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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GDST & NFI partner to drive traceability standards for US seafood businesses

The Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST) welcomes new strategic partnership with the National Fisheries Institute (NFI) - supporting hundreds of US seafood businesses in delivering best practice for digital traceability and, crucially, meeting new FDA food traceability requirements.

As of January 20th, 2026, the seafood market in the U.S. must comply with new traceability data requirements defined by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Food Traceability Final Rule, also known as "[FSMA 204](#)" rule. The new rule requires those exporting to and handling foods in the U.S. to implement the capture and exchange of standardized data. Meeting these new requirements will be facilitated through digital interoperability traceability between systems.

A new strategic partnership between the GDST and the National Fisheries Institute (NFI) supports wide-scale implementation of digital interoperability in the U.S., with the GDST providing a Standard and resources that enable seafood companies to compile and coordinate traceability data.

Lisa Weddig, NFI's Chief Food Safety Officer commented:

"NFI includes nearly 300 member companies - many of them household names - and all of them committed to the sustainable management of our oceans and platinum level food safety. Partnering with the GDST ensures we are at the forefront of digital interoperable data capture and exchange. Enabling this type of traceability through the supply chain, will facilitate achieving these new requirements."

The partnership highlights the growing recognition of the GDST Standard as a bridge between industry practices and government policies. A key requirement of the current FDA rule is that seafood supply chain companies who manufacture, process, pack, or hold foods on the Food Traceability List maintain records containing standardized Key Data Elements (KDEs) associated with specific Critical Tracking Events (CTEs) and share these data with supply chain customers and, when requested, the FDA. The GDST

provides standardized definitions for KDEs and CTEs within the GDST Standard, supporting seamless data sharing to demonstrate traceability.

Kevin Edwards, Vice President Global Market Development for GDST said:

“This partnership with NFI highlights how important digital interoperable traceability is becoming on the global stage, both within the seafood industry and beyond. Retailers and brands are choosing to use the GDST Standard to inform their adoption and implementation of digital data exchange to demonstrate traceability throughout the whole length of the supply chain. FSMA 204 covers a broad range of commodities and it is likely that other food industries will follow in the wake of the seafood industry as it leads the way towards global digital interoperable traceability.

At its heart, this policy effort is about making sure we’re all speaking the same language. In partnering with the GDST, NFI is taking a technological leap forward; utilizing a purpose-built Standard, developed by industry, for industry, that is practical and directly applicable to what’s needed right now. Additionally, the Standard isn’t static - it will remain fit-for-purpose, evolving through ongoing Dialogues with the seafood community, shaped and reshaped to reflect their needs and communicated via a library of free resources.”

Lisa Weddig, NFI’s Chief Food Safety Officer added:

“With work to achieve the Food Traceability Rule implementation rapidly developing, this new partnership illustrates how NFI members will be engaged in the next evolution of the GDST Standard. Through the Dialogues, participants will help ensure the Standard continues to align systems with any future requirements. Our members’ presence alongside the GDST at the Dialogues places NFI at the forefront of a global movement pioneering supply chain transparency. As seafood is one of the world's most traded commodities, this is a huge challenge, but we're happy to be part of leading this charge.”

ENDS.

Notes to editor

[**The Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability \(GDST\)**](#) is an international, business-to-business platform dedicated to creating global standards and guidelines for interoperable seafood traceability. Founded in 2017 by WWF and IFT, GDST became a partnership Foundation in 2022, guided by a Steering Committee comprising industry leaders that operates under the oversight of the Secretariat, which facilitates collaboration and implementation of its objectives.

GDST’s primary goal is to establish a common framework for seafood traceability that enables seamless data exchange across the supply chain. Its standards, including the

Critical Tracking Events (CTEs) and Key Data Elements (KDEs), ensure that traceability systems are interoperable, addressing industry-wide challenges like combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and improving sustainability practices.

The GDST has 80 Partners, including major seafood processors, retailers, software companies, NGOs and global brands. Notable partners include Marine Stewardship Council, Wholefoods, Metro, Thai Union, and WWF. GDST also works closely with international organizations like the FAO to align its standards with global fisheries management and policy frameworks.

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[The National Fisheries Institute](#) is a non-profit organization dedicated to education about seafood safety, sustainability, and nutrition. From vessels at sea to your favorite seafood restaurant, our diverse member companies bring delicious fish and shellfish to American families. NFI promotes the US Dietary Guidelines that suggest Americans include fish and shellfish in their diets twice per week for longer, healthier lives.

NFI and its members are committed to sustainable management of our oceans and being stewards of our environment by endorsing the United Nations Principles for Responsible Fisheries. Our investment in our oceans today will provide our children and future generations the health benefits of a plentiful supply of fish and seafood tomorrow.

From responsible aquaculture, to a marketplace supporting free trade, to ensuring the media and consumers have the facts about the health benefits of fish and shellfish, NFI and its members support and promote sound public policy based on ground truth science,

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For more information:

<https://aboutseafood.com/>