

- Participating Organizations
- Purpose
- “Common Ground’: We Agree....
- Summary

Participating Organizations

- Leading environmental organizations (eNGOs) formed the Buyer Engagement Strategy Team (BEST) Working Group in October, 2013.
- Participating organizations include:



**New England
Aquarium**

Protecting the blue planet

Monterey Bay Aquarium
Seafood Watch



Purpose

- To document the current consensus among Buyer Engagement Strategy Team (BEST) participants related to engaging buyers to support tuna sustainability improvement.
- To identify areas of disagreement or outstanding issues, if any.
- To be a catalyst for concrete and coordinated efforts among participating eNGOs to engage with buyers.

We agree...

- To champion a comprehensive standard for tuna sustainability that incorporates key environmental factors.
 - Stock sustainability (health)
 - Minimize eco-system impact
 - Effective management
- To work toward improving global tuna stocks to meet the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) standard without conditions.
- To stand behind a process of continual improvement toward the MSC standard that is science-based, measured and transparent.
- To empower buyers (e.g., retailers, foodservice, importers, processors) to actively engage in science-based tuna sustainability efforts.
 - With Suppliers (e.g., processors, vessels)
 - With RFMOs

We agree...

- To encourage buyers to adopt a minimum tuna procurement benchmark incorporating ISSF conservation measures¹ AND vessels registered on the ISSF ProActive Vessel Register (PVR)².
- To provide sourcing guidance that fosters improvement toward MSC:
 - MSC certified/logo product, to the extent that is practically available, **or**
 - Sources of supply in transition toward sustainability, including:
 - Fishery Improvement Project (FIP)
 - ISSF participating companies or companies that adhere to ISSF conservation measures with the same level of auditing and traceability; AND Vessels registered on the ProActive Vessel Register (PVR)
 - For all sources, require traceability and transparency through the supply chain to the vessel level.

¹Summary of ISSF Conservation Measures: <http://iss-foundation.org/resources/downloads/?did=382>; and ISSF Resolutions Operative Paragraphs: <http://iss-foundation.org/resources/downloads/?did=458>

²About the ISSF ProActive Vessel Register (PVR): <http://iss-foundation.org/resources/downloads/?did=387>

We agree...

- Different gear types have different degrees of environmental impacts and each fishery has room for continual improvement. While buyers are encouraged to source from tuna fisheries with fewer impacts, no single gear type, alone, is a credible and practical solution to the sustainability of global tuna stocks for all markets. All gear types must be monitored and managed.
- To advise buyers that additional sourcing requirements (e.g., catch method) are based on robust science and implement traceability³ and auditing/ compliance protocols to ensure the integrity and veracity of claims associated with these requirements.

³ ISSF Resolution 09-04 (Product Traceability) resolves to credibly trace products from capture to plate. The measure states that the traceability procedure will record the name and flag of catcher and transshipping vessels, fish species, ocean of capture corresponding to tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organization area, fishing trip dates, fishing gear employed, date the company took ownership of the fish and each species by weight. (All ISSF participating companies are audited for compliance.)

<http://iss-foundation.org/2009/07/21/resolution-09-04-product-traceability/>

We agree...

- To apply this sourcing guidance to all sales channels (e.g. retail, foodservice) and product forms (e.g., fresh, frozen, canned, pouch), gear types, etc.
- To collaborate and coordinate our buyer engagement efforts to maximize effectiveness and efficiency.

We agree...

- To encourage and enable buyers to support eNGO advocacy for improved Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) management required to meet the MSC standard.

Purse Seine:

- Reference Points and Harvest Control Rules (HCRs)
- Vessel Registries and Fleet Capacity
- FAD Management and non-entangling FAD designs
- Improving and Strengthening RFMO Compliance Assessment Process and Tools to Address Non-Compliance
- 100% Observer Coverage for Large-Scale Purse-Seine Vessels (*if applicable*)
- Full Tuna Retention (*if applicable*)
- Improve Data Reporting in Poorly Monitored Fisheries (*where applicable*)
- Transparency in chartering arrangements and access agreements.

We agree...

- To encourage and enable buyers to support eNGO advocacy for improved RFMO management required to meet the MSC standard

Longline:

- Reference Points and Harvest Control Rules (HCRs)
- Vessel Registries and Fleet Capacity
- Compliance and Transparency (including in access and chartering agreements)
- Bycatch mitigation and shark conservation and management
- Observers & Electronic monitoring systems (EMS) and electronic skippers logbooks and observer reporting
- Transshipment regulation

Pole & Line:

- Catch and effort collection and submission of data to RFMOs
- Baitfish management

We agree...

- To support buyers who wish to contribute more deeply to improvement efforts... Opportunities include:
 - Formation/Participation in FIPs
 - Sponsorship of scientific research (e.g., ISSF Bycatch Mitigation project)
 - Implementation of non-entangling FADs
 - Contribute to Baitfish management initiatives
 - Support skipper training initiatives for all gear types
 - Development of technology solutions to sustainability challenges
 - Encouraging suppliers to ensure, at a minimum, that sourcing vessels of all gears:
 - Are not on the IUU list of any tuna RFMO
 - Are on the authorized vessel record of the RFMO, if required by the RFMO
 - Are flagged to member/cooperating non-member of the relevant RFMO
 - Have an IMO number or other unique vessel identifier
 - Do not engage in shark finning and have a company policy prohibiting shark finning.

Summary

- The BEST working group has documented its current consensus related to engaging buyers in support of tuna sustainability improvement.
- Highlights of this ‘Common Ground’ document include our agreement to:
 - Improve the sustainability of global tuna stocks to meet the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification standard without conditions.
 - Engage and empower buyers (regardless of sales channel) to actively and credibly use their influence to drive improvement.
 - Adopt a shared principle for sourcing guidance.
 - Recommend a minimum procurement benchmark incorporating ISSF participating companies and vessels registered on the PVR, regardless of channel, product form, gear type, etc.
 - Adopt shared priorities for RMFO advocacy efforts.
- The BEST group can now proceed to develop plans to conduct coordinated buyer engagement (e.g., joint buyer meetings, buyer advocacy support)