



Contact: Doohyun Park | [doohyun@oceanoutcomes.org](mailto:doohyun@oceanoutcomes.org) | +82 (0)10 7327 3478

## **South Korea's Largest Seafood Industry Players Come Together to Support Sustainable Tuna**

*New, annual roundtable in Seoul facilitated by Ocean Outcomes  
highlights Korean industry support for harvest strategies*

**Seoul International Seafood Show, Seoul, Republic of Korea** — Five nations are responsible for 90% of distant water fishing efforts. Korea — one of these five — is a major seafood producer and exporter, with tuna long being the leading seafood export, both by volume and value. Last month, at a first-ever roundtable meeting of Korea's largest and most influential seafood companies, those responsible for catching tuna in Korea came together to jointly advocate for better management and operation of key tuna fisheries in the Western and Central Pacific Oceans.

At the newly formed Korean Roundtable for Sustainable Tuna Fishing, launched in 2022 at the Seoul International Seafood Show, participants expressed their concerns over the continued delay in adopting key measures ensuring sustainable tuna fisheries management in the region. The participating companies urged member countries of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Management Commission to expedite the promised process of: formally adopting Harvest Strategies for all tuna stocks; improving data collection mechanisms to contribute to science-based management; and better assessing the ecosystem impacts of tuna fishing, including on endangered, threatened and protected species.

[Read the complete joint statement from participating companies here.](#)

“New England Seafood International recognise the continued leadership of the Korean tuna industry in driving responsibly sourced tuna for the UK market. Tuna sustainability remains a priority for NESI as well as our retail and foodservice customers. The Korean Roundtable for Sustainable Tuna Fishing presents a great opportunity to provide a platform for leaders across key Korean fishing companies and stakeholders to discuss the sourcing challenges facing the tuna industry, and to identify those areas where a collaborative approach can work to ensure responsibly sourced Korean tuna for the future,” Ruth Hoban of New England Seafood International, one of the participating companies.

The newly formed and newly initiated Korean Roundtable for Sustainable Tuna Fishing also includes Dongwon Industry, Sajo Industry, Silla Co. Ltd, Dongwon Fisheries, You Wang Co. Ltd, the Korea Overseas Fisheries Association, the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, and the National Institute of Fisheries Sciences, among others.

Korea has been working towards tuna sustainability in its key distant water fisheries for over a decade: in 2019, two major fisheries in the WCPO were the first in Korea certified as sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council. More recently, additional fisheries are moving into Fishery Improvement Projects and the MSC process to pursue sustainable

statuses. As of 2022, seven tuna fisheries are either MSC certified, in MSC assessment, or in Fishery Improvement Projects. All these were represented by participating companies at the roundtable meeting.

“Sustainability has always been at the top of the priorities of the Korean tuna industry”, said Doohyun Park, Korea Fishery Improvement Manager at Ocean Outcomes. “Facilitating discussions amongst industry players — such as through this roundtable — helps coordinate various industry needs and the related asks of tuna fishery managers so that the Korean tuna industry can continue to meet its production and sustainability goals,” he added.

The participating companies called on WCPFC members to take bold action to help avoid the risk of suspension of MSC certifications in the region and to support the Fishery Improvement Projects to implement the improvement actions in their respective work plans, such as adhering to electronic monitoring requirements.

In addition to the Korean companies participating in the roundtable, other key markets for tuna were represented at the event by the Global Tuna Alliance, a group of major tuna buyers in the European Union and the United Kingdom.

"The Korean distant water fishing industry is committed to actively engage with — and address — a number of distant water fishery issues. We are keen to work closely with international agencies, coastal states and other related organizations, in order to promote sustainable fishing practices and help fisheries continue to meet global standards, such as the MSC," added Bongjun Choi, Manager of the Korea Overseas Fisheries Association.

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*Ocean Outcomes (O2) works with local communities, fisheries, and the seafood industry to improve the environmental, social and economic sustainability of seafood production. Learn more at [www.oceanoutcomes.org](http://www.oceanoutcomes.org)*