



IPNLF
FOR ONE-BY-ONE FISHERS

Fisheries Improvement Toolbox

A world with thriving fisheries that work in balance with
nature by catching one fish at a time

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IPNLF Fisheries Improvement Toolbox



Why is the FIT needed?

All fisheries have the potential to improve their environmental sustainability, support local livelihoods and advance financial equity. They should be tasked with sufficiently evidencing the social benefits and sustainable actions associated with their operations. A responsible seafood industry must not compromise marine ecosystems or the social welfare of workers involved in producing seafood products. However, in order to be genuinely fit for purpose and achieve the greatest positive impacts possible, tangible fishery improvements must also accommodate local contexts and truly implement best environmental, social and economic practices.

Coastal communities fishing one-by-one naturally employ the most sustainable methods that best align with the global ambition outlined by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** that were adopted in 2015 by the Heads of State and Government at a special UN summit.

The 2030 Agenda is a commitment to eradicate poverty and represents a shared global vision towards sustainable development for all, ensuring that no one is left behind.

One-by-one fisheries are diverse by nature and therefore improvements need to be tailored to the needs of each fishery, rather than through a prescriptive 'one-size fits all' approach. In response, the **Fisheries Improvement Toolbox (FIT)** has been created as a voluntary mechanism for the fisheries and companies that IPNLF work with to collaboratively engage in implementing improvements. The FIT does not require fisheries to address all problems at once in a pre-defined way, but instead is a versatile framework that proactively accommodates the needs of IPNLF Members and facilitates the targeted improvements identified by companies as the key issues they want to address.

Ultimately, improvements implemented under the FIT will provide the market with assurance that the seafood they procure is responsibly produced.



What is the FIT?

The **Fisheries Improvement Toolbox (FIT)**, is designed to encourage and support the implementation of targeted improvements in one-by-one fisheries and their receiving supply chains. IPNLF are the global one-by-one tuna fishery and supply chain specialists, and the FIT provides a framework whereby we can offer tailor-made project support and consultancy services to our Members. The FIT also provides a clear pathway to our Members so that they can actively engage in collaborative improvements made in the fisheries they source from, and in their associated supply chains.

The FIT is underpinned by a holistic understanding of sustainability, offering a framework for social, economic, environmental and operational improvements. The FIT has five main components that will help facilitate targeted improvements in one-by-one supply chains:

1. **Social Responsibility Tool**
2. **Ecosystem and Management Tool**
3. **Traceability Improvement Tool**
4. **Plastic Neutrality Tool**
5. **Seafood Quality Assurance Tool**

Each of the "Tools" listed provides an opportunity for IPNLF Members to directly engage with IPNLF to co-develop tailored fishery improvements for their supply chains. Our Members will benefit from IPNLF's many years of unique experience improving the performance and sustainability of one-by-one fisheries on a global scale. By directly engaging with the FIT, our Members have the opportunity to leverage our collective expertise, as well as those of our specialist networks, to help one-by-one fisheries continue to excel in global seafood markets.

The FIT, 2025 Commitment & STP

IPNLF's **Member Code of Conduct**, our **2025 Commitment** and our **Sourcing Transparency Platform (STP)** are all geared towards driving improvements on the water and in supply chains where one-by-one tuna is processed and traded. The FIT provides the framework for our Members to implement improvements while continuing to supply socially responsible and environmentally sustainable one-by-one tuna to markets.

When IPNLF Members seek to demonstrate their responsible seafood sourcing on the STP, they can also target strategic improvements to specific seafood supply chain issues by engaging IPNLF directly through its FIT. The FIT is designed to work collaboratively alongside IPNLF's STP and when combined, these tools offer Members a way to transparently demonstrate their ongoing improvements and responsible performance to all stakeholders in seafood supply chains, including end-consumers.

How do I engage with the FIT?

STEP 1 - ENGAGE



IPNLF Member identifies an issue(s) in their fishery or supply chain that requires improvement and then makes a confidential request for support through the engagement of single or multiple FIT Tool(s). Enquiries can either be directed to FIT@ipnlf.org or discussed directly with an IPNLF staff member.

STEP 2 - PREPARE

Follow up discussions are scheduled between Member representative(s) and IPNLF technical experts to further investigate the issue(s); a gap analysis is done and a solutions-focused work plan is co-developed. External experts can also be consulted during this early stage if deemed necessary, and if both parties are in agreement with this approach.



STEP 3 - COMMIT



A customised proposal with budgets is provided to the Member; agreement is reached and an improvement contract is signed for implementation. Note that IPNLF will also communicate with its networks to actively promote public private partnerships (PPP), and develop co-financing options within proposals where necessary and feasible.

STEP 4 - IMPROVE

Improvements are implemented, tracked, and reported back to the Member.



STEP 5 - COMMUNICATE



Progress and successes are publicly communicated, with IPNLF support, to showcase improvements made by Members. Improvements made using the FIT can be communicated through the STP, IPNLF website, IPNLF social media and various other marketing and communications channels.

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Social Responsibility Improvement Tool



In any supply chain, ensuring that socially responsible best practices are occurring throughout is paramount. While supporting one-by-one tuna fisheries, IPNLF are leaders in shifting the global narrative towards responsible seafood which duly considers the local, social, and economic impacts and also considers human rights issues in fisheries. As such, securing, safeguarding and building opportunities for coastal communities to participate in highly competitive global seafood markets is a key aspect of this tool.

While many other fishing sectors only emphasise biological sustainability as their main consideration, through this Tool, IPNLF seeks to encourage, enable and publicise proactive efforts of our diverse membership to promote a more holistic and SDG-aligned vision of what genuinely responsible fisheries and seafood value chains should look like in the future. Crucially, this tool also provides Members with access to mechanisms and services that help them to actively engage in robust and credible human rights due diligence actions, evidencing best practices where present.

People-centric

One-by-one fisheries are already globally renowned for providing more equitable and employment-rich methods of harvesting tuna. These fisheries tend to show a greater proportion of local ownership, are more inclusive of local communities that share harvest benefits, and they are less prone to labour abuses than larger fleets operating on the high seas.

One-by-one fisheries are people-centric operations and therefore provide a vital source of opportunities to holistically support local livelihoods.

The Social Responsibility Improvement Tool helps IPNLF Members proactively improve, evidence and promote the social benefits of their source fisheries and value chains.

Engagements can also support Members in managing social risks related to labour abuses and safety at sea throughout their supply chains, while ensuring they join the pioneering drive to produce the more socially responsible seafood products that global consumers are increasingly demanding.



Options for engagement of the Social Responsibility Tool include:

- Assistance with developing a safe and ethical working environment for all workers both on land and at sea.
- Assistance ensuring that the fundamental human rights of workers throughout supply chains are met, either through conducting Human Rights Impact Assessments (HRIAs) or utilising other applicable human rights due diligence tools.
- Guidance on improving corporate and national policies so they suitably protect all workers, including due consideration and resolution of gender equity disparities.
- Development of operating protocols that enable suitable engagements with workers, enable worker voice as required and align with international best practices.
- Supporting context specific improvements related to gender equity and eliminating other forms of discrimination among Member fisheries and supply chains.
- Conduct comparative social research that will uncover improvement opportunities and enable further public promotion of well-evidenced social benefits associated with one-by-one fisheries.
- Technical assistance regarding the attainment of seafood social certifications such as Fair Trade certification, Naturland certification and/or applicable social audits.



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Ecosystem and Management Improvement Tool



IPNLF proudly promotes one-by-one tuna fishers as responsible ocean stewards, while helping them access premium markets and promoting their efforts to sustainably and responsibly minimise any negative environmental impacts resulting from their fishing operations. Resource sustainability is in the best interest of all stakeholders harvesting from internationally shared tuna stocks.

It is widely recognised that managing fisheries with the sole aim of maximising catches is too risky. The ocean is a changing and often unpredictable environment and the interactions between target fish stocks and the broader ecosystem are not fully understood. Given the importance of global tuna fisheries to countless coastal communities, it is critical that the management systems for tuna be precautionary to safeguard not only the resource but also the people that depend on it.

A critical aspect of any seafood supply chain is that it helps to protect and restore marine ecosystems to sustain current and future generations.

IPNLF actively promotes one-by-one fisheries that, by nature of their gears and methods, can harvest fish of premium quality while causing minimal damage to their supporting marine ecosystems. These low impact fishing practices provide local communities with the best opportunities to sustainably benefit from marine resources.

The **Ecosystem and Management Improvement Tool** enables IPNLF Members to pursue a variety of initiatives that minimize the environmental impacts of the fisheries they source from. For fisheries already using one-by-one fishing methods, improvements through this Tool may typically focus upon:

- Capacity building of different stakeholders
- Implementing best practices
- Promoting scientific fishery data collection
- Improving bycatch management and bait fish sustainability
- Policy improvements guided by robust scientific evidence
- Improving operations to minimise waste and improve energy efficiency
- Implementing new technologies to enhance effective fisheries management

For many years IPNLF have played an active and important role in driving policy improvements at both national and regional level through its engagement with governments and its participation at the tropical tuna RFMOs - the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC). Through these engagements, IPNLF will continue to give its fishers' associations and private sector Members a voice to help influence and drive policies that will lead to environmentally sustainable and socially equitable tuna fisheries globally.



Options for engagement of The Ecosystem and Management Improvement Tool include:



- Access to IPNLF technical expertise to support Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certified fisheries in meeting their conditions, support full assessments against the MSC standard and support the implementation of Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs).
- Advocate for the adoption of well-defined, precautionary management systems for tuna fisheries at RFMOs and help drive policies at national and regional level for all tuna fisheries that will ensure effective management based on rigorous science and the application of the precautionary approach.
- Improve the sustainability of bait fisheries - including training of fishers in handling and onboard management best practices, development of baitfish management plans, live bait tank design and circulation improvements and exploring alternatives to wild bait.
- Assess the environmental footprint of one-by-one fishing vessels, including recommending improvements to reduce carbon emissions and exploring renewable energy solutions.



- Implement innovative technologies that help fisheries achieve operational efficiencies at sea, reducing waste and evidencing their compliance with regulations (e.g. bird radars, e-monitoring, innovations that reduce reliance on live bait).
- Implement training, deployment and management of at-sea observers and port enumerators to improve scientific data collection, evidence compliance and ensure good practices.
- Conduct assessments and provide recommendations on improvements to help Members ensure that their source fisheries are compliant with national and international legal frameworks.
- Build capacity at the fisher level and support the establishment of fisher and industry associations, thereby promoting shared decision-making for the effective management of fisheries.
- Conduct training and implement protocols to minimise bycatch incident rates and ensure the safe handling of any bycatch species, including those caught in abandoned gears from other fleets, to minimise the likelihood of post-release mortality.



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Traceability Improvement Tool



Traceable seafood supply chains - from deck to dish - are critical to mitigate and manage risks around food safety, can improve operational and supply chain efficiency and prevent substitution or fraud while minimising the risk of selling illegally-caught fish or seafood products tainted by human rights violations. Traceability is also important for tracking and evidencing good practices. Where traceability tools are applied to IPNLF Members' supply chains, retailers and food service outlets that supply sustainable and ethically-sourced seafood can confidently promote their products to gain deserved market recognition and increased market competitiveness. Empowering a consumer to track a product back to the fishery where it was caught further incentivises accountability of the entire seafood supply chain to ensure reliable, sustainable, and ethical practices.

One-by-one tuna fisheries use sustainable fishing gears and methods that intrinsically support coastal communities. Traceability systems that provide assurances on the provenance of products from one-by-one fisheries carry powerful messages to consumers about the ethical and sustainable sourcing credentials of their can of tuna, the tuna steak at the fresh fish counter of their local retailer, or the tuna sandwich, poke bowl or sushi platter at their favourite restaurant or food market.

Together we have a powerful and positive story to tell; emphasising how supporting one-by-one fisheries can help to achieve sustainable development and a higher quality of life for all people.



Through the **Traceability Improvement Tool**, IPNLF will develop and implement fit-for-purpose traceability solutions to address various issues that our Members might face in ensuring full traceability in their supply chains. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are increasingly being used to develop sophisticated systems that address some of the world's more pressing social and ecological challenges. An increased focus on technological innovation provides an exciting opportunity for small-scale fisheries to evidence their credentials as responsible ocean stewards and, at the same time, help to build consumer trust. New technologies and digitization could however also exclude small-scale producers from some commercial value chains. IPNLF will continue to ensure that small and medium-scale producers implement ICTs and disruptive technologies, where relevant and applicable, to achieve inclusive traceability and market access.

We will primarily work with traceability service providers and experts, relying on their knowledge of ICTs and Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) technologies such as blockchain, artificial intelligence (AI) and satellite imaging, to apply these as applicable, working towards affordable traceability solutions. This approach is expected to help our Members evidence their responsible seafood claims, bolster food safety, incentivise best practices in the value chain, and help carry the positive messaging of one-by-one tuna all the way through our Members' supply chains to their end-consumers.

IPNLF have endorsed the Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST) [Standards and Guidelines for Interoperable Seafood Traceability Systems \(v1.0\)](#) and will work with our Members towards implementing GDST-compliant seafood supply chains where feasible.

Options for engagement of the Traceability Improvement Tool include:



- Gap analysis of Member's current traceability systems to identify and implement strategic improvements that maximise system function and interoperability.
- Alignment with standards by identifying the minimum data elements that need to be documented and transmitted within GDST-compliant seafood supply chains.
- Conduct value chain assessments:
 - Define streamlining opportunities that promote one-by-one sourcing
 - Co-develop targeted options for traceability systems to carry positive messaging about the benefits of one-by-one sourcing to end consumers, with suitable links to the STP and other IPNLF communications.
- Cooperative engagement with others to apply ICTs and 4IR technology in one-by-one fisheries and supply chains, where applicable, and work towards finding cost-effective solutions for small and medium-scale producers.
- Development of targeted traceability improvements to selected nodes of supply chains.
- Support in obtaining Chain of Custody certification as required by certification schemes such as MSC, Fair Trade and others.
- Empower coastal communities by helping them to meet international demands for traceability and improve their catch value by achieving access to higher value markets.



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Plastic Neutrality Tool



Ocean plastic pollution has become one of the most pressing environmental issues this planet faces. Commercial fishing gears are typically made of plastic and can be frequently abandoned, lost or discarded at sea. Of all the types of ocean plastic, abandoned, lost or discarded fishing gears (ALDFG) represent the greatest threat to marine life, especially in the case of lost nets that continue capturing, entangling and killing a variety of marine species through what is termed "ghost fishing". Fishing gears also frequently damage marine ecosystems like coral reefs and can continue to do so for decades after being abandoned or lost by a fishing vessel. **This connection between seafood production and plastic pollution is rarely made.**

IPNLF and partners are now pioneering an evidence-based model to encourage one-by-one fishing vessels to achieve plastic neutral, or potentially even plastic positive, status by 2025. This forms part of IPNLF's 2025 Commitment, collaborating with Members to minimise gear loss, and seeking practical and viable solutions to recycle and repurpose other plastics used throughout their operations. To achieve this, one-by-one fisheries will need to retrieve

at least the same amount, or more, plastic than they may lose during their fishing operations. Under this tool, IPNLF can also actively assist our Members to ensure that collected plastics are effectively reused, repurposed or recycled within various circular economy initiatives.

IPNLF will also work with our Members to develop waste and garbage management protocols onboard one-by-one fishing vessels in accordance with MARPOL Annex 5 which seeks to eliminate and reduce the amount of garbage being discharged into the sea from ships. Waste management of plastics will focus on reduction, recycling, and onboard management while IPNLF will also work with port authorities to help facilitate appropriate reception facilities ashore.

The **Plastic Neutrality Tool** helps IPNLF Members to improve their "plastic footprint", leading the charge against the critically important issue of ocean plastics. Working with our team, we will help ensure that lessons learnt from current projects will guide your success under this pioneering initiative. Members engaging this tool will also benefit from IPNLF and their partner's media campaigns promoting the broad plastic mitigation actions of Members, as well as their efforts in cleaning up "ghost fishing gear" originating from other tuna fisheries, such as drifting Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs), longline buoys, and gillnets. **The time for action is now** and we look forward to assisting all of our Members on this path to plastic neutrality.



Options for engagement of the Plastic Neutrality Tool include:

- Training and application of IPNLF at-sea gear collection and recycling protocols.
- Access to IPNLF gear loss mitigation solutions informed by the organisation's growing fishing gear loss database.
- Assessments of gear loss and circular economy opportunities available from abandoned fishing gear and plastics that can be collected locally.
- Local engagements by IPNLF and partner specialists to enable and train local communities to re-purpose collected plastics.
- Development of onboard waste and garbage management protocols, crew training on these protocols, and facilitation to provide appropriate reception facilities ashore.
- Direct and proactive co-development of partnerships with governments, companies and other organisations to maximise circular economy opportunities throughout IPNLF Member supply chains.

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Seafood Quality Assurance tool



Many one-by-one fisheries already produce the highest quality seafood products, competing with the best in the world in terms of food safety, handling practices, testing, and control systems while also being fully compliant with international guidelines and standards.

All IPNLF Members aspire to proudly and confidently stand behind their products and brands. Efficient seafood value chains produce safe, high quality and premium-value products through methods that minimise wastage while maximising the value and shelf life of consumer-facing products. The financial benefits associated with quality improvements are obvious and can also make a valuable contribution to food security by reducing post-harvest losses.

Whether improving onboard handling practices to add value to landed catches, or improving operational efficiencies and systems, IPNLF and its experts are ready to help our Members achieve the premium product quality that's available from one-by-one fishing methods.

By engaging with this tool, Members can leverage decades of experience within IPNLF and its global partner networks to streamline their pursuit of premium quality tuna products.

Multiple Advantages

One-by-one fishing methods achieve the active capture of live fish that can then be immediately handled, processed and cold-stored to provide premium quality tuna products. One-by-one fishing methods have the added benefit of avoiding quality-degrading gear soak times and the bruising associated with fish being bunched up in nets. While there may be some generic themes around improving the handling and storage of harvested tuna, each fishery provides its own unique challenges and opportunities when it comes to quality maximisation and assurance.

Through the **Seafood Quality Assurance Tool**, IPNLF experts can help improve the quality, value, shelf life, and brand reputation of Member's tuna products through the implementation of tailored innovations and training programmes where they matter the most.

Options for engagement of the Seafood Quality Assurance Tool include:



- Local context-specific training that improves at-sea handling, processing and storage of catch. Training courses will be tailored according to the harvest method, species, fishing location and end-products, aimed at improving the quality of landed catch.
- Evaluation of cold chain management, prioritising nodes for quality improvement intervention.
- Assess cold storage and logistical processes in order to minimise post-harvest losses.
- Innovative trials and investments that ensure fisheries and their value chains have the knowledge and materials at hand to maximise product quality and value.
- Value chain mapping to identify opportunities to streamline processes or logistics, and define Member synergies that will get end-products to market as cost and time-efficiently as possible, minimising en-route degradation of products.





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