

Blueyou Launches Fair Trade Certified Tuna Program in Maldives

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Ahead of World Tuna Day on May 2, Blueyou, a Swiss impact-driven seafood company, announced the launch of its Fair Trade Certified tuna program in the Maldives in partnership with Fair Trade USA. The initiative combines sustainable fisheries, restorative mariculture and community development to strengthen seafood supply chains and improve livelihoods.

The initiative will partner with 25 island communities across eight atolls, benefiting approximately 30,000 people, including 2,500 tuna fishers and 500 women engaged in sea cucumber farming alongside seagrass conservation and restoration efforts.

The fisheries component focuses on skipjack and yellowfin tuna harvested using traditional pole-and-line fishing, widely considered one of the most environmentally responsible fishing methods.

"Blueyou's full-scale program has the potential to become a game-changer for the participating fishing communities," said Josh Nelson, seafood program manager at Fair Trade USA. "Together, we will channel more than \$700,000 in Fair Trade Community Development Funds into island communities in the Maldives."

By scaling the Fair Trade model to 200 fishing vessels with an annual catch capacity of 20,000 metric tons, the program aims to significantly expand market access in Europe and North America while increasing incomes for local fishers and funding community-led environmental and social projects.

"Our program demonstrates how sustainable fisheries, community empowerment, social inclusion and marine conservation can work together to build resilient blue food systems," said Shakir Mohamed, Blueyou's program manager in the Maldives. "By combining Fair Trade value chains with climate-smart restorative mariculture, we are creating new income opportunities while protecting the ecosystems that coastal communities depend on."

A key element of the initiative is the organisation of women mariculture harvesters into Fair Trade Committees to lead new livelihood activities, particularly sea cucumber cultivation, while strengthening inclusive governance and community decision-making.

Blueyou's Fair Trade tuna program is designed to supply a significant volume of shelf-stable tuna products to global markets, with a focus on Europe and North America. The company has secured distribution partnerships with FollowFood in Europe and Envisible and Arkk Food in the United States.

"Our five-year plan is to supply 500 freight containers of Fair Trade Certified canned tuna to retail markets," said Ren  Benguerel, co-founder and CEO of Blueyou. "Fair Trade matters not only for coffee and bananas, but also for seafood producers. Our program helps seafood buyers mitigate social risks, which remain a major challenge in the global tuna industry."

The program integrates marine habitat conservation with climate-smart infrastructure. Local communities will collaborate in the protection and management of seagrass beds, which are critical for biodiversity, carbon storage and coastal protection. The initiative will also pilot a solar-powered ice plant to reduce the carbon footprint of seafood processing, while supporting plastic recycling and improved waste management systems through Fair Trade Community Development Funds.