January 26, 2026

Dear stakeholders across the global seafood value chain — from harvesters and processors to retailers, foodservice, and beyond:

RE: **Open Letter from Third-Party Certification Standard Holders in Support of the Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST)**

As organizations entrusted with setting and upholding the highest standards of seafood certification, we share a collective commitment to advancing traceability, transparency, and trust throughout the seafood sector. We recognize that collaboration and alignment are critical to achieving a truly responsible, sustainable, and verifiable seafood industry.

In this shared spirit of progress, we express our strong support for the **Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST)** and its open, voluntary **GDST 1.2 Standard** — a global framework that defines how key data elements (KDEs) and critical tracking events (CTEs) should be digitally shared across interoperable seafood traceability systems.

The GDST standard represents a major milestone in aligning the seafood industry around common digital data and information-sharing protocols. It provides a foundation upon which transparency and assurance can be built efficiently and credibly, reducing duplication of efforts while improving both supply chain visibility and stakeholder confidence.

Enhancing Traceability and Chain of Custody Standards

As certification standard holders, we recognize that standardized, digital, and interoperable information — built upon the GDST framework — offers transformative potential for both traceability and **chain of custody (CoC) systems**.

By enabling digital traceability that can seamlessly communicate between platforms and partners, GDST allows certification schemes to:

- Evolve their traceability and CoC standards with greater efficiency, consistency, and real-time verification capabilities.
- Reduce administrative burdens and data duplication across certified entities.
- Increase the accuracy and timeliness of traceability data used in audits and assurance processes.
- Strengthen the integrity of certified seafood products, benefitting both producers and buyers.
- Reflect evolving regulatory requirements for seafood companies to collect standardised traceability data elements across the supply chain.

Supporting the Transition to Digital Traceability

The continued emergence of **GDST-verified capable digital solutions, across different geographies,** provides a practical pathway for certification programs, and their certificate holders, to transition from paper-based or isolated digital systems to a modern, interoperable digital framework that

underpins traceability as a foundation for effective CoC assurance that seafood buyers, retailers and consumer depend on.

The ability to validate data across multiple sources and systems — seamlessly and securely — will be essential to maintaining trust and ensuring credible sustainability claims in an increasingly digital marketplace.

A Call to Action

We, the undersigned certification standard holders, encourage all our certificate holders and partners to explore **the GDST journey** by:

1. **Learning about the GDST** and the benefits interoperable digital data exchange and traceability can provide your business.

2. **Mapping your supply chains** to understand data flows and traceability gaps;

3. **Assessing the software and hardware systems** currently used to manage traceability and certification information; and

4. **Encouraging your technology providers** to collaborate with the GDST and pursue **GDST-verified capability**, ensuring that their systems can exchange standardized digital traceability data.

By working together toward digital interoperability through GDST, we can build a more transparent, trusted, and resilient seafood industry — one that continues to deliver value and assurance to all stakeholders, from fishers and farmers to final consumers.

Signed by:

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Third-Party Certification Standard Holders in the Global Seafood Sector.