

Transparency, traceability key supply chain issues for seafood industry

The global nature of the seafood industry has resulted in transparency and traceability emerging as key supply chain issues, especially when it comes to combatting the growing threat of illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing. Without a better understanding of exactly where seafood comes from and how it was harvested, consumers could easily be supporting illegal and unsustainable fishing practices without knowing it.



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These were among the issues discussed at the recently held annual Sustainable Seafood Symposium hosted by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and WWF-SA's Southern African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI).

“In the absence of adequate traceability and supply chain transparency, markets cannot recognise responsible fishers, consumers cannot make informed seafood choices, and governments cannot successfully combat trade in illegal seafood products. A possible way to improve this situation is to continuously look at innovative solutions such as blockchain technology. This technology that is embedded in crypto currencies is applicable to driving transparency in commodity supply chains,” says Chris Kastern, WWF-SA's seafood market transformation manager.

Growing sense of responsibility

Increasing awareness and a growing sense of responsibility in the seafood industry has led to a number of global initiatives to help address these challenges, including the [Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability](#). This dialogue is an international, business-to-business platform that seeks to establish seafood traceability practices.

The symposium also saw the release of the [WWF-SASSI Retailer/ Supplier Participation Scheme Report 2017](#) which showcases progress made over the last year by South African seafood vendors who have made commitments to sourcing sustainable seafood.

“The demand for sustainable and traceable seafood has been increasing worldwide for some years. More and more businesses are signalling their commitment to sourcing sustainable seafood and where products are certified, the MSC Chain of Custody system addresses traceability concerns for businesses all along the value chain. In this way consumers can be sure the seafood they are buying comes from legal, well managed fisheries,” says Michael Marriott, Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Southern Africa manager.

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