

Ethical Tuna Collaboration Overview | June 2026

The Ethical Tuna Collaboration (ETC) is designing a multistakeholder, market-based initiative to help address forced labor on tuna vessels. This stakeholder feedback period (through July 31) focuses on key elements of ETC's design:

- Responsibilities for buyers at all levels of the supply chain and vessel owners that participate in ETC; and
- Data that participating buyers and vessel owners will provide to ETC.

This overview will help you understand these proposals in the broader context of the need for scaling improvement at the vessel level, how ETC aims to address the need, and the initiative's scope and core values.

The need: accelerate improvement at the vessel level

The seafood industry and NGO community have invested in assessing the risk of forced labor on tuna vessels. Now, collective efforts must focus on accelerating and scaling action to address identified risks. Accelerating vessel-level improvement requires:

- **Stronger market signal.** Individual businesses are working to address risks in their supply chains and promising NGO pilot projects are testing approaches to improve outcomes for fishers. However, because of the dynamics in tuna supply chains, parallel individual initiatives cannot create change at scale. A critical mass of buyers must align their expectations for fisher outcomes and those expectations must be communicated consistently across the supply chain to incentivize vessel improvement.
- **Capacity-building and financial support.** A strong market signal alone is not sufficient to create change. Vessel owners that are motivated to improve also need capacity-building and financial support to implement changes.
- **Partnerships with fisher representatives and local experts.** For effectiveness and durability, all of this needs to happen in partnership with fisher representatives and local and regional experts with adequate capacity to support improvement.

How ETC will address the need

ETC is a multistakeholder, market-based initiative with the **goal of driving improvement of fisher outcomes at scale on tuna vessels**. For the first five years, ETC will focus on four priorities:

- Timely payment of wages per contract terms
- Employer-paid recruitment fees
- Fisher access to Wi-Fi while at sea
- Fisher access to effective grievance mechanisms

To achieve this goal, ETC will:



Engage a critical mass of buyers to communicate consistent expectations for improving fisher outcomes through their supply chains to vessel owners.



Collect and analyze data to track both vessel performance on priorities and how participating buyers are conveying expectations to suppliers.



Partner with frontline organizations and international NGOs to scale pilot projects and provide financial and capacity-building support for vessel-level improvement.



Provide information to buyers about whether vessels in their supply chains are improving, to inform individual decision making that incentivizes and rewards progress.



Report publicly, in aggregate, on progress made by vessels, buyers, and ETC overall.

ETC will be governed by a multistakeholder oversight committee composed of industry at all levels of the supply chain; human rights and sustainability NGOs; and frontline organizations that represent or work closely with fishers.

The design proposals shared during this stakeholder feedback period provide more detail on how ETC will build industry alignment and collect data from both vessel owners and buyers. In October, we will share design proposals focused on improvement and capacity building, governance and financial models, and transparency for stakeholder input.

ETC scope

- **All tuna – fresh, frozen, and shelf-stable – sold in the U.S.** ETC began with a focus on the U.S. market, with the intention of designing an initiative that is responsive to the U.S. regulatory environment, including CBP enforcement and SIMP reporting regulations. However, in response to interest from buyers in the UK, EU, and Japan, we are exploring whether ETC can be designed to operate across markets to create globally aligned market signals and investment in vessel-level improvement.
- **Forced labor at the vessel level (including recruitment)**, because of significant, widely documented risks to fishers and increasing risks to buyers at all levels of the supply chain (including legal, reputational, regulatory, and surety of supply risks).
- **Initial supply chain priority: Taiwan-flagged vessels.** To build capacity and support vessel-level improvement, ETC will make training and resources available to participating vessel owners from any tuna supply chain (details to be determined and shared during ETC's fall feedback period). ETC will also work more

deeply in priority supply chains where there is both documented high risk and high opportunity to scale improvement in partnership with active frontline organizations and pilot projects. ETC has prioritized Taiwan-flagged vessels initially for this deeper level of engagement.

ETC core values

- **Impact now and long term.** ETC aims to accelerate improvement of fisher outcomes, starting with prioritizing what is feasible now while developing a program that can adapt and expand over time in response to evolving needs and progress. One key example is integrating pilot projects on wages, recruitment fees, and Wi-Fi into the design process so that action can inform design.
- **Alignment with international human and labor rights standards and guidance,** including the ILO [Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work](#), [Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 \(No. 188\)](#), and [Guidelines on Fair Labor Market Services for Migrant Fishers](#); [OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct](#); and UN [Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#).
- **Collaboration and co-governance.** Collaboration across the entire system – including all levels of the supply chain, civil society, and frontline organizations – is essential for system-wide impact. Specifically, ETC is prioritizing meaningful engagement with fishers, fisher representatives, and other frontline organizations in the design phase to develop both implementation partnerships and a role for these stakeholders in ETC’s governance model.
- **Full supply chain accountability.** All buyers are responsible for preventing and mitigating forced labor on tuna vessels, including through the recruitment process. Fulfilling this responsibility includes:
 - Supply chain visibility to the vessel level.
 - Ongoing supplier engagement to convey expectations and reward progress.
 - Assessment and improvement of purchasing practices that contribute to instability for other actors in the supply chain.
 - Contribution to the costs of preventing and remediating human rights abuses in supply chains.
- **Connection over duplication.** Many existing initiatives are working to improve fisher outcomes in different ways, from pilot projects to grievance mechanisms and worker voice platforms to individual and joint industry human rights due diligence approaches. ETC aims to connect and amplify existing efforts so they can have greater impact together. This includes identifying an existing organization with the capacity and expertise to operate ETC, rather than establishing a new organization.

The Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions is the convenor for the Ethical Tuna Collaboration, leveraging its global membership and track record of effective pre-competitive collaboration to drive coordinated action. This project will be conducted in accordance with applicable antitrust and competition laws. Nothing in this project shall be construed to require or encourage coordination on pricing, supplier selection, or other competitively sensitive matters.