



Partnership Progress  
Review:  
Year-2 Public Report

*June 2023*

A background image showing a grey, overcast sky and a dark, choppy sea. In the distance, several large industrial ships, likely fishing vessels, are visible on the horizon. The text "THAI UNION AND THE NATURE CONSERVANCY" is overlaid in the center in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

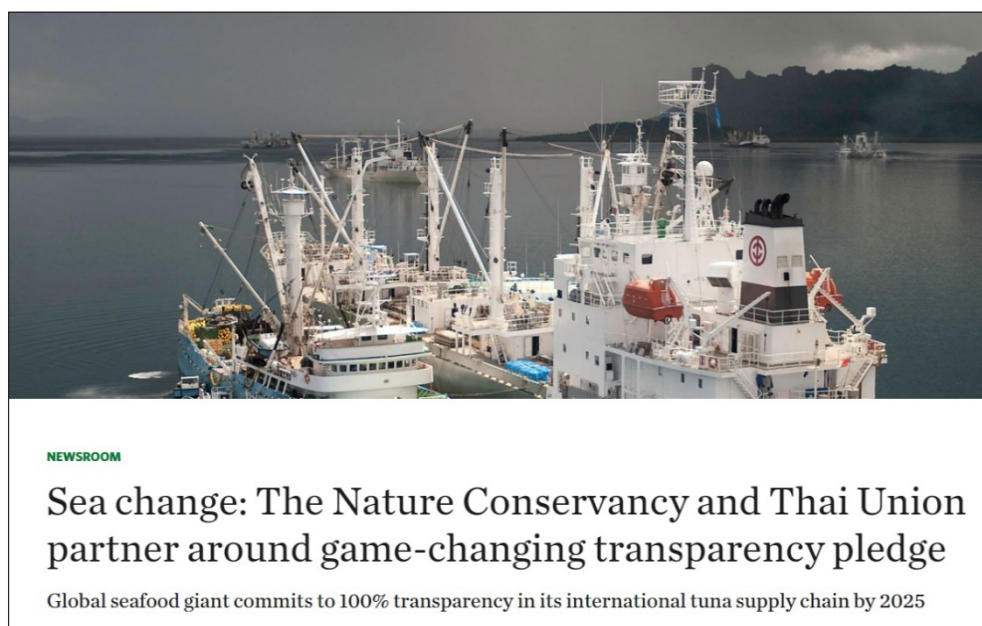
# **THAI UNION AND THE NATURE CONSERVANCY**

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## Abbreviations

EM	Electronic Monitoring
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organisations
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
TU	Thai Union



# 1 Introduction

In March 2021, one of the world's largest seafood companies, Thai Union, and global environmental conservation nongovernmental organization (NGO), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), announced their partnership on a pioneering commitment to improve on the water transparency in global tuna supply chains. This commitment is an important part of Thai Union's seafood sustainability strategy, forming one of the [Tuna Commitments to 2025](#):

1. Tuna fisheries that Thai Union sources from are engaged in FIPs towards MSC certification, are in MSC assessment or are MSC certified
2. Vessels have completed Vessel Improvement Plans or meet the VCoC or equivalent
- 3. Vessels are monitored at sea and have either human or electronic coverage**
4. Suppliers and Thai Union operations meet ISSF conservation measures
5. Vessels must report data, meet quota allocations and conservation measures according to RFMO resolutions
6. Tuna is traceable to vessel and the Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST) Standard 1.0 is implementable

Thai Union and TNC have identified numerous projects, objectives, and activities to be developed and deployed throughout the partnership to achieve its goals. These will involve engagement with stakeholders throughout the global seafood industry, NGOs, and governments—and the aspiration is to drive change in the industry to demonstrate legal, regulated, and reported fishing practices and contribute to better oversight and reporting from on the water. The headline is to ensure that there is 100% “on-the-water” monitoring by 2025 on all of the vessels that Thai Union sources from. This will be achieved by ensuring that the vessels have deployed either electronic monitoring or human observers on board—including onboard video cameras, Global Positioning System (GPS), and sensors to automatically track activities onboard.

Independent seafood consultancy company Key Traceability (KT) is contracted to conduct a third-party evaluation of the progress of the partnership against its objectives. This review formally evaluates the progress to identify the status of the different components of the partnership, and to suggest recommendations for the following year. This report contains a summary of the evaluation of the second year of the partnership.

The approach to complete the review was for KT to identify potential forms of evidence against each objective for TU and TNC to provide and report on. Data requests were then made to TU and TNC for them to complete and provide evidence such as documents, records, communications, and public sources. The KT team reviewed the evidence and explanations provided to assess the relation of the evidence and determine the status of each objective and activity, communicating with TU and TNC contacts for further clarification where needed.

## 2 The TU and TNC Partnership

The partnership is planned to run for five years (to 2026) and will focus on activities across the following areas:

**1. Supply chain: Improving transparency of seafood production operations.**

Through the partnership there will be an increase in the amount of EM in operation on fishing vessels. All of the tuna vessels that Thai Union sources from will have either EM or human observer coverage.

**2. Markets: Work together to engage stakeholders to accelerate change.**

The partnership will serve as a backbone for engagement with managers, companies, fishers and more to facilitate understanding and change needed.

**3. Policy: Advocate for better transparency of fishing activities at sea.**

Thai Union and TNC commit to engage with authorities and promote advocacy initiatives aimed at improving international or regional fisheries management and regulations.

**4. Technology: Contribute to technological innovation in the fishing industry.**

The partnership will develop, fund, and engage technology experts to improve availability to fishing vessels.

**5. Partnership: Foster a collaborative relationship together.**

Thai Union and TNC will collaborate as partners, sharing knowledge and experiences towards their shared vision to improve transparency at sea.

The progress review was designed to measure and report the progress made against the various identified work activities which fall under the above areas. The KT evaluation is detailed below. The following section provides details of the milestones achieved in year two of the partnership.

### ***What is EM & why is it important?***

Electronic monitoring (EM) is an integrated system of onboard cameras and sensors that record activity on the fishing vessel and provide the ability to extract data. It is a tool that can provide detailed information fishery managers and scientists need to ensure compliance and set management measures in the fishery. EM cameras automatically record all fishing activity 24 hours per day/7 days per week while a vessel is at sea—including GPS location tagging. This differs from the observer programs whereby fishing activity data is recorded by humans.

EM can enable more targeted, cost-efficient management strategies and is able to be on vessels when human observers cannot be deployed on board. Monitoring of activities at sea creates opportunities for seafood industry stakeholders to drive improvements in their supply chains and demonstrate legality and sustainability to the seafood marketplace.

### 3 Year-2 Milestones

Whilst Year 1 was focused on building the EM performance standard and increasing EM coverage. Year 2 of the partnership continued to increase volumes of tuna coming from vessels with coverage and also incorporate integrating EM data review and its continuous improvement in accordance with the EM performance standard. The following major milestones were achieved in Year 2 of the partnership:

#### **Electronic Monitoring Program Design and Performance Standard**

The Performance Standard, developed during Partnership Year 1, has now been finalized. The Verification Plan and Continual Improvement sub-activities require finalization, and this has been highlighted as a focus for 2023 to be communicated with suppliers for adoption.

#### **Electronic Monitoring Bulk Procurement**

Executed a bulk procurement of 240 longline tuna vessels across five seafood supply companies operating in the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans. In Year 2, Thai Union and TNC confirmed the completion of the development activities, the EM provider was selected and the roll-out of initial EM systems was completed. The installation of vessel EM systems will continue throughout Partnership Year 3.

#### **Launched New EM Use Cases**

TNC and Thai Union have worked to develop a project plan for consultants to ‘explore the use of EMS at-sea to monitor social criteria and labor conditions and improve reporting of environmental criteria’. This will use historical footage from vessels that Thai Union sources from. This project will commence December 2023.

#### **Market Engagement**

Progress has been made on engagement with market actors such as Ghana including commitments to EM/observer coverage in the government’s 5-year strategy, and continued presentations linked to market transformation have been undertaken.

#### **Advocacy**

Participated in joint advocacy to advance EM scale-up through advocacy to Regional Fishery Management Organisations such as the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC).

#### **Technology Innovation for EM Advancement**

Multiple proposals and project presentations undertaken during partnership year 2, including ‘Assessment on the Edge’ and ‘Turning the tide on electronic monitoring: Global electronic monitoring accelerator’.

#### **Increased Coverage of EM on Vessels TU Sources From**

TU created the baseline from which this will be monitored. Observer coverage, either EM or human, across the vessels that TU sources tuna from was 79.4% in 2022. This will continue to be monitored and will be reported against next year.



## 4 Progress Review Summary

Five project workstreams have been developed by TU and TNC, reconfigured following Partnership Year 1, containing eight objectives, which are further broken down into 19 activities. Of the eight objectives which have been defined and agreed by the Partnership, progress has been made across 100% of them, with four completed during Year 2. Of the 19 activities, progress has been made across the majority of them, with nine complete for Year 2, and two which were not initiated or had evidence of progression during Year 2, to be developed across the remaining years of the Partnership.

### *Summary of Year 2 Objectives Status: Percentage of progress made*

In Progress	Complete
4 (50%)	4 (50%)

### *Summary of Year 1 Activities Status: Percentage of progress made*

Not Started	In Progress	Complete
2 (10.53%)	6 (31.58%)	11* (57.89%)

\* 8 of the 'complete' activities are complete for Partnership Year 2 but will be ongoing throughout Year 3 or remaining years of the Partnership as these activities consist of ongoing outreach or regular meetings, ongoing data processing, and management of the Partnership.

## 5 Progress Review Recommendations

Recommendations based on the Thai Union and TNC partnership review were suggested by KT to support effective progress through the remaining years of the partnership. These suggestions include:

1. Attach internal goals / metrics for this partnership year to know what 'success' is, targets to meet or timelines to be met within the Partnership, e.g. percent / number of EM installations for Year 3, targets for Performance Standard progression, etc.
2. Identify alignment with TU25 and TU30 goals, customer goals, TNC goals outside of the Partnership, and where these will support one another. This can also be used for adding metrics to activities as above.
3. Develop the detailed work schedules for Year 3 and Year 4. This can ensure that project timelines are met and facilitate achievement of the goals.
4. Establish the timelines and roles of personnel across the projects for the following years of the partnership, which will support effective management and implementation.

## 6 Objectives and Activities

This section contains details of the work areas, the activities that have been undertaken and that are in progress for 2022 and beyond.

Objectives	Activities	Status
<b>1. Supply chain: Improving transparency at sea of fishing operations</b>		
<b>1.1 Design Industry-Led EM Program, Execute EM Bulk Procurement, and Implement EM On-the-Water</b>	1.1.1 Map EM and observer coverage in TU supply chain and build EM deployment schedule	In progress
	1.1.2 Develop EM performance standard, verification plan, and continual improvement process	Complete
	1.1.3 Implement EM performance standard and continual improvement plan in FIPs and existing TU projects	In progress
	1.1.4 Design and execute EM bulk procurement project	Complete
<b>1.2 Advance Critical New EM Use Cases</b>	1.2.1 Develop and launch EM for human rights proof of concept	In progress
	1.2.2 Implement EM for transshipment prototype	Complete
	1.2.3 Explore opportunities for launching Europe, Eastern Pacific, and Ghana EM projects	Complete
<b>2. Markets: Work together to engage stakeholders in the goals to accelerate change</b>		
<b>2.1 Risk-Based Data Adequacy Framework to Strengthen MSC Fisheries Standard</b>	2.1.1 Develop risk-based data adequacy framework and engage in MSC Fisheries Standard workshops	Complete
<b>2.2 Advocate For EM/Observer Sourcing Commitments</b>	2.2.1 Engage retailers and other market actors to make EM sourcing requirements	In progress
	2.2.2 Develop and execute communications strategy for market transformation	In progress
<b>2.3 Explore Opportunities for Strengthening Market Incentives for Supply Chain Transparency</b>	2.3.1 Scope opportunities for adapting Pacific Island Tuna model to other seafood commodities	Complete
<b>3. Policy: Advocate for better transparency of fishing activities at sea</b>		
<b>3.1 Advocate to Fisheries Authorities</b>	3.1.1 Engage countries and RFMOs to advance EM scale-up and other partnership objectives	Complete
<b>4. Technology: Contribute to technology innovation in the fishing industry</b>		
<b>4.1 Advance Technology Innovation to Improve EM Program Design, Efficiency, and Costs</b>	4.1.1 Continue to build training data database and long-term management plan (fishnet.ai)	In progress
	4.1.2 Advance machine learning and near-real time analysis in EM workflow	In progress
	4.1.3 Pilot satellite-based data offload pilot project	Not started
	4.1.4 Explore opportunities for combining EM with traceability and other technology to improve transparency	Not started
<b>5. Partnership: Foster a collaborative relationship together</b>		
<b>5.1 Partnership be managed, and progress reported annually. The partners are able to converse in a trusted and free environment</b>	5.1.1 Regular in-person or virtual meetings/calls/emails focused on exchanging ideas, building projects, discussing progress and more	In progress
	5.1.2 Develop partnership management framework and communications plan	In progress
	5.1.3 Complete a partnership progress review with an independent company (KT)	Complete (annually)