

Non-Entangling and Biodegradable Fish Aggregating Devices – Public Policy

Atlantic Ocean tuna – purse seine (GSK Marine S.A.) FIP – August 2022

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This Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) is the GSK Marine S.A. Atlantic Ocean purse seine tuna fishery. The fishery targets Atlantic bigeye (*Thunnus obesus*), eastern Atlantic skipjack (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) and Atlantic yellowfin (*T. albacares*) tunas through free-school and FAD-associated purse seine sets. The two fishing vessels are flagged to Senegal and Guinea and operate on the high seas of the eastern Atlantic Ocean and the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of the following coastal states: Senegal, Mauritania, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. The fishery is managed regionally by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).

The fishery aims to improve its sustainability and reduce its impact by working towards the objectives below:

- Sustainable fish stocks – Formal commitment to working towards the sustainable exploitation of target and bycatch species in the Atlantic Ocean, to as far as is practicable for this FIP.
- Minimising environmental impacts – To promote the ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management and promote best practices with FAD fishing.
- Effective management – To strengthen governance systems in flag and coastal states, RFMO and the fishery itself.
- Overall, we aim to meet an unconditional pass of the MSC Fisheries Standard by April 2026.

To ensure the participating vessels meet the above objectives the fishery has made this commitment to achieve using only non-entangling Fish Aggregating Devices (NEFADs). NEFADs, as defined by the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) are constructed with no netting material to minimise ghost fishing (entanglement of fauna, primarily sharks and turtles). For a FAD to be completely non-entangling, it must not use netting materials either in the surface structure (raft) or the submerged structure (tail).

By not using netting in FADs, tuna-vessel owners and fishers can prevent the entanglement and "bycatch" of sharks, sea turtles, and other non-target marine species. In addition, by choosing vegetal-based instead of plastic-derived materials for FADs, fishers can avoid contributing to the ocean pollution caused by abandoned, lost and discarded fishing gear. The fishery intends to engage on minimising habitat and ecosystem impacts by engaging on a number of related actions for biodegradable FADs and recovery programmes.

The fishery recognises this and adopts the following practices and commitments:

- To transition to only deploying non-entangling FADs, with 100% NEFADs deployment achieved by November, 30th, 2022, however considering global crisis and in difficulties in sourcing materials, there may be six-month grace period.
- To participate in trial(s) by 1 January 2023 of biodegradable FAD designs and/or FAD recovery programs that include the participation of Coastal States and/or national scientists, etc to monitor experimental design.



- For all skippers to attend training to understand the reason for these changes and agree best practices.
- All vessels will comply with ISSF recommended best practices mitigating bycatch of silky sharks.
- If encircled by a purse seine net, actively releasing sharks (via other fishing gear) and turtles (via manual capture).
- If brought on deck, practicing safe-handling techniques for sharks and resuscitation/revival techniques for sea turtles, to reduce mortality after release and record interactions.
- Develop a FIP strategy for FAD recovery to retrieve and replace any own or foreign entangling FADs when possible and safe to do so. The strategy will include provisions to minimise loss, abandonment, or interaction with sensitive habitats.
- Monitoring of FAD deployments and locations of drifting FADs with the goal of understanding FAD density impacts on the pelagic ecosystem and to avoid high-risk deployment areas.
- Provide FAD track data on the position of FADs in confidentiality to scientists or ICCAT upon their request, in order to quantify their impacts on coastal environments, and to measure the efficiency of the initiatives taken to mitigate the loss and abandonment of FADs. If FADs are deactivated when they drift out of the fishing zone, these buoys can still communicate position to buoy providers.
- Frequently review and improve procedures in line with best practices.
- Promote FAD marking schemes and FAD ownership rules. This may include collaborations with other FIPs in the eastern Atlantic to develop a collaborative marking ownership scheme that will rely less on activities on opportunistically encountered FADs.
- Continue to mark FADs deployed to indicate its ownership.
- All vessels will comply with ISSF Best Practices for FAD management Plans, including the ISSF Guide for Non-Entangling FADs and be listed on the ISSF Proactive Vessel Register (PVR).

Recommendation for fully non-entangling FAD designs are as follows:

- **Raft:** The surface structure shall not be covered with netting or meshed materials. If covered, cover with canvas, tarpaulin, shade cloth, or non-entangling materials.
- **Tail:** Subsurface structure is made with ropes, canvas sheets, or other non-entangling materials.
- No netting should be used anywhere on the FAD (raft or tail) to prevent any entanglement.

Recommendations for biodegradable FAD configurations are as follows:

- **Raft:** Rafts should be constructed using bamboo, balsa wood or other natural materials that degrade without producing pollution on the marine environment. For FAD flotation, the use of plastic buoys and containers should be reduced as much as possible (e.g., reducing the weight and volume of the FAD structure would require less flotation).
- **Tail:** Only natural and/or biodegradable materials (cotton ropes and canvas, manila hemp, sisal, coconut fibre, etc.) should be used, so that they degrade without causing impact on the ecosystem.



Signed on behalf of GSK Marine S.A.

Signature: 
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Date: 18 August 2022

