

Seafood Traceability and Key Data Elements

Summary of Recommendations for Moving Forward



WHEN THINKING ABOUT TRACEABILITY, MANY COMPANIES HAVE THE SAME TWO QUESTIONS:

1. What level and type of traceability is needed to meet company needs, especially with regards to sustainability and traceability commitments?
2. Which key data elements (KDEs) should companies include in their traceability systems?

The good news: many groups are working collaboratively to help answer these questions, even as the enormous complexity of the seafood industry and the dynamic traceability technology landscape mean that there are no simple answers.

AN ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT APPROACH ALLOWS COMPANIES TO MAKE SYSTEMIC CHANGES WHILE REMAINING NIMBLE ENOUGH TO ADJUST OVER TIME.

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT ADVICE

1. STAY IN THE LOOP ON EVOLVING INDUSTRY PRACTICES AND NORMS

The [Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability](#) is working to develop an internationally agreed list of KDEs, benchmarks for data validity, and routine business norms and practices for traceability.

2. BE FLEXIBLE

Invest in adaptable, flexible traceability infrastructure that can readily incorporate new data needs or requirements. Make this an explicit ask of your chosen technology vendor.

3. MANAGE KEY DATA ELEMENTS

Collect government required KDEs first (e.g. [US SIMP](#), [EU IUU Regulations](#)), and then layer on additional KDEs to meet individual company commitments, goals, and industry best practices

4. KEEP EVERYONE HONEST

Require and promote robust verification practices from all actors that produce the data related to a product's pedigree which underlies traceability systems.

5. MAKE IT EASY

Utilize the tools, resources, information and training opportunities available, such as the ones linked [here](#).

6. BUILD A TEAM

Consult with other industry partners and engage in pre-competitive processes that allow you to move towards interoperable solutions when making near-term traceability investments. Work towards implementation of full chain, secure, electronic, interoperable data systems.

A NOTE ABOUT VERIFICATION AND TRACEABILITY

No matter how strong an individual company's data collection practices are, KDEs by themselves do not ensure a company's products or supply chains are traceable. Verification is paramount to achieving robust traceability, and periodic reviews and updates help ensure companies are well-prepared to meet evolving standards. Use of digital (electronic) traceability systems increases robustness of data collection and sharing and can increase efficiencies of mock recalls and other tests that can catch weak links in traceability systems before they become public safety or reputational risks.

Robust traceability also depends on secure data sharing from water to plate. This requires requiring companies to work directly with their trading partners to create interoperable, full-chain traceability solutions. See this guide for how to engage trading partners effectively.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: TRACEABLE TO WHAT UNIT?

A: Traceability requirements may vary depending on what type of product you have.

- Wild Caught: Traceability back at least to the fishing vessel(s), trip(s), and fishery/management unit.
- Aggregated Product: Companies can track all fishing vessels and trips that may have been aggregated into a single shipment to demonstrate that the vessels are all legal and permitted.
- Aquaculture: Traceability to the farm(s), as well as to the feed and stock inputs to the farm(s).

Q: WHICH KEY DATA ELEMENTS SHOULD COMPANIES COLLECT?

A: Given the different circumstances, products, and capacities of seafood companies, it is clear that no "one size fits all" KDE list is possible. There are also species and commodity-specific elements that need to be considered as well. Pending the outcome of the Global Dialogue, our collaboration suggests that companies utilize the five following sources to inform near-term improvements or changes to their data collection practices:

- [U.S. Seafood Import Monitoring Program \(SIMP\)](#)
- [EU IUU Regulation \(EC No 1005/2008\)](#)
- [Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions A Common Vision for Sustainable Seafood](#)
- [EPLAT Recommendations for a Global Framework to Ensure the Legality and Traceability of Wild-Caught Fish Products](#)
- [Institute of Food Technologists \(IFT\) Global Food Traceability Center \(GFTC\) Project to Develop an Interoperable Seafood Traceability Technology Architecture](#)

OTHER RESOURCES

For a comprehensive list of additional seafood KDE lists and initiatives, please refer to FishWise's "[Key Data Elements for Seafood: A Compilation of Resources](#)" and their "[Social Responsibility for Seafood Supply Chains: A Compilation of Resources](#)" for a summary of social responsibility, worker well-being, and human rights in seafood.

For a more detailed response to the questions outlined above, please see the original document in its full length [here](#).

This document was created by [Future of Fish](#), in collaboration with [FishWise](#), [Global Food Traceability Center](#) and [World Wildlife Fund](#), under the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation's [Oceans and Seafood Markets Initiative](#).