



## International Pole & Line Foundation Fishery Improvement Toolbox

**IPNLF, Seafood Souq, and Omani fishers  
demonstrate a new global source of Sashimi  
Grade Yellowfin Tuna**

### **IPNLF FIT CASE STUDY SERIES**

**FISHERY IMPROVEMENT TOOL: QUALITY ASSURANCE**

**AREAS 5.1-5.5**

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## INTRODUCTION

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Oman's 3,165km coastline is home to a variety of marine life with a long-standing history of traditional artisanal fishing operated by highly skilled, Omani fishers. Omani tuna is, more often than not, sold for a domestic market rather than exported internationally, but it holds huge potential.

One of the challenges faced by this fishery was developing the techniques to provide the highest quality tuna product ("grade-A") to meet the demands of international buyers. In the global market, high quality tuna for sushi and sashimi is often bought from longline, rather than small-scale fisheries using low-impact techniques like handline. However, this doesn't necessarily have to be the case.

IPNLF and its member Seafood Souq joined forces together with partner Ocean Experts, and IPNLF member Ryan Nienaber (experienced one-by-one tuna fisher), using their combined expertise, and IPNLF's FIT (Fisheries Improvement Toolbox) to develop a Seafood Quality Assurance-project for the fishers located in Oman.

Over 10 days in Oman, the team provided technical training in fish handling and cold storage and successfully demonstrated that, with the right techniques, Omani handline tuna can become 'Grade-A' quality, and post harvest losses can be eliminated, with Seafood Souq providing a direct route to global buyers via their digital seafood marketplace.



## ACTIVITIES

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- Turley and Nienaber trained 4 Omani fishing crews in ten days; one in Salalah, and three on Masirah Island on their own vessels in best practice fish handling and cold storage, to improve quality and minimise losses.
- At-sea training took place during fishing operations. Once tuna were landed on board, Turley and Nienaber were able to demonstrate the following best practices to improve quality and minimise losses. Training activities included soft surface fish handling, use of the correct 'reeming' tools and methods, bleeding the fish, cloth wrapping and cold storage best practices.
- After the at-sea training days in each location, a factory demonstration was held for fishers and factory workers to demonstrate a comparison between the fish they had caught together with fishermen during the training to a control fish which was caught the same day by the same crew but handled in the traditional way.
- Land side logistics were handled by Seafood Souq and guaranteed the Omani fishers a route-to-market for their fish at a higher-than-market price, provided a higher quality can be achieved.
- Fishers were incentivised to work with IPNLF thanks to the offtake agreement with Seafood Souq, meaning that fishers had the potential to earn more, from catching fewer, well-kept fish.



During the factory demonstration, fishers and factory workers were shown a comparison between the fish they had caught together during the training versus a control fish which was caught the same day by the same crew, but handled in the traditional way. Fishers noticed key differences like:

- Brighter colour indicating less lactic acid build up and fresher meat
  - Firmer flesh, because the meat had not begun to decompose
  - No smell, as the fish was fresh
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## OUTCOMES

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This project has seen an increase in product quality, reduced waste, reduced environmental impact and supports better economics for the local fishers and the region by expanding their horizons beyond the shores of the Omani market.

Turley and Nienaber managed to up-grade the tuna from the baseline of grade C (or worse) to around 14% of the fish achieving grade A and the rest being 2+ and 2. The biggest symbol of success were the fishermen fighting over who takes home the grade A loins.

It's fair to say the results were outstanding and beyond everyone's expectations. Within just two days of consultancy. This kind of on-the-water quality improvement work is ground-breaking and if upscaled will not only empower Omani fishers to achieve higher quality and minimise post-harvest losses, but also potentially access foreign export markets with their products, which ultimately will allow them to increase their income.



*A comparison between tuna caught at the beginning of the project (left) and the end (right), with improved handling techniques.*

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# ABOUT

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## About IPNLF

The International Pole and Line Foundation (IPNLF) promotes the sustainable management of the world's responsible pole-and-line, handline and troll (collectively known as 'one-by-one') tuna fisheries while also recognising the importance of safeguarding the livelihoods they support.

IPNLF's work to develop, support and promote one-by-one tuna fisheries is subsequently fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We believe effective and equitable global governance is essential to protect and restore the ocean, and this should be achieved by ensuring the participation of local and coastal communities in decision-making processes.

Environmental sustainability in tuna fisheries can only be fully achieved by also putting an end to the overfishing and destructive fishing practices that are driving the degradation of already threatened marine species, habitats and ecosystems. Allied with its members, IPNLF demonstrates the value of one-by-one caught tuna to consumers, policymakers and throughout the supply chain. IPNLF works across science, policy and the seafood sector, using an evidence-based, solutions-focused approach with strategic guidance from our Board of Trustees and advice from our Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) and Market Advisory Group (MAG).

IPNLF was officially registered in the United Kingdom in 2012 (Charity 1145586), with branch offices in the UK, South Africa, Indonesia, The Netherlands, and the Maldives.

## About Seafood Souq

Technology company Seafood Souq offers a vertically integrated digital solution for global seafood trade. Seafood Souq's platform facilitates discovery, negotiations and transactions between seafood producers and buyers worldwide, together with freight and payment integration.

Featured in the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development for their contribution towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Seafood Souq's product suite includes an open and transparent marketplace that specializes in sourcing from diversified developing markets as well as a supply chain traceability product and sustainability dashboard, SFS Trace.

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## About FIT

IPNLF are the global one-by-one tuna fishery and supply chain specialists, and the Fishery Improvement Toolbox (FIT) provides a framework whereby we can offer tailor-made project support and consultancy services to our members. When IPNLF members seek to demonstrate their responsible seafood sourcing on IPNLF's Sourcing Transparency Platform (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.

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:

- Social Responsibility
- ToolEcosystem and Management Tool
- Traceability Improvement Tool
- Plastic Neutrality Tool
- Seafood Quality Assurance Tool