

Tackling Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing Through Traceability Solutions

UL develops a traceability audit to better address the social and environmental risks associated with shrimp supply chains.

UL developed a traceability audit for the Shrimp Sustainable Supply Chain Task Force (Task Force) that enables members to trace shrimp feed to fishmeal to by-catch in their supply chain. The audit is intended to help the Task Force's effort to identify illegal, unreported and unregulated products in their supply chains, while supporting the Task Force's commitment to addressing social and environmental issues in the industry.

The Challenge

In 2014, the Thai shrimp industry faced allegations of human trafficking and forced labor on off-shore fishing vessels in international waters, as well as environmental allegations of overfishing and harm to marine ecosystems. While much of the shrimp in shrimp supply chains is farmed, and would therefore not be subject to open water allegations, the practice of shrimp farming still relies on the purchase of shrimp feed, which is comprised of small fish caught in open water. Therefore, both wild and farmed shrimp were subject to the social and environmental allegations.

As a result, a group of affected stakeholders, including over 80% of Thai shrimp feed market, convened to establish the Shrimp Sustainable Supply Chain Task Force to address the issues around illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and introduce better oversight into shrimp supply chains.

Solution

In 2014 the Task Force approached UL, requesting guidance on how to trace their supply chains at the feed mill, port, and vessel level. As an initial step, UL conducted a traceability study to map products through the supply chain, starting at the feed mill and tracing back to the original vessel where the product was caught. This study allowed UL and the Task Force to identify how to best establish a traceability system, using the existing Thai legal framework and industry practices in place. On the basis of the initial information gathered, and during further fact-finding sessions with industry representatives, UL developed a traceability audit that allows Task Force members to trace by-catch through all levels of the supply chain.

In an effort to drive industry change, the Task Force began to require all members to implement traceability systems within their supply chains. To assist, the Task Force appointed UL as their independent monitor to conduct traceability audits for all member supply chains.





Results

By establishing clear traceability systems for products, and introducing regular monitoring for suppliers, the Task Force is now able to understand where product in their supply chains comes from and the associated risks of that product. This is a first step in the Task Force's work to address social and environmental issues in the shrimp industry. Through UL's traceability audits, Task Force members gain valuable information about the source of the product entering into product streams, the various supply chain actors and their relationships, and potential and actual social risks.

UL developed a traceability audit for the Shrimp Sustainable Supply Chain Task Force that enables members to identify illegal, unreported and unregulated products in their supply chains, while helping support the Task Force's commitment to addressing social and environmental issues in the industry.

Shrimp Sustainable Supply Chain Task Force - Established in July 2014, the Shrimp Sustainable Supply Chain Task Force (Task Force) is a leading international industry alliance including major US and EU retailers, Thai manufacturers, governments and NGOs. Its aim is to drive fundamental change in the seafood industry by ensuring Thailand's seafood supply chain is free from illegal and forced labor through accountability, verification and transparency. Its unique combination of stakeholders and growing membership give it significant influence in Thailand's seafood industry.

Since 1894, UL has been a respected leader in safety science. Today UL's Consumer and Retail Services group is advancing its commitment to protecting people, products and places through expert advisory and independent quality assurance testing, audits and inspections, and assessments for a wide range of consumer products. Our network of more than 170 laboratory testing and certification facilities in 40 countries helps drive the integrity of global supply chains, optimize product performance and protect brands.



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