



HKSSC Interim Meeting #1 Minutes

Date: 11 April 2022

Location: Zoom

Attendees:

11	Members	1	Technical Advisor (TA)
1	Secretariat	1	Steering Committee (SC)

Agenda:

No agenda; open floor discussion

Summary of discussion:

1. Introduction of Seafood Friday

- New website from Natural Holland - online platform where people can buy seafood
- Allows people to understand why certain seafood cannot be sourced all year round
- A new way of sales combining education on sustainability and traceability; connecting farmers and fishers directly to the customer

2. Data collection

- Invitation for Member trade and data collection survey
- Taking stock of wild and farmed species trade volumes for start approaching external funders
- Identify next steps after risk assessment



3. Blueyou

- A swiss company working as a sustainability certifier and recently started working with artisanal fisheries
- Working with source fisheries for improvement
- Puts standards into place, work with certification bodies to make products more sustainable and more transparent
- Also helped to develop small scale fisheries and get them to the mainstream market
- Members could help put the HKSSC in touch with them, as a follow up after the SRA to start improving fisheries
- Currently strong on Yellowfin tuna, Vannamei prawns, black tiger prawns
- Head office in Europe and in partnership with a subsidiary in Manilla for Tuna

4. Exploring new seafood suppliers

- HKSSC often gets approached by outside seafood suppliers
- If a good source appears, it was proposed that we bring these up during the SRA WG meetings

5. Membership fees

- Quarterly installments are possible
- Grace period until July

6. Marketplace updates

- Still looking for funds for technological developments
- Next WG call will be in early May

7. General discussion: Shift in clientele

- For some businesses, the clientele is becoming younger
- Incorporate sustainability in their decision-making progress, therefore marketing shifting to sustainability
- Good to have system in place to trace progress towards food sustainability

8. Waste Management



- Can be in seafood or other food
- Downscaling on packing materials - one member company has managed to achieve 25% reduction in wastes due to these efforts
- When one has to start paying for food waste, will be very expensive (Hong Kong seems to be going in this direction)
- Business model of buffets and all you can eat are not sustainable; some member hotels have stopped buffet breakfasts because of this and shifted to a la carte only
- New head chef of Regent hotel (replacing Intercontinental) who worked from Tokyo is interested in certifying the whole hotel - also very passionate about waste management and sustainability - connection to be made to HKSSC

9. Certified bluefin tuna

- A sushi restaurant belonging to a member company will be eliminating bluefin tuna along with all other endangered species, result of a 3-year work in progress (first starting with certification, then eliminating completely)
- Shall be strongly publicized to help encourage similar actions amongst other restaurants
- Bonito will still be served as well as other substitutes, such as bigeye tuna
- Member opinion: the credibility of certification label is challenged given frail stock of the species
- Some restaurants in Hong Kong are sourcing certified bluefin tuna from Japan - quantities are small and prices are expensive
- Certified options of Yellowfin tuna and Bigeye tuna exist from the Philippines, but still under FIP with Blueyou
- Certified yellowfin tuna options are also available from Queensland, although there are concerns with FIFO ratio with ranch tuna, reportedly 10kg of anchovies need to be fed for 1kg of tuna.
- Atlantic bluefin tuna: SRA assessment found that total allowable catch and strict controls have ended over-fishing, according to ISSF, but illegal fishing of bluefin tuna in the North Atlantic and Mediterranean remains an issue, due to bluefin tuna's very high market value; IUU is not mitigated in Hong Kong

10. Abalone from South Africa

- Recent research suggests that the more endangered the species, the more this drives up prices and increases market demand in Hong Kong
- Controversial insights presented in an article of opening up the fisheries and letting the stocks crash and hence the market demand, so biological stocks can eventually rebound
- Abagold is a good company farming abalone locally in South Africa, mostly tinned, been through processing facilities and has health certificates - *Haliotis midae*
- Dried abalone from South Africa - no health certificates linked to it, difficult to tell whether legal or not and better to avoid



11. Eels

- Mostly from Holland (European species)
- Not allowed to be exported but still sold in clubs in Hong Kong
- Some traders trade them by putting eels in a can and not declaring, then selling through Singapore
- In Hong Kong, no regulation on bringing in eels but European eels (*Anguilla anguilla*) is CITES II listed - the only eel species that is listed - so permits would be required for import
- Working with customs, using eDNA to identify European eels to make seizure possible
- One member company will stop sourcing all eel species, including from Japan, from Dec 2022, due to the endangered status of the species more generally