How Collaborative Leadership is Turning Seafood into the Protein of the Future

By Ned Daly

ONE OF THE BIGGEST challenges for developing innovation in any industry is how to position companies to be both profitable in an existing business model, while exploring ways to innovate around the production and delivery of products for future markets. This challenge is especially true for more established sectors like seafood. Companies and organizations that are successful in playing this dual role are referred to as ambidextrous organizations.

The concept is often defined as the need to balance “exploitation” – addressing issues like refinement of products and supply-chain efficiency in the existing business landscape – with “exploration,” meaning innovation that helps a company adapt and succeed when faced with external production or market changes.

It is also framed as incremental change (product improvements) and architectural change (production procedures) versus discontinuous change, which creates new products and systems rather than just tweaking the existing business model.

This balance is very difficult for most companies to manage. In response to this challenge, the pharmaceutical industry began looking at ways to support companies as they tried to play an ambidextrous role of working in existing markets while investing heavily in R&D. The industry found there were a number of challenges and necessary innovations that were best dealt with in a collaborative way. While pharmaceutical companies may compete on the development of specific drugs, they are able to invest in improved delivery mechanisms, for example, which provide benefits across the industry.

The pharmaceutical industry created a platform to support companies’ abilities to compete and prosper in the existing world, while developing or supporting innovation for the industry to be competitive and prosperous in the future.

Pre-competitive collaboration is a well-developed model in seafood, with an estimated 250 companies engaged in the business model, according to a recent report.
by the Packard Foundation. While there
have been important innovation efforts
made when it comes to seafood products
and preparation methods, much of the
sector’s ingenuity has focused on improving
the management of fisheries, farms, and
supply chains. With seafood, as is the case
with most natural resource-based industries,
the pre-competitive model has been used to
solve large-scale environmental and social
challenges that are impacting sector business
and profitability.

Pre-competitive collaborations have
been exploring ways to address a second
major challenge around innovation: How
to efficiently engage the broader industry in
adoption of the innovation. “The Chasm” is a
business theory asserting that discontinuous
innovation or sector disruption is not adopted in a consistently cascading manner
through the industry. The challenge around
discontinuous innovation is that the adopter,
or seafood companies, must change their
behavior to receive the benefits of the
innovation – think digital cameras or solar
energy. Innovators and early adopters tend
to embrace innovation and disruption fairly
quickly, according to the theory. Decisions
to embrace these changes usually revolve
around a personal vision for a company that
aligns with the innovation. For the rest of the
marketplace, adoption of innovation is based
on very different criteria – proof that it works.

The management and business theories
that underpin the concepts of ambidextrous
organizations and “The Chasm” are not new,
but they are now being applied to the adoption
of innovation around sustainability to help
companies and industries more efficiently
improve production and supply chains.

Pre-competitive collaboration in
seafood is analogous to the collaborative
R&D programs in other industries. Because
these programs in seafood are industry
driven, two cornerstones of their work
are science-based initiatives and results-
oriented solutions.

With the seafood industry becoming
more comfortable with pre-competitive
 collaboration and as business strategies take
on more refinement when addressing issues
in the sector, a clear ROI for collaborative
engagement has emerged. This includes
removing barriers to access, improving
production, and reducing risk in supply
chains, all of which provide tangible returns
of sustainable practices in production. The
Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative, The
Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability,
and the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership
are all looking at ways to more efficiently
and effectively engage the broader seafood
industry in sustainable practices.

The work being done by pre-
competitive collaborations tends to focus
on issues where national management and
international governance bodies and other
marketplace tools have failed to improve the
management of global fisheries and supply
chains. These are the most challenging
issues for the industry, but also the most
pressing. Looking at the collective impact of
these collaborations, it should be clear that
seafood is well-positioned to deliver a clean,
healthy protein to global markets that can
help with much broader societal concerns,
such as climate change and food insecurity.

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There is still a significant amount of
work to do to improve the sector’s
sustainability, and innovation will always
be a constant need for seafood. This brief
looks at some of the work being done by
pre-competitive collaborations in these arenas,
highlighting how they are preparing seafood
for success in future protein markets.
Engaging Producers and Processors in Sustainable Practices

WORKING IN COUNTRIES with reduced capacity for fisheries management and oversight can be extremely challenging when introducing improved management, stock assessments, and traceability. Add to that social challenges like worker recruitment, which has roots in issues beyond the seafood industry, and the size of the obstacles these programs face becomes clearer. But these are the issues necessary to address for the seafood industry to stay competitive in global protein markets. These platforms are driving innovation that improves the industry’s relationship with impacted ecosystems, workers, and communities, and deliver a more sustainable protein to market.

Unlike other proteins, seafood requires a much broader base of science to manage production efficiently because of the number of species, environments, and geographies involved. The focus on science and research is not only a reflection of an interest in grounding decision-making in data, but also the greater need for science in fisheries management. Unlike other proteins, seafood requires a much broader base of science to manage production efficiently because of the number of species, environments, and geographies involved in managing the industry. The same lack of capacity that exists for management and enforcement in many countries exists for scientific research.

The NFI Crab Council and the Seafood Task Force (formerly the Shrimp Sustainable Supply Chain Task Force) are examples of traditional pre-competitive collaborations. Both were incepted to address a very specific set of issues in seafood production. For the NFI Crab Council, improving the sustainability of crab production in five countries in Asia was the primary aim, with a focus on creating more productive crab fisheries and harvesting methods that produce larger crabs for market. The council, which is representative of the sustainability R&D model of collaboration, has provided a very effective vehicle for engaging fisheries in sustainable management and traceability. It puts significant resources into research and supporting the science related to crab fisheries, developing systems that incentivize management based on these components as well as stakeholder input.

The Seafood Task Force (STF) was first organized in response to the 2014 Guardian article alleging slavery in a number of shrimp supply chains, including those belonging to some of the companies forming its ranks. It has assembled a very influential and diverse set of companies to address social concerns in seafood production and processing. Along with a focus on science and results-oriented solutions, pre-competitive collaborations also share a high degree of transparency about their work, something that the task force does with its Seafood Task Force Progress Report, which paints a very clear picture of the enormous challenges present when dealing with issues like forced labor in countries with little national capacity and multiple-link supply chains.

The complexity of tuna management as well as the size of global tuna markets makes organizing industry stakeholders – while getting consensus around solutions and priorities – quite difficult, but nevertheless essential to driving innovation and improving tuna supply and supply chains. The International Sustainable Seafood Foundation is a pre-competitive collaboration that has played a leading role in organizing the tuna industry and working to improve the sector’s sustainability since 2009. ISSF has taken a science-based and very holistic approach to improving tuna stocks. ISSF does this by developing and implementing verifiable, science-based practices, commitments, and international management measures that result in tuna fisheries meeting the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) standard and measures that become the industry standard for vessel owners, traders, processors, and marketers.

Considering the value of good fisheries management to countries, capturing the industry’s innovation is a win-win for governments and industry.
management and harvesting of tuna. The GTA was started to support supply chain actors engaging with regional fishery management organizations (RFMOs), though it has since shifted its sights on the World Economic Forum’s 2020 Tuna Traceability Declaration following a collaborative agreement with the forum in 2019 and 2020. The GTA is made up of retailers and tuna supply chain companies, who traditionally have not had a collaborative, market-based platform to influence tuna management. Together, these retailers and companies work to push for harvest strategies that can impact tuna’s legality, environmental sustainability, worker and community relations, and traceability.

The ability of the supply chain to engage in discussions related to management has become an important dynamic for shaping the future of tuna markets. There are a number of tuna stocks seeking MSC certification that cannot pass the requirements due to a lack of implementation of harvest strategies by RFMOs. In this case, governing bodies’ inaction is actually blocking the advancement of sustainable practices and sustainable investment by the seafood industry.

“GTA is working with tuna supply chain stakeholders in particular, but a broader set of seafood stakeholders as well to improve the management and sustainability of tuna. Not only is the industry demonstrating a commitment to sustainable practices, they have outpaced governments and governing bodies in pushing for better management in fisheries and aquaculture. "Not only is the industry demonstrating a commitment to sustainable practices, they have outpaced governments and governing bodies in pushing for better management in fisheries and aquaculture."

The relationship between governments and industry has evolved in a similar manner in other industries. For example, the chocolate industry has asked for more regulation around the issue of child labor, recognizing the industry cannot address the issue alone. Like chocolate, the seafood industry is responding to trends in the marketplace with innovation around the management and production of seafood. In order to realize the benefits of these investments in the marketplace, the seafood industry must engage governments to keep pace.

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**Regional fishery management organization (RFMO): an international organization that is dedicated to the sustainable management of fishery resources in a particular region of international waters**

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**Tuna 2020 Commitments**

[The Global Tuna Alliance is working to implement these commitments with the global tuna industry for the World Economic Forum]

1. **Tuna Traceability Commitment**
We pledge that all tuna products in our supply chains will be fully traceable to the vessel and trip dates, and that this information will be disclosed upon request at the Point of Sale either on the packaging or via an online system.

2. **Commitment to a Socially Responsible Tuna Supply Chain**
We pledge to eliminate any form of slavery and ensure suppliers at least meet minimum social standards in management practices as recommended in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Labour Organization’s Conventions and Recommendations.

3. **Commitment to Environmentally Responsible Tuna Sources**
We pledge to source from tuna fisheries that have implemented:

   - a) Robust science-based management plans, including harvest strategies that can maintain stocks at, or restore them at least to, levels which can produce maximum sustainable yield; and
   - b) Measures to ensure that impacts of fisheries on the environment are sustainable, including bycatch mitigation techniques.

   To put this pledge into effect we will continue to explore new opportunities to support the multi-stakeholder initiatives mentioned above, and we will work to continually increase our sourcing from tuna fisheries certified by schemes that are internationally recognized by the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI).

4. **Government Partnership**
In addition to the above commitments, we — as industry leaders — will call on and work with governments to take actions needed to support them:

   - a) Implement Harvest Strategies for all tuna stocks under the jurisdiction of each tuna RFMO by 2020, that will ensure sustainably managed tuna fisheries in line with SDG Target 14.4.
   - b) Establish systems to identify and restrict illegal seafood through government-led measures on traceability and transparency.
   - c) Build capacity to establish and manage information systems to account for domestic and international fishing fleets, landings, enforcement and trade of seafood products, in line with the FAO Code of Conduct and the Port State Measure Agreement.

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Evolving from Species to Sectors

As the seafood marketplace became more concerned with sustainability and a lack of oversight and management in many important fisheries, retailers began to incorporate more purchasing requirements around sustainability. While intended to spur on sustainable practices, a lack of coordination around these commitments created new challenges for producers who had to meet multiple sets of requirements.

The Sustainable Seafood Coalition (SSC) is a collective of U.K.-based seafood retailers, suppliers, brands, and foodservice outlets looking to implement a common set of commitments. The SSC was not a reaction to specific fishery management issues, but to the challenges posed by companies at the end of the supply chain, who individually were driving positive practices in supply chains, but because of a lack of coordination, also made it difficult for suppliers to comply. The SSC allowed leading seafood companies in the U.K. to align their asks of the supply chain, creating more influence to drive those changes they were seeking. Such initiatives and the SSC platform allowed these companies to more efficiently implement innovative approaches and solutions to positively impact their supply chain.

The SSC was founded in 2011. ClientEarth, an environmental non-profit based in London that works in a number of natural resource sectors, helped start the initiative and is now its secretariat. The SSC developed two voluntary codes of conduct that members pledge to – a Code of Conduct for Environmentally Responsible Fish and Seafood Purchasing and a Code of Conduct on Environmental Claims. In 2015, leading seafood businesses signed the codes, marking a pivotal moment in developing best practices for sustainability in the industry. The SSC has now grown to include 40 members, including eight of the U.K’s ten biggest food retailers.

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The SSC is a progressive partnership of businesses cooperating to address important issues in fish and seafood sustainability. By agreeing to follow its labelling code, members commit to assure consumers that all voluntary environmental claims made in relation to their own-brand fish and seafood are consistent, clear, and accurate.

Due to the difference in markets and industry make-up, the SSC Spanish program is designed to support the unique challenges facing the large seafood industry in Spain.

Approved codes of conduct are voluntary agreements on responsible sourcing and labelling, developed by SSC members.

They are tools for change and contribute to the vision that all fish and seafood sold in the UK is from sustainable sources. The Codes represent commitments SSC members have agreed to adhere to, irrespective of size or sector, and set a precedent for industry best practice. The SSC Codes are without prejudice to national, international or other laws or regulations.

The Labelling Code

The SSC aims to create harmonised seafood labelling that will provide consumers with accurate information on the provenance and sustainability of the fish or seafood. The Voluntary Code of Conduct on Environmental Claims is designed to achieve this.

The Sourcing Code

A primary goal of the SSC is to ensure that consumers can have confidence that the seafood they are buying meets or exceeds minimum standards of responsibility. The Voluntary Code of Conduct on Environmentally Responsible Fish and Seafood Sourcing is designed to achieve this.

How were the Codes developed?

While the Codes were under development, the process began with a working group meeting on the Code topic (e.g. a labelling working group meeting). ClientEarth, as secretariat of the SSC, would present some initial ideas for discussion at this first working group meeting and facilitate a discussion to outline what direction the Code should take.

SSC members and non-member experts were then invited to share their specialist knowledge at working-group meetings. Non-member experts included government officials, NGO representatives, academics and non-departmental public bodies.

How are the Codes implemented?

All members of the SSC have committed to implementing the SSC Codes, where they are applicable. This means translating the requirements of the codes into their business practices. Members have a year to implement the codes after signing up (unless agreed otherwise).
Initial work has focused on building industry support for fishery improvement projects (FIPs). The model has also been replicated in Hong Kong.

Conventional wisdom would say getting a group of competitors in a room to work on a common set of goals would be an uphill battle in terms of engagement. Across the board, this has not been the case in seafood. There is certainly a period of developing trust and setting ground rules, but the value of driving supply chain and production improvements through collective impact has many collaborations searching for new ways to innovate in the sector.

Last year, Northeast Atlantic mackerel fisheries lost MSC certification due to stocks falling below a pre-cautionary threshold. This is an important fishery for many SSC members. However, the SSC was able to work with its members to first voice support for management reform in the mackerel fishery and then explore the opportunity to develop a “policy” or “governance” FIP to address the unique challenges to management present for the species.

“Some progress has been made but there is no escaping that delivering long-term sustainable management of these fisheries presents a challenge. Coastal state governance issues mean that it has not been possible to agree a mechanism which establishes total allowable catches aligned to scientific advice for these fisheries. In the absence of any quick win solutions, it is vital that the supply chain works together to drive improvements and influence change,” Ally Dingwall of Sainsbury’s, a member of the SSC, said.

SSC members are now working with a new collaboration, the North Atlantic Pelagic Advisory Group (NAPA), to bring the market to bear in driving improvements in the fishery, with the hopes of reinstating MSC certification.

The interest of SSC members in continuing to collaborate and working to address new challenges speaks to the leaders and innovators that make up its membership and the real desire of the seafood industry to address sustainability issues.

Sea Pact is a pre-competitive collaboration that has adopted a similar model to SSC. Sea Pact sets out to align the interests and efforts of like-minded North American companies in the middle of the supply chain to drive change in the seafood industry. There was not a direct relationship between the change Sea Pact wanted to bring about and its own supply chains and products, making its model a little different that many of the other collaborations. Rather than focusing on their own challenges, Sea Pact members looked to where they could promote research and sustainability through financial support or engagement. The program has provided USD 550,000 (EUR 466,459) in grants to date.

“Sea Pact is made up of members who see a strong relationship between the sustainability and the competitiveness of...
the seafood industry in the broader protein market. Sea Pact is helping other sectors and geographies develop similar collaborative models for engagement,” Sea Pact Managing Director Rob Johnson said.

Along with their grantmaking and sharing their model for collaboration, Sea Pact companies are working with their own supply chains to promote traceability. Sea Pact was able to use its existing network of companies and suppliers to share COVID-19 strategies to keep businesses rolling. And given its significant impact already, like many other collaborations, Sea Pact is looking for new ways to improve the sustainability of seafood.

“We are also looking at how to support the type of transformational change that will help the industry in addressing future challenges and meet the U.N.’s Sustainable Development Goals,” Johnson added.

Flexibility and the ability to work on a variety of issues fits well with center-supply chain companies that are often quite literally caught in the middle – between demands being pushed down the supply chain and the challenges of implementation closer to the water. This position allows Sea Pact to have a solid understanding of the realities of seafood supply chains and helps its member companies identify projects that support research and innovation in seafood that can drive real change.

In 2019, Sea Pact partnered with the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP) to start a FIP for snapper fisheries in Mexico. The plan is for U.S. importers to fund the development of the basic, national-level snapper FIP. There is the opportunity for the FIP to eventually convert to comprehensive status once some of the stock and management issues have been resolved. The basic FIP being initiated will cover the snapper family overall, and will be national in scope.

The FIP includes northern red snapper, yelloweye snapper, and blackfin snapper as target species, and over 30 associated species, including other snappers, groupers, jacks, porgies, and tilefish. The snapper fishery includes both artisanal and industrial vessels, and has no regulations or management plan in place governing it beyond gear specifications. There is also very little stock assessment data – the most recent publicly available stock assessment was published in 2002. At that time, the fishery was considered overfished or depleted. The fishery is now officially considered in deterioration, but has no accompanying science around management or catch limits.

Sea Pact was able to identify a project where it could provide critical investment dollars to scale up a FIP to a national level program and create real change on the water. It has also invested in innovative models to improve the management and long-term assured supply of fisheries and the delivery of consumer-friendly, sustainable products to global markets.

SeaBOS brings a slightly different model to sector-based collaboration. Launched by the Stockholm Resilience Center, the program borrows its strategy from nature – its concept of a “keystone actor” is based on “keystone species” in ecology. Keystone species have a disproportionately large influence on the ecological system in which they operate. Likewise, a keystone company has a disproportionately large impact on its sector and how the sector operates.

The initiative brought together ten of the largest seafood companies in the world, including the two largest companies...
by revenues, Maruha Nichiro Corporation and Nippon Suisan Kaisha, Ltd; two of the world’s largest tuna companies, Thai Union Group PCL and Dongwon Industries; the two largest salmon farmers, Mowi ASA and Cermaq; the two largest aquafeeds companies, Skretting – which is a subsidiary of Nutreco – and Cargill Aqua Nutrition; Japanese tuna purse seine company Kyokuyo; and the agro-industrial conglomerate Charoen Pokphand Foods.

A statement from SeaBOS members reflects the need for seafood companies to play an ambidextrous role for a healthy industry today and in the future:

“We already make a significant contribution to healthy and nutritious diets, as well as to employment all around the world, helping to provide food security for all. We are confident that an increased production of seafood – caught in a healthy ocean using sustainable fishing methods or farmed in sustainable production systems, by people employed in safe and fair working conditions – is both possible and critical for the future of humankind.

However, oceans are under enormous pressure. There is strong scientific evidence of growing impacts on marine ecosystems. Ocean temperatures and acidification are increasing; degradation of coastal mangroves and coral reefs is threatening critical life support systems; habitats are being destroyed; nutrient run-off and toxic substances are causing serious pollution; and the build-up of plastic waste in the oceans is a threat to many species and to human health.”

SeaBOS is working to address illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and forced labor; increase and improve traceability and transparency; join forces with governments to improve regulations; and address the issue of plastics. Along with addressing these challenges, SeaBOS has a fifth goal to be a source of inspiration for the rest of the industry.

The genesis of SeaBOS reflects the genuine interest of the seafood industry to solve large scale problems in the sector. These are companies that do not necessarily share similar production, supply chain, or market challenges – the common element amongst the participants is the ability and interest in having a positive impact on the global seafood industry. The ability for an industry to develop and adopt innovation increases dramatically with organizations like SeaBOS, as well as other collaborations supporting seafood companies’ abilities to be competitive in the future.
LIKE MANY OTHER collaborations, the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI) looked to develop a coordinated response to a challenge impeding the growth of the sustainable seafood market. But this was not a sector- or species-specific issue. Just like many other industries, seafood saw the growth of ecolabels and certifications correlate with sustainability becoming a bigger focus. GSSI was able to bring some order to the growing field of ecolabels through a bench-marking process to help the seafood industry understand and identify credible ecolabel and certification programs.

The work by GSSI is another example of how these collaborations are endeavoring towards the ultimate goal of a more sustainable seafood industry. Confusion around ecolabels was a challenge recognized by almost everyone in the seafood industry that was impeding the uptake of sustainable products. Addressing this challenge would not provide any competitive advantage for the companies involved. In fact, the industry leaders and innovators that made up GSSI membership were likely giving up a competitive advantage – their knowledge of certifications in the marketplace – to support a more sustainable seafood industry.

“Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative members have, through collaboration, consultation, and science-based evaluation, provided the seafood marketplace with the ability to support sustainability with greater confidence and efficiency. Leveraging our network of partners and experience in driving market improvements, we would now like to bring more seafood producers into sustainable supply chains.” GSSI’s Herman Wisse said.

The program is now looking at how to engage small boat and artisanal fisheries in sustainable seafood production and markets. Like the benchmarking process, the goal is not to address problems in members’ supply chains, but to tackle an issue that can improve the livelihoods of fishers and deliver more sustainable, consumer-friendly product to market. GSSI members will be working in partnership with the FAO, and with a broad set of stakeholders including industry, governments, NGOs, and investors to develop innovative ways to help non-certified fisheries and aquaculture operations meet the growing global demand for seafood sustainably.

“In a fragmented sector like seafood, the alignment and shared learning under Seafood MAP are essential to drive the majority of seafood, that is still uncertified, towards responsible and future-proof practices that can feed the world.”

~ Herman Wisse, GSSI

~ Flavio Corsin, IDH

How it works

Seafood MAP can be used to:

**ASSESS**
the sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture production systems

**MAKE COMMITMENTS**
in sourcing non-certified seafood coupled with continuous improvement

**INFORM**
development, investment and capacity-building programs based on local needs and priorities

**COLLABORATE**
with other stakeholders using the same common language
towards responsible and future-proof practices that can feed the world,” Flavio Corsin, aquaculture director at IDH – a Seafood MAP partner with GSSI – said of the importance of the work to the broader industry.

Like GSSI, the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP) is working on bringing sustainable practices to the broader industry or across “The Chasm” from the early adopters. Part of the challenge in seafood is many of the market-based tools developed in the sector are aligned with best practices in the marketplace, making it difficult for some producers to find an appropriate entry point and earn market incentives or support for adopting new innovation.

SFP, through its supplier roundtables and Target 75 program, is working to engage the majority of the seafood industry in sustainable practices. The Target 75 program is focused on ensuring 75 percent of world production in key sectors is – at a minimum – either sustainable (i.e., certified by the MSC program, or green-listed in SFP’s metrics tool) or making regular, verifiable improvements. SFP has been a major proponent of FIPs and its supplier roundtables support a large number of such projects around the globe. Similar to what the Global Tuna Alliance is facing with RFMOs, advances in fishery management through FIPs has outpaced national management in many cases. SFP sees an opportunity for governments to leverage the investment made in FIPs by companies, NGOs, and other stakeholders and the advancement in best practices FIPs have produced for national fisheries management.

The Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST) is working on one of seafood’s biggest challenge – the development of a global voluntary standard for traceability. GDST is focused on developing four areas of work: aligning and standardizing key data elements, efficient data verification, interoperability, and harmonization of emerging national regulations related to seafood traceability. GDST launched its Standard 1.0 in March 2020 with broad industry support.

As is the case with many of its peer organizations, GDST is rooted in science and has engaged a broad set of seafood stakeholders and technology and traceability experts in the development of its standard. Organizing the seafood industry and getting buy-in to new innovation can be as challenging as developing the innovation.
itself, but GDST has been able to make steady progress engaging the seafood industry and is building a network of support through other collaborations – SeaBOS and the Global Tuna Alliance are actively supporting the GDST standard.

In an open letter from the GDST, the value collaborations bring to seafood is apparent:

“Seafood is a key source of protein for 4.3 billion people and provides income to hundreds of millions of families, communities, and businesses around the world. In fact, seafood is the most globalized sector of the food industry, bringing products to consumers from every corner of the planet. But globalized production and trade also includes risks, such as seafood fraud and mislabeling, labor abuses, and challenges for managing complex supply chains to ensure products are responsibly sourced. In fact, new regulations in the U.S. and Europe demand that the seafood industry step up its effort to track seafood imports and prevent illegal fishing. That is why our companies are helping the seafood industry take a major step toward building trust and increasing transparency by establishing the first-ever global voluntary standards for seafood traceability.

Seafood traceability cannot be accomplished by any one company or organization alone. The new GDST traceability standards are a collaborative effort that will benefit the entire seafood industry. Our companies are already starting to work with our supply chain partners to make this a reality. We encourage all businesses and stakeholders with an investment in seafood to join us in working to sustain the future of our industry.”

How the work of the GDST and other collaborations relates to markets was highlighted in a recent survey by Cargill, a feed company familiar with the significant challenges of both land-based and ocean-based protein production. The survey, which involved 3,500 respondents, showed the importance of transparency and the ability to tell the story behind the food when building trust with consumers. Being able to tell seafood’s story through traceability, with a strong narrative about better management, has been one of the benefits of pre-competitive collaboration in the industry.

Seafood also has the most to gain from collaboration – addressing key challenges in production and processing will allow the industry to better differentiate itself on its exemplary nutritional and sustainability profiles.

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Seafood2030 will continue to track the role of pre-competitive collaboration in making seafood the protein of the future.