

We can't save what we can't see

Traceability as the precursor to sustainability

Let's say that you are at the supermarket, ready to buy seafood for dinner. You prefer seafood from a specific region known for its quality; you see this in the freezer and grab it. But did you know that 1 in 5 seafood products is mislabelled?

Without traceability, your white fish could be high-end cod or affordable pangasius. Just as we value transparency in coffee, cacao, and palm oil, the seafood industry needs the same level of transparency to ensure we are buying what we expect. Without traceability, the origin, quality, and sustainability of seafood remain uncertain.



But what is traceability?

Traceability in seafood supply chains refers to the ability to systematically identify, track and document the journey of seafood products from their origin (such as the fishing vessel or aquaculture farm) through processing, distribution, and retail stages until they reach the consumer.

Effective traceability helps verify the source, quality, and sustainability of seafood, combats fraud and illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing practices, and enhances food safety by enabling rapid responses to contamination or recalls.



Traceability and sustainability

As sustainability becomes a non-negotiable expectation rather than a nice-to-have, the seafood industry stands at a pivotal moment. At the heart of this transformation is traceability. It means tracking seafood from the moment it's caught until it reaches your plate. This visibility into the supply chain is more than a technical necessity; it is fundamental to ensuring the integrity and sustainability of our seafood sources.

While traceability alone cannot guarantee sustainability, it is crucial for verifying and upholding our commitment to responsible practices.



Why now?

The urgency for traceability has never been higher. With new regulations like the USA's FDA requirements and the European Union's CATCH certification published in 2022, the industry faces significant pressures to ensure transparency and accountability.



The seafood supply chain: from bait to plate

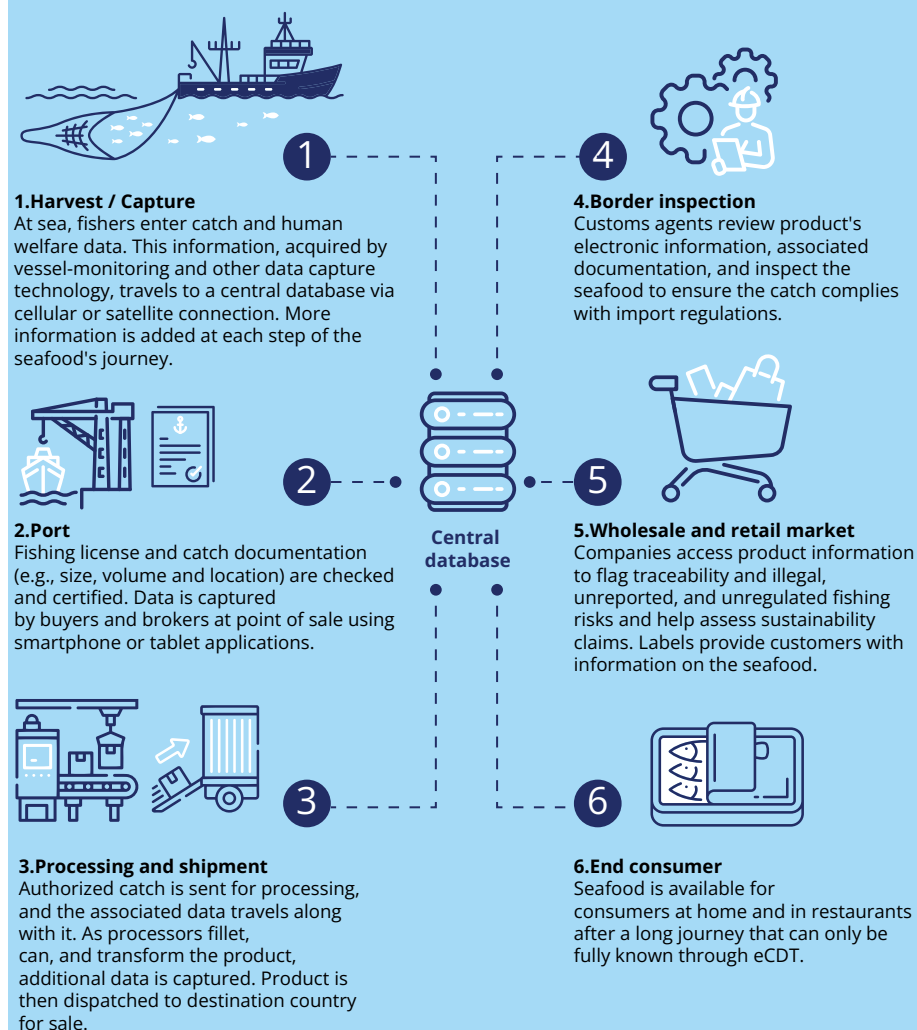
The journey "from bait to plate" involves multiple stages, each with unique challenges and opportunities for implementing traceability.

While traceability alone cannot guarantee sustainability, it is crucial for verifying and upholding our commitment to responsible practices

From bait to plate

Uncovering the seafood supply chain:

The power of using Electronic Catch Documentation and Traceability (eCDT)



Credit: Seafood Alliance for Legality and Traceability | Adapted from USAID Oceans and Fisheries Partnership

At each of these stages, traceability is vital for ensuring that seafood is responsibly sourced, legally harvested, and accurately labelled. This not only helps maintain consumer trust but also minimizes waste and reduces the carbon footprint of the supply chain.

Change requires innovative thinking, strategic planning, and a steadfast commitment to both environmental responsibility and financial success. Stakeholders who embrace these changes secure their own future prosperity and drive positive change within the industry. Plus, every stakeholder in the supply chain can benefit from traceability. Whether you are the producer or the farmer, the supplier or processor, the retailer or buyer - traceability should be part of your process and requirements.



Enhanced traceability would have a positive impact on our business by improving supply chain efficiency, optimizing logistics, reducing the risk of product identification issues, and increasing consumer confidence through greater transparency.

- a tuna fishing company based in Spain, active since the 1960s



Traceability is crucial to ensure transparency and the ability to trace each step from raw material to the final product, from fishing to production. Our suppliers often fail audits primarily due to a lack of traceability systems in place.

- One of Europe's leading retail group



The Atlantis case study: 13,000,000kg of seafood traced

Atlantis' goal: "The goal is to achieve 100% application of traceability technology across all seafood products served within the destination by December 2024"

Seafood Souq partnered with Atlantis Hotels UAE to improve seafood traceability from 68.7% in December 2023 to 100% by December 2024. The collaboration involved sustainability and procurement teams, as well as chefs. Initially, Atlantis faced challenges with high transaction volumes and non-digitized documentation, making verification difficult. Their goal was to serve traceable seafood aligned with their sustainability goals.

The Process:

1. Baseline establishment: Set a baseline to highlight the need for a traceability system and created a roadmap for improvement with audits and product development over a year.
2. Supplier engagement: Overcame challenges in getting supplier buy-in through training, collaboration, and addressing confidentiality concerns.
3. Implementation: Developed a roadmap to achieve 90% traceability of all seafood products by June 2024 with supplier cooperation.

Results:

- A 20% increase in traceability score for wild-caught products and 10% for farmed products.
- Identification and rectification of mislabelling across 50% of their seafood basket.

This case study with Atlantis demonstrates the transformative power of traceability. By leveraging data and collaboration, Atlantis significantly improved their seafood procurement practices and is on a journey towards achieving 100% traceability by December 2024. Without traceability data, making informed decisions would have been impossible.



At Atlantis Dubai, home to 65,000 marine animals, two of our key sustainability pillars focus on marine conservation while another on responsible operations including sourcing. Working with Seafood Souq to support our seafood partners to identify traceability of the seafood they supply to Atlantis Dubai has been the first step in our sustainable seafood journey, which now enables us to make more responsible choices to do business in ways that are good for both people and the planet.

- Kelly Timmins, Executive Director, Sustainability and Marine Animal Operations, Atlantis Dubai



Seafood traceability scores on the SFS Trace digital platform which also flags any species of concern, allows our chefs to make better informed decisions which assures us that the seafood we source is not only of the highest quality but also does not negatively impact marine ecosystems. A process that began 2 years ago with Seafood Souq, we now have greater insight into our seafood supply chains while driving our commitment of 100% traceable seafood by the end of 2024.

- Mathew Goodlet, Director, Culinary, Atlantis Dubai





The SFS Trace Score, aligned with the Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST) standard, measures key data elements (KDEs) like vessel registration, gear type, and harvest certification collected during the auditing process. A higher score indicates more comprehensive data availability. It serves as a benchmark for companies to evaluate seafood traceability, providing a baseline for full visibility and informed decision-making – because you can't measure what you can't see.

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Seeing through the buzzword

Traceability is not just a regulatory requirement; it is a crucial element for ensuring sustainability, transparency, and ethical practices within the seafood industry. Early adopters of robust traceability practices will stand out in the market, as they will be able to guarantee the origin and provenance of their products, meeting the growing demand for transparency.

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