



**for a living planet**

## TUNA PROCUREMENT GUIDELINES

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Tuna is a critical component of the marine ecosystem as well as an important seafood commodity. As with many popular fish species, tuna are under significant anthropogenic stress, and almost all of the 23 commercially harvested tuna stocks face heavy fishing pressure, with some stocks overexploited, some overfished, and most others fully exploited; few (mostly skipjack) remain underexploited. Traded globally, these fish significantly support national economies, sustain millions of livelihoods and provide essential animal proteins to millions more.

WWF believes we must move the tuna fisheries into a sustainable state for benefit of the planet and the people that depend on this fish. These procurement guidelines are intended to provide a stepwise process to support tuna purchasers move toward responsibly sourced tuna product which ultimately progresses towards compliance with the Marine Stewardship Council standard for wild-capture fisheries. Additionally, full traceability should be ensured along the entire supply chain from boat to shelves.

### **NOTE:**

We recommend companies refrain from purchasing Atlantic, Pacific and southern species of bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*, *T. orientalis* and *T. maccoyii*) in the near term<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> This approach should be adopted until science-based reference points and harvest control measures have been adopted by the relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and the stocks are on a recovery program, above a limit reference points and with a 'high probability of reaching sustainable levels' within at least two generation times. For the East Atlantic and Mediterranean stock of Atlantic bluefin tuna, if MSC certification is achieved, prior to Chain of Custody and the MSC logo as a minimum, WWF recommends only sourcing fully traceable and legally harvested tuna compliant with the ICCAT's electronic bluefin tuna catch document (e-BCD) made available to the final consumer in order to trace the fish fully from boat to shelves.

## Tuna<sup>1</sup> Procurement Guidelines:

1. Preferentially procure Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)<sup>ii</sup> certified tuna products, ensuring that all fishery certifications as well as Chain of Custody certifications are in place and valid. This step can be verified by the restaurant / retailer / supplier / importer independently using the links referenced in the Notes and Clarifications below.

**If unfeasible;**

2. The tuna species appears on the WWF-SASSI database<sup>iii</sup> as Green-listed. This step can be verified by the restaurant / retailer / supplier / importer independently using the link referenced in the Notes and Clarifications below.

**If unfeasible;**

3. The tuna species appears on the WWF Network Seafood Database as either Light Green or Green. This step would have to be verified by WWF-SA as access to the Network database is restricted. At the discretion of WWF-SA, this assessment could be adopted on the WWF-SASSI database during the next assessment cycle.

**If unfeasible;**

4. Move all wild-caught tuna products towards improved sustainability by preferentially sourcing from:

i) Fisheries that are implementing a WWF approved Fishery Improvement Project (FIP)<sup>iv</sup>, the vessels fulfil all International Seafood Sustainability Foundation's (ISSF)<sup>v</sup> ProActive Vessel Register (PVR)<sup>vi</sup> criteria and have a method of ensuring the traceability of promoted products from fishing vessel to plate<sup>vii</sup>.

**If unfeasible;**

ii) An International Seafood Sustainability Association (ISSA) participating company<sup>viii</sup> that implements all ISSF Conservation and Management Measures and submits its annual audit report for compliance against these measures. Furthermore, the ISSA participating company identified should provide a list of all source tuna vessels, all of which should be listed on the PVR. This should be verified by cross-checking against the PVR database<sup>ix</sup> and progress of non-compliant vessels on the PVR should be tracked annually;

**if unfeasible;**

iii: An ISSA participating company that implements all ISSF Conservation and Management Measures, submits its annual audit report for compliance against these measures. Furthermore the ISSA participating company identified provides a list of all source tuna vessels and a time bound strategy to ensure that all source tuna vessels register on the PVR is developed by the restaurant / retailer / supplier / importer that is implementing this strategy. Progress against PVR targets should be reported annually by the restaurant / retailer / supplier / importer that is implementing this strategy.

- **For all source farms and fisheries meeting the above criteria, WWF-SASSI will support communications by retailers and suppliers that these sources are in line with their commitments to sustainable seafood.** However, the support from WWF-SASSI on these communications is reliant on full transparency in the process. Restaurants / retailers / suppliers / importers who are implementing this strategy should publically communicate progress in either FIPs, ISSF or PVR related targets by listing all source farms or fisheries, the sustainability objectives of each of these fisheries as well as the associated timelines for reaching these objectives. These communications must be updated annually to reflect progress on the sustainability objectives.
- **Source farms or fisheries that do not meet the above criteria would not be considered as Under Improvement<sup>x</sup> by WWF-SASSI, however they should be encouraged to engage in improving the sustainability practices of their operations to meet the above requirements. Should the source fishery not want to engage in improving the sustainability practices of their operations, WWF-SASSI cannot support retailers and suppliers that continue to procure from these sources.**
- All new procurement should come from sustainable sources by selecting fish from well-managed fisheries that meet the criteria above.

## NOTES AND CLARIFICATIONS

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<sup>i</sup> Canned: Mainly skipjack (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) and yellowfin (*Thunnus albacares*), some albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*) and bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*).

Fresh and Frozen: Mainly yellowfin (*Thunnus albacares*) and bigeye (*Thunnus obesus*).

<sup>ii</sup> MSC certified fisheries are listed on the MSC website and can be found here: <https://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/fisheries-in-the-program/fisheries-by-species/fisheries-by-species#tuna>

<sup>iii</sup> The WWF-SASSI list can be found here: <http://wwfsassi.co.za/sassi-list/>

<sup>iv</sup> WWF-approved Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) as defined by the WWF Guidelines on Fisheries in Transition defined Fishery Improvement Projects as focused initiatives with the goal of enabling a fishery to reach the necessary sustainability standards to enter full assessment by a credible third party assessment scheme, in this case the MSC.

<sup>v</sup> The International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) aims to Improve the sustainability of global tuna stocks by developing and implementing verifiable, science-based practices, commitments and international management measures that result in tuna fisheries meeting the MSC certification standard, without conditions, and becoming the industry standard for vessel owners, traders, processors and marketers. More information can be found here: <http://iss-foundation.org/>.

<sup>vi</sup> The ISSF has launched the ProActive Vessel Register (PVR), an innovative and effective way for vessel owners to identify themselves as active participants in meaningful sustainability efforts. More information about the PVR can be found here: <http://iss-foundation.org/pvr/>

<sup>vii</sup> All supply chain businesses, including subcontractors and secondary processors, shall have a documented traceability system in place able to trace all products from purchase and delivery through to sales. The traceability system shall:

- a) Use labels, bar codes or other unique identifier to link products and information
- b) Record minimum product information at every step (collected from suppliers, during processing, packaging, delivery, etc.)
- c) Deliver the required information in an electronic format.

In addition, the following information confirming the origin of seafood shall be kept for every product:

In the case of a wild-caught prawn product:

- a) Common and scientific fish names
- b) Fishing method and gear type
- c) Fishing area (country of origin)
- d) Information on the vessel (including name)
- e) Date of catch, ports of entry, landings and any transshipment.

For further information, see the WWF Traceability Principles for wild-caught fish products (<http://bit.ly/1KkuW4Y>).

<sup>viii</sup> ISSA is a trade association whose members are tuna processors and marketers who, by virtue of their ISSA membership, agree to follow the conservation measures implemented by the ISSF. More information can be found here: <http://iss-association.org/>.

<sup>ix</sup> The PVR database is available here: <http://iss-foundation.org/pvr-database/>.

<sup>x</sup> A definition of what is considered as Under Improvement by WWF-SASSI can be found in the WWF-SASSI communications around species Under Improvement document that can be downloaded from <http://wwfsassi.co.za/sassi-participants/>.