Procurement Specs Ecological Sustainability Measures for Pelagic Longline-Caught Tuna and Tuna-like Species[1]

Version 1 (July 2012)[2]

To aid SFP corporate partners in avoiding exceeding a level of acceptable reputation risk, the following ecological sustainability measures are recommended for inclusion in procurement specifications for products supplied by pelagic longline fisheries, including fresh and frozen tuna and tuna-like-species and albacore (white-meat) tuna for canning.

Measures are placed into one of four categories: (i) general; (ii) traceability and IUU, (iii) target stock status, and (iv) ecosystem effects. Measures within each category are then categorized into three levels along a continuum from minimum and least onerous to more demanding measures that are relatively burdensome for capture sector compliance and likely have a larger effect on supply.

The more demanding measures are intended to be implemented in addition to, and not in lieu of, the minimum measures. This design provides an a la carte continuum of measures to enable flexibility to meet individual company requirements, based on your volume of pelagic longline-supplied products and acceptable level of market reputation risk.

General Measures

Minimum/nominally-demanding measures

1. The port of landing must implement port sampling and unloading/transshipment monitoring rates that meets scientific advice.
2. Vessels that operate on the high seas are flagged to a nation that is a member or cooperating non-member of the relevant tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO).

Medium-level demanding measures (in addition to those above)

3. For fisheries rated medium or high risk via assessment against the SFP FishSource methodology, require evidence that the fishery is in a Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP) Stage 3 or higher (as defined by SFP), or otherwise the FIP is at an earlier stage with evidence of steady progression towards Stage 3.[3]

More demanding measures (in addition to those above)

4. Onboard observer coverage rates meet scientific advice.[4]

IUU and Product Traceability

Minimum/nominally-demanding measures

1. Actively avoid purchasing IUU-caught product. This should include:

[1] Tuna and tuna-like species typically refers to the suborder Scombroidei, including the tropical and temperate tunas, billfishes, bonitos, and other tuna-like species.

[2] SFP will revise and publish subsequent versions following lessons learned from trials of the specs by retailers and buyers.

[3] Ensure that the FIP is using the work-plan and reporting templates developed by SFP (http://www.sustainablefish.org/fisheries-improvement/fip-toolkit/fip-toolkit-overview).

[4] Applicable to vessels that are a subset of a fishery if traceability mechanisms enables tracing product to the vessel, otherwise applicable to the fishery as a whole.

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- Requiring your suppliers to sign SFP's control document (which states you will cease sourcing from any supplier which gives you or any of your competitors the following problems: (a) found to be supplying IUU product, (b) refuses an audit for IUU or (c) fails an audit for IUU).
- Implementating a formal program for periodic random audits.
- Adopting an IUU risk assessment and action plan.

2. The final product can be traced to an individual fishery and group of vessels as verified by internal desk-based audit.
3. If operating within the convention area of a tuna-RFMO, then the vessel is on an authorized vessel list of the relevant RFMO.
4. No supplying vessels are on an RFMO IUU list.

Medium-level demanding measures (in addition to those above)

5. The source fishery has sufficient management in place to address IUU in terms of:
   - Data collection protocols and data reporting enable assessment of compliance with RFMO and national control measures.
   - Surveillance methods are required that enable assessment of compliance with all binding conservation and management measures and effectively identify infractions, and there is transparency with surveillance activities such that information on surveillance activities is readily publicly available.
   - Enforcement occurs: identified infractions routinely result in the assessment of penalties, and there is transparency with enforcement activities such that information on enforcement activities is readily publicly available.
   - Official sanctions (or market imposed costs) that are assessed when an infraction of a binding conservation and management measure occurs provide a strong incentive for compliance, and there is transparency with the outcomes of enforcement actions, such that information on penalties is readily publicly available. In other words, source only from fisheries where penalties for violating rules are sufficiently high and surveillance is effective so that vessels in the fleet have a large economic incentive to comply with the rules.
6. The supplier has a formal policy and procedure for product full traceability that ensures full-traceability integrity and minimizes risk of sourcing IUU caught tuna:
   - Nominated individual responsible for full-traceability, IUU checks and related queries;
   - Product batch full traceability to legal individual catching fishing vessel;
   - Effective and accurate sorting of species raw material at first cold store and assurance of species segregation and identification at all stages, i.e., carrier, truck, storage, processing, packing;
   - Mass-balance demonstration that incoming raw material match outgoing production weights, accounting for differences;
   - Internal auditing of full traceability integrity along the entire supply chain back to catch and vessel legality to validate that the fish was legally caught.

More demanding measures (in addition to those above)

7. Independent third-party full traceability audit and a system for addressing corrective actions in place.
8. Catch certificate from the vessel flag authority or fishery authority for the product assuring the vessel complied with all regulations for that trip.
9. Fishery occurs in the Convention Area of a tuna RFMO that publicly discloses all identified infractions of binding obligations by its members and members' vessels, and the outcomes of enforcement procedures, both by the RFMO against Members and by the Member against vessels with detected violations.
10. No at-sea transshipment without 100% observer coverage.
11. Fishery is in compliance with all RFMO conservation and management measures.
12. Fishery is in compliance with all national control measures.

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Stock Status

Minimum/nominally-demanding measures

1. If stocks subject to mortality in the fishery are overfished or are experiencing overfishing, then require evidence that the fishery is in a Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP) Stage 3 or higher (as defined by SFP), or otherwise the FIP is at an earlier stage with evidence of steady progression towards Stage 3.

Medium-level demanding measures (in addition to those above)

2. Source from regions where stocks subject to mortality in the fishery are overfished or for which overfishing is occurring per the most recent stock assessment findings only if:
   (a) Legally binding science-based conservation and management measures are in place by the relevant tuna RFMO that are designed to achieve rebuilding of overexploited stocks and comply with recommendations made by the RFMO's scientific committee, or
   (b) There is strong scientific consensus (e.g., based on the most recent stock assessment findings or advice from the RFMO's scientific committee) that exceeding reference points does not warrant a conservation concern because the RFMO has adopted adequate, scientific-based conservation and management measures, where fishing activity is expected to fluctuate about target biological reference points.

More demanding measures (in addition to those above)

3. Avoid sourcing from overexploited stocks: Limit biological reference points have been adopted based on scientific advice for principal market species, and none of these stocks are currently exceeding limit reference points based on the most recent stock assessment findings; and input (capacity) and/or output (catch levels) control measures are set conservatively to guard against overexploitation.
4. Control measures implement an ecosystem approach to fisheries management: Multispecies pelagic ecosystem models, indicators and ecosystem-level reference points have been developed by the RFMO's scientific committee, binding control measures have been adopted based on the multispecies ecosystem-level reference points, and the fishery is not exceeding ecosystem-level reference points.

Ecosystem Effects

Minimum/nominally-demanding measures

1. A Level 1 (qualitative assessment based on expert and stakeholder opinion) or Level 2 (semi-quantitative assessment, for example, through a productivity – susceptibility analysis) Ecological Risk Assessment has been conducted for the fishery to identify species and groups most likely to be vulnerable to fisheries overexploitation as a result of their life history characteristics and susceptibility to capture in the fishery.
2. If hard-shelled sea turtle bycatch occurs, then hooks as wide as determined to be economically viable at their narrowest point and fish bait are used, and narrower hooks, squid bait and lightsticks are prohibited.
3. If leatherback sea turtle bycatch occurs, then fish bait is used, and squid bait and lightsticks are prohibited. If relative risks to affected leatherback populations exceed risks to shark populations subject to fishing mortality, then wide circle hooks are prescribed and narrower J-shaped J and tuna hooks are prohibited.
4. If seabird bycatch occurs, then effective seabird bycatch mitigation methods are employed, such as night setting plus branchline weighting, or side setting plus branchline weighting, or bird-scaring tori line plus branchline weighting.
5. If shark populations subject to fishing mortality are overexploited or otherwise the status of the stock is not known, shark bycatch levels and/or rates are high (e.g., >15% of the catch), and the mortality rate of caught sharks is high (i.e., most caught sharks are retained or are released dead or injured

to degree where research shows post-release survival rates are low), then prohibit the use of squid for bait.

Medium-level demanding measures (in addition to those above)

6. Data collection protocols and data reporting enable assessment of the sustainability of fishing mortality levels and rates of all stocks/populations subject to fishing mortality, including populations of species groups determined to be at risk of fisheries overexploitation based on a Level 2 Productivity-Susceptibility Ecological Risk Assessment.
7. The efficacy of binding measures adopted in order to mitigate problematic bycatch has been assessed, and adaptive management has been taken to correct any measures found to be ineffective, for example, in avoiding limit bycatch rates or levels.

More demanding measures (in addition to those above)

8. A Level 3 Ecological Risk Assessment has been conducted, documenting population-level effects from fishing mortality.
9. Vessel operates in the Convention Area of a tuna RFMO that mandates onboard observers to collect data on all sources of fishing mortality, including retained and discarded catch, and the disposition of discards.
10. If shark populations subject to fishing mortality are overexploited or otherwise the status of the stock is not known, if shark bycatch levels and/or rates are high (e.g., >15% of the catch), and mortality rate of caught sharks is high, then prohibit the use of wire leaders.
11. If bycatch of sea turtles and sharks occurs, then all baited hooks in a basket (between two floats) soak below 100m.
12. If cetacean bycatch occurs and scientists determine that mortality in this fishery might cause population-level effects, then require the use of circle hooks and 'weak hooks'. Weak hooks have a wire diameter that allows the hook to straighten with a pull strain force that is determined to result in acceptable risk of loss of target species, and acceptable risk of cetacean capture, and where the hook fails before other branch line components (i.e., the hook is the weakest component of the terminal tackle).
13. Best practice handling and release techniques are employed to maximize survival rates of all species of released catch (sharks and other fish, turtles, seabirds, marine mammals), including prohibited use of lazy lines.
14. Discard rates of incidental marketable species and sizes are low – in other words, the fishery utilizes as many of the individuals of all fish species and sizes that are incidentally killed as economically practicable.
15. If predictable well-defined hotspots of (i) high ratios of bycatch of vulnerable species (juvenile swordfish, sea turtles, seabirds, marine mammals, sharks) to marketable catch, or (ii) biodiversity hotspots have been identified with due scientific process, then the fishery is subject to time/area closures at these hotspots.
16. Management authorities have conducted ecological risk assessments to understand both (i) the risk of population-level effects of fishing mortality, including vulnerable species groups (sharks, seabirds, sea turtles, marine mammals, other fish species), and (ii) effects on ecosystem structure and processes from fishery removals, and findings of problematic ecosystem effects are being managed through binding measures.
17. All population assessments of sensitive species groups subject to fishing mortality have been conducted and management measures are in place that meet scientific recommendations to mitigate the risk of causing population-level declines of species that are vulnerable to fisheries overexploitation due to their life history characteristics and susceptibility to fishing mortality, and allow for rebuilding and recovery of listed endangered and threatened species.