

Summary report of Ghana trip for EASTI and Ghana pole and line FIPs

PREPARED BY KEY TRACEABILITY
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Introduction

This report is the summary of site visit activities during the week of 20th January 2020. Representatives from Thai Union and Key Traceability travelled to Ghana to visit the Ghanaian FIP participants ahead of the AGM in March 2020. The main purpose of the visit was to gather information that could not be collected remotely and provide stakeholders with further information about the requirements of the MSC fisheries standard and the FIP process. This report has been produced to summarise the information gathered during the trip and provide FIP stakeholders with an update of the current status of both FIPs; the Ghana tuna pole and line and the Eastern Atlantic tuna purse seine. The information will be used by the FIP project managers in the formal FIP process, assessment by fisheryprogress.org and at the FIP AGMs.



Figure 1. Opening meeting with GTA held by Thai Union and Key Traceability at PFC offices in Tema and meeting attendance form (photos: Key Traceability).

The week started with a meeting with the Ghana Tuna Association (Figure 1) in Tema to discuss the FIP process, the perspective of the GTA about making progress on the actions and the importance of continued steps to towards sustainability in both FIPs.

Following the meeting, Thai Union facilitated a tour of one of the local tuna processing factories in order for Key Traceability to evaluate traceability in the supply chain. The following information has been understood as a result of the tour:

- Fishing vessels must give 72 hours prior to unloading at the factory.
- Before a shipment can be unloaded, all necessary permits and verification from the Fisheries Commission is obtained, demonstrating that the vessel has only fished in waters where it has a valid fishing licence.
- A copy of the VMS track of the logsheet and permits, which is received by the factory.
- Triplicate records are kept of all trips, with logbook copies going to the Fisheries Commission and tuna buyer and one copy residing with the vessel.

Key Traceability was able to undertake other activities in Tema such as guided tours of pole and line and purse seine vessels from the GTA fleet. During this time discussions were held about tuna and bait fishery operations and the following was ascertained:

- All Ghana FIP vessels (pole and line and purse seine) are on the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) Proactive Vessel Register (PVR), meaning they have sustainability policies, such as mandatory non-entangling FAD deployment and no-shark finning and marine waste policies and are subject to annual third-party audits. Below are examples of policies onboard both purse seine and pole and line vessels visited.



Figure 2. Policies onboard GTA vessels witnessed during January trip (photo: Key Traceability)

Interviews were held with operations managers and crews whilst visiting the vessels, and information was collected with regard to tuna operations and to the pole and line fishery, including their bait fishing activities. Crew were well-aware of non-retention and handling policies for bycatch species (Figure 2). GTA vessels (both purse seine and pole and line) deploy only non-entangling FADs (Figure 3), as per the PVR programme.



Figure 3. FAD buoys awaiting construction and deployment on one of the purse seine vessels (photo: Key Traceability)

Key Traceability also met with representatives from the Fisheries Commission – Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development to gain further understanding of management processes in place in the country (Figure 4). The meeting provided understanding in the consultation, decision-making and dispute resolution processes in place at the national level. Further elaboration illuminated how information is disseminated through the Commission to relevant departments. Consultations with relevant stakeholders are sought, for example prior to new laws going to Cabinet for final approval by Parliament. In the case of artisanal fishers, information is sought at the regional level, with consultations held locally and minuted to facilitate participation. There is opportunity for industry to raise issues with laws or regulations and discuss areas where they feel changes should be made, feasibility of these changes are then reviewed by the Commission.

Insight into the bait fishery was also gained, including bait fishing areas, current data collection and issues. The observer training process was also described. ISSF training guides are utilised during observer training, which covers topics such as collecting information on vessel activities, non-entangling FAD construction, species identification (target and non-target species) and scientific sampling.

The Fisheries Commission latter outlined how information and compliance is maintained between themselves, the industry and ICCAT. The software in place to collect fisheries data was explained to gather information which includes size and positions of sets, and all information from logbooks.

Meeting attendance form

Purpose of the meeting FISHERIES MINISTRY Mo FAD

Date 23rd JANUARY 2020

Location PFC offices

Name (PRINTED)	Signature	Company	Job Title
KAT COLLINSON	<i>K. Collinson</i>	KEY TRACEABILITY	PROJECT MANAGER
TRACY CAMERON	<i>Tracy Cameron</i>	TUNA UNION	SUSTAINABILITY DIRECTOR
Michael Arthur-Dubler	<i>Michael Arthur-Dubler</i>	Fisheries Commission	Executive Director
PAUL BANWEMAN	<i>Paul Banwema</i>	Fisheries Comm	Dep Exec Director
SILVIA AYI	<i>Silvia Ayi</i>	FISHERIES COMM - Field	Senior Manager
Kwame P. Adomako	<i>Kwame P. Adomako</i>	PFC	Head Fish Rec Insp

Figure 4. Meeting attendance form of Fisheries Commission representatives attending FIP meetings in January (photo: Key Traceability).

Information that will contribute positively in an assessment against the MSC fisheries standard

For the assessment of both fisheries:

1. Following the issuance of the EU yellow card in 2013, Ghana has taken great steps to improve transparency in Ghanaian fisheries and reduce IUU fishing. The yellow card was lifted in 2015 and this has direct positive effects for the FIPs. The VMS tracking systems in place on all tuna vessels provides the FIPs and supply chain with confidence that tuna landed has only been caught legally, in waters for which the vessels hold licences. The Fisheries Commission has access to VMS tracking, with vessels sending their positions every two hours.
2. There are around 50 observers trained in Ghana. They are responsible for recording scientific information during fishing operations but also are trained with knowledge of the up to date International Commission on the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) resolutions and recommendations and therefore also fulfil a compliance role within the fisheries. Observers are contracted with the Ministry to be present on 100% of the trips deployed. Fishing vessels are not permitted to leave on a trip without one onboard.

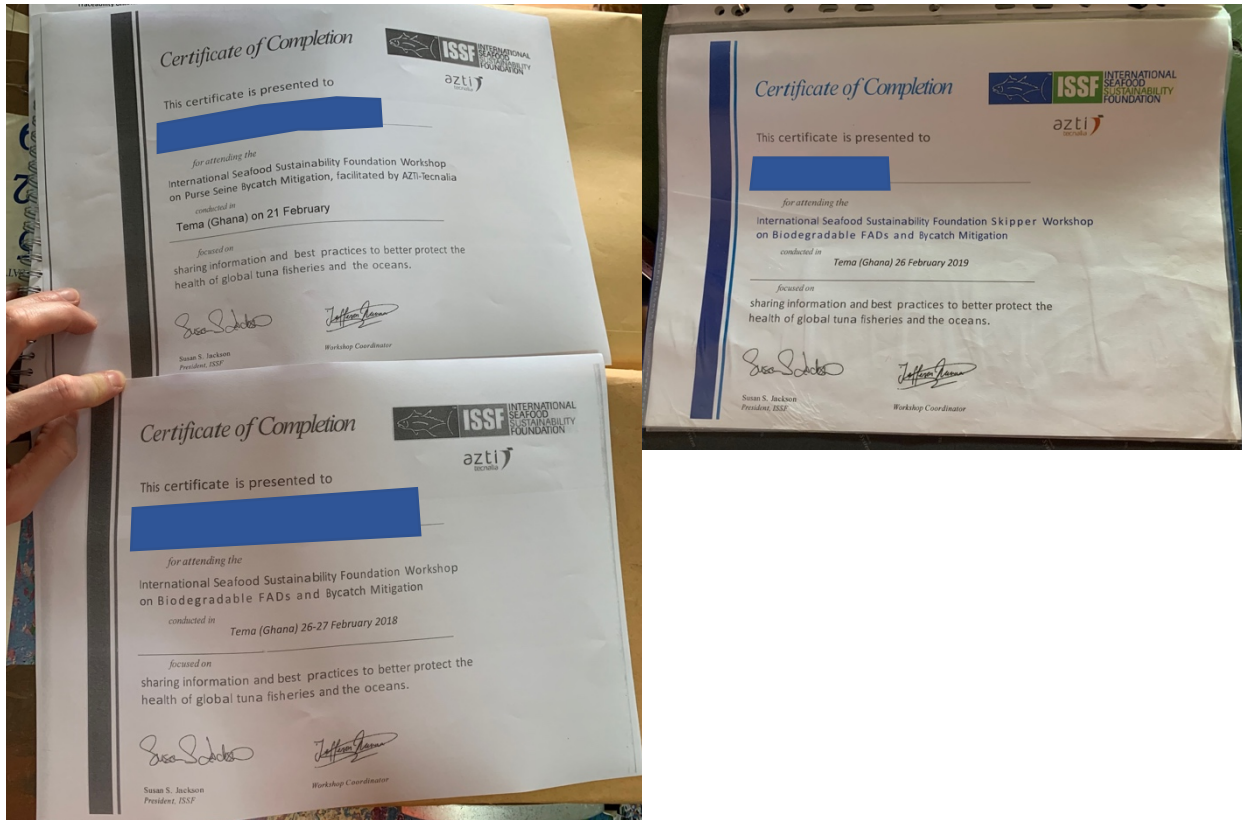


Figure 5. Examples of certificates awarded for participation in ISSF training (photo: Key Traceability)

3. The GTA and their vessels have fully engaged with ISSF programmes and policies. All Ghanaian flagged vessels are listed on the PVR, meaning they deploy only non-entangling FADs, have no shark-finning policies and participate in ISSF skipper training provided by AZTI (Figure 5).
4. At the regional level, ICCAT reported “significant improvement in the discussions and adoption of a new multi-annual conservation and management programme for tropical tunas. The Commission agreed a TAC for bigeye tuna of 62,500 t and 61,500 t, for 2020 and 2021, respectively. The annual TAC for yellowfin will remain at the current level of 110,000 t. In addition, in order to reduce the fishing mortality of juvenile bigeye and yellowfin tuna, it was also agreed to reduce the maximum number of fish aggregating devices (FADs) deployed by vessels and to prohibit the use of FADs for two and three months in 2020 and 2021, respectively.”

For the assessment of EASTI FIP:

The purse seine fleet also participated in FAO’s phase I ABNJ project pilot study in 2018 for electronic monitoring to improve compliance with, and enforcement of, international, regional and national regulations, as well as providing additional observations of bycatch interacting with the fishery. This has since ended, but in a number of vessels continued to record during fishing trips. This trip saw the collection of two EM hard drives from a vessel

and analysis is currently being conducted by [Digital Observer Services](#) (DOS) in Spain. The results will be used to conduct a bycatch risk assessment, which should be completed in the next couple of months. Another vessel will have its EM hard drives removed shortly and collected in March 2020 for analysis. According to the GTA and Fisheries Commission (pers. comm.) there are also plans to continue EM in phase II of the FAO's ABNJ project, with the aim the EM could also be installed on pole and line vessels. Purse seine vessels are now also part of the [FAO biodegradable FAD pilot study](#), which is being coordinated by ISSF: "The initiative addresses some of the challenges facing the fishing sector by implementing best practice solutions to reduce both bycatch due to entanglement in FAD structure, and the amount of plastic and other non-natural materials used in FAD-fishing, with the aim to contribute to achieving responsible, efficient and sustainable fisheries and biodiversity conservation".

Catalysing implementation of actions and improvements

Despite positive steps in Ghana, both FIPs have yet to make significant progress according to the FIP progress indicators. Below are listed some of the assessed delays which have affected the FIPs to date.

For the assessment of both fisheries:

1. Issues remain for the stock status and management of bigeye tuna at the regional level of ICCAT. This surrounds the rebuilding of bigeye tuna and the development of harvest strategy and harvest control rules (HCRs) for target species. Further to this, no activity was made for tropical tuna management strategy evaluations (MSEs) in 2019, but ICCAT's Standing Committee of Research and Statistics (SCRS) noted the need to restart the process at the [26th Regular Meeting of the Commission \(ICCAT\) in November 2019](#).
2. With respect to Principle 3 (fisheries management), there are currently gaps in knowledge of national management in the countries where the fishing takes place (excluding Ghana). Analysis of other countries (Benin, Togo, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire) was not conducted during the original pre-assessment and therefore not included in the development of the FIP action plans. The FCWC website goes some way to provide further information, as country regulations are included on the website. Here fisheries laws and regulations are provided as a starting point. This will have to be further investigated during the life of the FIP.

For the assessment of the purse seine FIP (EASTI):

1. This is an issue which relates to bycatch mitigation. Whilst there have clearly been steps in the right direction, observer data is yet to be supplied, in addition to the EM analysis, to provide an information base and formalise bycatch mitigation and management in the fishery.

For the assessment of the Pole and line FIP:

1. The largest area of work that needs to be achieved, is improvements in the bait fishery. Currently the only management for the bait fishery is that vessels are not able to fish at night with lights, there are no other harvest control rules or restrictions (such as minimum landing sizes (MLS), quotas, closed areas, closed seasons or licence caps). Due to not being able to fish in this manner, when anchovy and sardinella schools move too close to shore to be targeted by tuna boats, pole and line vessels must purchase bait from some of the ~8000+ canoes from the Ghanaian artisanal fleet that operate inshore. Due to the method of capture by the canoe fishers, the survivability of the bait is poor as fish often, and live bait is essential for the capture of tuna. Tuna vessels must often seek new quantities of bait during their typical 30 to 40-day trip length if they cannot source the bait themselves. Bait caught by the tuna vessels themselves can typically survive for over a week onboard before use in fishing activities. This issue was not highlighted in the pre-assessment. Whilst vessels record how much bait they catch or buy from canoes, this is not standardised across the fleet, as it is by the bucket and includes water, so weight and species of fish is not accurately recorded. The Fisheries Commission informed Key Traceability that stock assessments were conducted for anchovy in the region by the [Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea](#) (FCWC), and of which Ghana is a member country.

Final points and next steps

Key Traceability are following up on information, which is still outstanding, namely:

1. Aggregated catch data for the fleets.
2. Aggregated observer data.
3. Responses of the FAD questionnaires for all vessels deploying FADs.
4. The most recent anchovy stock assessment.

The meetings that were held in January were regarded as a ‘fact-finding’ mission for both of the FIPs, where a large amount of information was gained and identified where more information was needed for the FIP process. Key Traceability were grateful to the FIP stakeholders for their active participation in the meetings and the next step for the AGM to be held was discussed.