

FIP Background: WWF Coral Triangle Network Initiative (WWF-CTNI) and WWF Vietnam (WWF-VN) are supporting a national-level fishery improvement project (FIP) for longline and handline caught yellowfin tuna in Vietnam. The goal of the FIP is to have all handline and longline yellowfin tuna in Vietnam become Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certified by approximately 2019. A MSC pre-assessment for the longline and handline yellowfin tuna fisheries was finalized in April 2013 and has identified the fisheries current weaknesses. An action plan to address these weaknesses was finalized in December 2013 and includes activities to:

1. Ensure tuna catches do not exceed sustainable levels;
2. Promote an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management (EAFM); and
3. Strengthen governance in the Vietnam yellowfin tuna fishery.

To help ensure the effective implementation of FIP Action Plan, and to establish appropriate controls over the marketing of FIP products, WWF has developed Partner Agreements which detail the agreed objectives, commitments and responsibilities of all recognized Partners of the Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) for Vietnam longline and handline yellowfin tuna. Sea Delight is one of the pre-qualifying companies that have signed this Partner Agreement. FIP action plan activities were subsequently initiated in April 2014.

Sea Delight's Membership and Contribution: Sea Delight has sourced yellowfin tuna from the handline and longline fisheries in Vietnam since 2011. Starting March 27, 2012 Sea Delight began implementing improvements within their own supply chain through a better fishing practices initiative (BFPI). BFPI is a term originated by Sea Delight to describe fishery improvement or fishery research activities prior to a MSC pre-assessment of the fishery and the establishment of a FIP. The overarching goals of the BFPI were to increase the use of circle hooks among longline fishing vessels, increase observer coverage aboard longline vessels, and move the BFPI toward a FIP. Sea Delight was awarded a certificate for its leadership role in implementing environmentally-responsible business practices, specifically in working with the public, private and non-governmental sectors, to help ensure the long-term health of the Coral Triangle's marine resources. This award was announced at the 3rd Coral Triangle Regional Business Forum in Bali, Indonesia last March 24-26, 2013. Sea Delight's BFPI was completed in December 2013 and the company has since developed a partner agreement with WWF to become an officially recognized participant in the planned FIP. Sea Delight's BFPI and subsequent FIP conditioning activities have been outlined below:

Sea Delight Activities

1. **Government Meetings:** Sea Delight held a meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and WWF-CTNI on July 25, 2011 to discuss their proposed free circle hook distribution program targeting longline vessels. MARD approved the implementation of the circle hook program in Vietnam and offered to assist Sea Delight in reaching other fisheries.
 - a. **BFPI Action Supported:** Increasing circle hook use is part of Sea Delight's BFPI activity schedule and will support bycatch management in the FIP.



feel it provides a higher quality product compared to handline caught tuna due to less stress experienced by the fish during capture.

- a. **BFPI Action Supported:** Although not specifically outlined within the BFPI agreement, handline fishing with live squid bait for yellowfin tuna has proven more productive and profitable with fishermen reporting decreases in bycatch, fuel usage, and bait usage.
 - b. **Importance:** Increased revenue for fishermen builds trust with Sea Delight while providing motivation for continued participation in sustainability improvements. Minimizing bycatch lessens a fishery's impact on endangered species and is necessary for MSC certification.
7. **Best Handling Practices:** Efforts to improve tuna handling practices by fishermen include 1. Expert tuna fisherman educating newly converted handline fishermen on the best techniques for catching and handling handline caught tuna in Binh Dinh; and 2. A DECAFIREP trained fishery observer joining trips in April and June 2013 to demonstrate new fish handling techniques. Using these new handling techniques on the first observer trip resulted in all tuna caught being classified as export quality and from which 19 of 21 were sashimi grade. Ongoing fish handling trainings have continued to result in landing higher quality fish and increased dockside prices.
- a. **BFPI Action Supported:** Although not specifically outlined within the BFPI agreement, efforts to improve tuna handling practices may lead to increased economic gains.
 - b. **Importance:** Better handling of handline caught tuna can increase both quality and value of the product, encouraging fishermen to continue using handline techniques in combination with C-hooks.
8. **FIP Conditioning Meetings:** Sea Delight representatives attended a September 12, 2012 stakeholder conference to discuss launching a FIP for the longline and handline yellowfin tuna fisheries. At this meeting, Vietnam fishery managers expressed doubt over whether the FIP and MSC certification would be cost-effective. Sea Delight's Sustainability Project Coordinator Stephen Fisher publicly supported launching a FIP with an MSC pre-assessment, reminding stakeholders that big buyers in the US and Europe are demanding sustainably caught seafood and those businesses not supplying sustainable options could lose market access. The motion for a FIP and MSC pre-assessment subsequently passed by a large margin.
- a. **BFPI Action Supported:** Sea Delight's Stakeholder Network that was created during the BFPI will support the current FIP work plan since the BFPI was officially completed in October 2013.
 - b. **Importance:** Although Sea Delight has been implementing fishery improvement activities as part of the BFPI, including the longline and handline fisheries, a WWF-supported FIP



will likely increase stakeholder participation, bolster financial contributions, and advance the fisheries towards MSC certification at a faster rate.

9. **Traceability:** Since June 2011 Sea Delight has used the Trace Register system in Vietnam to track all tuna products from vessel and area of catch to market, ensuring that their tuna from Vietnam is coming from suppliers participating in the BFPI and proposed FIP. Differentiation between product caught by handline vs. longline and J-hook vs. C-hook is a work in progress and currently conducted by marking the tail of the tuna as they are caught. In cases of doubt, the precautionary principle is used and tuna are labeled as longline caught.
 - a. **BFPI Action Supported:** Traceability will be a requirement in the FIP to track yellowfin through the supply chain. It is also a requirement for MSC certification.
 - b. **Importance:** The ability to trace products through the supply chain ensures that Sea Delight remains credible to its customers, that BFPI/FIP products are sourced for Sea Delight's supply chain, and that the benefits from improvements accrue to the fishermen that implement them.

Next Steps: Sea Delight, WWF-VN, and WWF-CTNI have identified Sea Delight's in the FIP Partnership agreement as:

1. Provide input and feedback to the recommendations from the FIP coordination unit and the Industry Advisory Group;
2. Assist in communicating about the FIP's implementation with key stakeholders including Government of Vietnam and supply chain parties;
3. Attend meetings as required in relation to the implementation of the FIP;
4. Work with the FIP coordination unit to apply and/or support traceability measures where appropriate;
5. Contribute to the development of minimum standards for traceability;
6. Cooperate with any audits of the supply chain and work related to the verification of FIP implementation; and
7. Support the implementation of specific FIP Action Plan activities, where appropriate and mutually agreed.

