



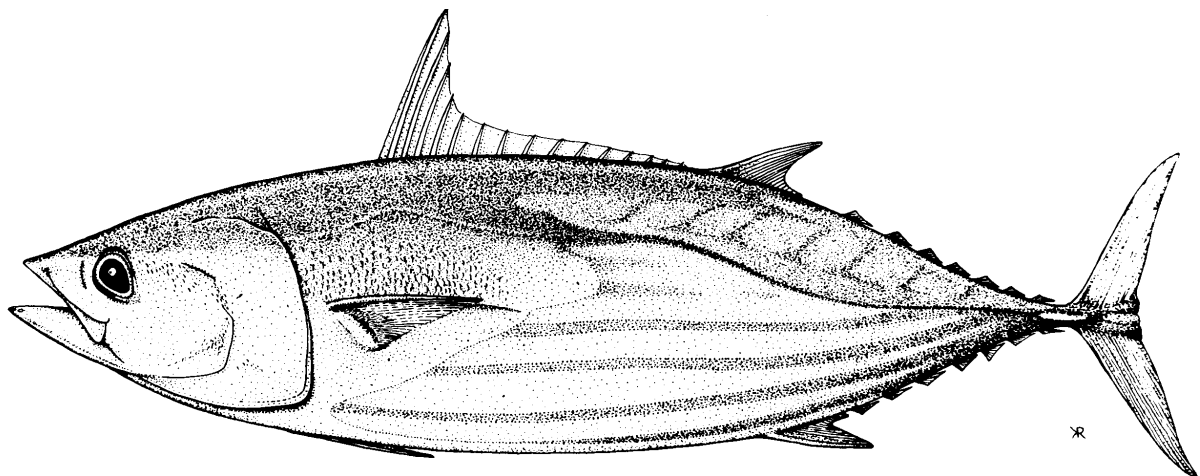
SCTB15 Working Paper

**SWG-6**

# **REPORT OF THE FAO EXPERT CONSULTATION ON THE HARMONISATION OF CATCH CERTIFICATION SCHEMES**

**9–11 January 2002**

**La Jolla, California, United States of America**



## OPENING OF THE CONSULTATION

1. The Expert Consultation was held from 9 to 11 January 2002 in La Jolla, California. A list of participants and observers, who brought to the Expert Consultation a wide range of relevant experience, appears as Appendix B to this report.

2. The mandate of the Expert Consultation was reviewed. Participants, who attended in their personal capacity, were reminded that the report and recommendations of the Expert Consultation would be presented to the Eighth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade in Bremen, Germany, in early February 2002. The issues would then be passed on to the FAO Committee on Fisheries in early 2003. The report of the Expert Consultation would be published in the FAO Fisheries Reports Series along with important information papers.

## ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON

3. The meeting unanimously elected Mr Robin Allen as Chairperson and Mr David Ardill as Vice-Chairperson.

4. The meeting adopted the Agenda as presented in Appendix A. A list of the documents placed before the meeting is given in Appendix C.

## REVIEW OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF CATCH CERTIFICATION AND CATCH DOCUMENTATION

5. “Trade documentation” refers to schemes established by regional Fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) to require documentation to accompany particular fish and fish products through international trade identifying the origin of the fish for the purpose of ascertaining levels of unreported fishing. Both schemes under consideration have the purpose of combating IUU fishing and in both, documents accompany the fish through trade. Discussion in the meeting revealed that the terms “catch certification,” “catch documentation” and other related terms have not been consistently applied in international practice.

6. One key difference between these types of programs is that **catch certifications** are issued at the point of harvesting and cover all fish to be landed or transshipped. **Trade documents** are issued only with respect to products that enter international trade. Both types of documents contain information relating to the fish in question, although catch certifications contain more comprehensive data.

7. Two types of documentation programmes have been already adopted by RFMOs. The Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) has adopted a Catch Documentation Scheme for toothfish (*dissostichus* spp.) that is in fact an amalgam of a catch certification and trade documentation programme. The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) and the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) have adopted trade documentation programmes. In addition, the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program, has adopted

a programme to certify certain tuna as “dolphin-safe.” The Consultation considered that this programme is significantly different from programmes adopted by the other RFMOs, in that its primary purpose is unrelated to efforts to combat IUU fishing.

8. The ICCAT, CCSBT and IOTC trade document programmes call on importing States<sup>1</sup> to ensure that all fish covered by the programs are accompanied with a trade document, validated by authorities of exporting flag countries or re-exporting countries. The ICCAT scheme, which has been in place the longest, has produced evidence that vessels from certain States have been fishing for Atlantic bluefin tuna in a manner that undermines ICCAT’s conservation and management measures for that species. That evidence, along with other related information, has led ICCAT to adopt binding recommendations that its members prohibit the importation of bluefin tuna from certain States.

9. The CCAMLR catch certificate programme requires logbook-type information to be provided by captains of the fishing vessels before each transshipment or landing, which are verified by the State<sup>2</sup> authorities. If the catches are confirmed to have been made in accordance with management measures, certificates are validated with unique numbers and attached wherever the fish are sold or processed.

10. The Consultation also briefly considered the documentation required pursuant to the Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) including permits to import, export and re-export species included in the Appendices to the Convention. The Consultation noted that the primary purpose of the CITES requirements relates to its mandate to protect endangered and threatened species through the regulation of international trade, and that this mandate was narrower than that of RFMOs.

11. The Consultation noted that terms for catch and landings of fish are often used in different ways which can lead to confusion. The Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP) has adopted a standard terminology to eliminate this confusion and has recommended that FAO use it. The Consultation recommended this should be followed by all parties. In this sense all uses of “catch” for this subject should be replaced by “landings”. In the report this has not been done to avoid conflict with the name of the Consultation and its antecedents but the Consultation recommended that FAO and RFMOs using these schemes should adopt the standard CWP terminology.

## **REPORT ON THE IMPACT OF CATCH CERTIFICATION AND CATCH DOCUMENTATION IN THE AREAS IN WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED**

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<sup>1</sup> In this report, where appropriate, the term “States” refers to regional economic integration organizations, entities and fishing entities.

<sup>2</sup> In some cases such as those where vessels are chartered, the responsibilities of flag States might be fulfilled by the State in which the vessel is chartered.

## General

12. A summary of the experience of RFMOs with trade documentation schemes and of their impacts is provided here. A more comprehensive account is given in FI:HCC/2002/INF. 2.

13. It was considered that multiple formats may create confusion and increase the paperwork burden placed on operators. The Consultation noted that in the future, more of the world's fisheries would be subject to landings certification and that there would be a number of advantages in harmonizing aspects of these as well as existing schemes. Harmonization of the schemes would create incentives towards compliance, would promote international trade in fish products and would reduce the possibility of fraud

14. Trade documents should have harmonized formats and overlays so that they would be readily completed in a number of languages and readily identifiable to customs officers.

15. It was also noted that some shipments of fish might actually be subject to schemes of more than one RFMO. For example, long liners were capable of carrying frozen fish harvested in different oceans. It was noted that the ICCAT, CCSBT and IOTC schemes already used forms that were very similar. The Consultation recommended that the three bodies consult to ensure that the forms are the same and to move towards consistent application of their schemes.

## ICCA

16. The trade document system for bluefin tuna had been initiated by ICCAT in the late 1980's and implemented in 1993. In 1991 the scheme uncovered unreported landings totaling 10% of reported landings. All bluefin exported to the parties of ICCAT had to have trade documents validated by government agencies. Indeed, the ICCAT system required exporters to complete the trade documents for bluefin tuna shipments harvested in any ocean (not just the Atlantic). This had encouraged some of these countries to impose control over their fleets and to become members of ICCAT. Nevertheless, the trade document scheme had not completely eliminated IUU fishing although it had encouraged compliance.

17. As noted above, the ICCAT scheme does not directly prohibit importation of illegally harvested bluefin tuna. The trade documents do not require a statement that the catch had been made in compliance with the fisheries management measures.

18. Problem areas had occurred with conversion factors between product live weight and product weight. There was also a problem with double counting, with different parts of the same fish being exported to different countries with separate documents.

19. The increase of farming bluefin tuna in pens was also creating problems for the system because the capture of live fish is not documented, they gain weight in the pens, and enter the documentation system after they have been killed.

20. ICCAT is in the process of adopting trade document programmes for big-eye tuna and swordfish. Relative to bluefin tuna, however, the market for these species is much less concentrated, which will create additional challenges for effective implementation.

#### CCAMLR

21. CCAMLR imposes a catch limit for toothfish with respect to each division in the CCAMLR Convention Area. The catches are monitored every five days; when the catch limit is reached, the fishery closes. It was explained that the terms applied to both the contracting parties to the Convention and other participating parties to the catch documentation scheme. All longline vessels licensed to fish in the Convention area have observers on board who report on catches, by-catch, discards and sea bird catches. However the observers do not report in real time.

22. The catch documentation scheme was introduced as a result of a high level of IUU fishing in the Convention area, but could not by itself prevent IUU fishing, so additional means have been implemented. It was pointed out that the CCAMLR reporting system avoided the possibility of double reporting, whereas other regional reporting systems could contribute to double counting. There had been a proposal towards electronic documents for catch documentation being issued and maintained by CCAMLR rather than the flag State. CCAMLR had already imposed rules on access and only authorized officers were able to access data and these rules would be conserved in the new system

23. CCAMLR effectively combined the catch certificate and the trade document into one document and concentrates on whether the catch has been caught legally. They deal with both parties and non-parties to CCAMLR and with exporters and importers. Major traders in toothfish had also been invited to become parties to the catch documentation scheme. With regard to strengths and weaknesses in the system, it was pointed out that the system had only become operational in May 2000 and for the EU in July 2001, however it was pointed out that all vessels comply and all landings of the catch documentation system are subject to verification. It has been possible to identify eight cases of fraudulent trade documents. Some of these catches were seized and one vessel confiscated.

24. The measures had reduced the black market price of toothfish to 50% of the legitimate market price so it was believed that IUU fishing would be progressively eliminated. The programme was being carried out in cooperation with non-Contracting Parties. The trade documents were being compiled in four languages and a guide for the completion of the catch certificates and catch documents had been published.

25. There had been a problem in how to deal with possible misreporting of the origins of catches reported from outside the Convention area. Increased use of VMS had been suggested as a method to solve this problem. Initial problems had also been experienced with regard to the responsibilities of the different parties to the catch documentation scheme (i.e. flag States, port States, importers and exporters).

## IOTC

26. IOTC adopted a trade documentation scheme for bigeye tuna in December 2001. This was expected to be implemented in July 2002. The scheme exempts bigeye caught in the Convention area by purse seine and pole-and-line destined to canning. This is because difficult to distinguish juvenile bigeye tuna from yellowfin of similar size, which are caught by these fisheries. In addition, these species are processed as a single commercial category.

27. The IOTC resolution recognizes that there is a considerable level of IUU fishing in the Indian Ocean and, in a context where current catch levels may not be sustainable for bigeye tuna, it is considered necessary to quantify catches and identify IUU vessels. It is possible that these schemes will be extended to yellowfin tuna and swordfish as these species may also be heavily exploited.

28. There are currently fleets from 30 to 40 flag entities operating in the Indian Ocean, landing in a large number of ports. In addition, up to 60 % of the tuna caught by large deep-freezing long liners is thought to be transshipped at sea. The IOTC scheme requires certification by officials representing the flag State and care will have to be taken to ensure that the verification process is carried out in a satisfactory manner.

29. The IOTC documentation scheme is identical to the one being considered for bigeye by ICCAT and this already provided a certain degree of harmonization. It was pointed out, however, that inclusion in both schemes of information on the precise dates of fishing trips when the catch was made would provide valuable information on the activity patterns of the vessels concerned. Both the IOTC and the ICCAT schemes require contracting and collaborating parties to report imports from all oceans. This opens an opportunity for coordination of actions between these two bodies.

## CCSBT

30. No participants in the Expert Consultation had direct experience relating to CCSBT. However, the CCSBT Executive Secretary provided a copy of the minutes from the recent CCSBT meeting at which the organization discussed implementation of its trade documentation scheme, noting several emerging issues. CCSBT also provided data from its scientific meeting demonstrating the impact of the introduction of the scheme.

## Other systems

31. The Consultation discussed the following other related experiences and systems which were different in nature to the catch certificate and trade document schemes discussed above.

## IATTC/AIDCP

32. Parties to the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP) recently adopted a scheme under which the parties could issue certificates indicating that canned tuna is “dolphin-safe” (i.e. was harvested without dolphin mortality or serious injury). The dolphin safe tuna certificate is a different type of form from all the others in that it is not aimed at trade or management measures but at market objectives. Observers are present on all large purse-seine vessels. At the time of catch, dolphin safe tuna is stored in separate wells from non-dolphin safe tuna. The tuna tracking number attached to the fish follows it through the system. Copies of the dolphin safe certificate and the original tuna tracking form are kept by the secretariat.

33. As this scheme was only introduced in July/August 2001, it is too soon to assess its effectiveness.

34. Although this scheme was not created as a tuna management tool, it may create an additional incentive for fishers to avoid dolphin mortality in the tuna fishery of the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

35. There is some longline tuna fishing in the Eastern Pacific Ocean by vessels of States that are not IATTC members which do not report their catches to the IATTC. The adoption of a catch certification or trade documentation programme for these fisheries might be helpful in the future

#### WCPFC

36. The Convention establishing the Commission for Highly Migratory Species in the Central and Western Pacific has not yet entered into force and the Commission does not yet exist as a functioning body and is not expected to do so for several years, but the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish (an ad-hoc meeting of scientists in the region who provide analysis of the fisheries) was considering catch certification and trade documentation as there is considerable potential for unreported catches in the central and western Pacific area. However this is expected to be very difficult due to the wide range of fishing fleets and diverse ports at which the vessels could land.

#### CITES

38. The CITES permit procedures are based on a system of permits to export products of species listed in the Appendices of CITES. About 30000 species are listed in the three Appendices. Some CITES species have an export quota which is decided by the country of origin. There is a specific field on the permit for recording the amount exported against the quota. It was explained that if fish were caught on the high seas a CITES “introduction from the sea” certificate would need to be issued by the country of first export if those fish were listed in Appendix 2.

39. Government authorities must determine that a species has been legally acquired and that its export will not be detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild before an export permit can be issued. The signature or the seal may be authenticated by the CITES Secretariat. The permit is valid for six months. The authority at a national level usually comes under the environment administration, but parties may designate additional

management authorities to deal with specific genera. This is the case with sturgeon for which the fisheries administration has been designated as the management authority by most states.

40. It was recommended that if CITES were to list a commercial fish species that was already the subject of a catch certificate or trade document system by a RFMO, to the extent possible the CITES procedures should be harmonized with those of the RFMO.

#### **LINKAGE BETWEEN LOGBOOK REQUIREMENTS, CATCH REPORTING AND CATCH CERTIFICATION**

41. Logbook and other systems of data collection describing fishing activity provide the essential information for catch certification.

42. Fishing logbooks contain data such as the positions of the fishing vessel, its catches and activities. The level of detail varies from fishery to fishery and generally the information contained in individual logbooks is regarded as confidential.

43. The era of electronic documentation has already affected the fishing industry and is most apparent in the implementation of Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS). It is now estimated that more than 8,000 fishing vessels throughout the world are presently reporting their positions by VMS to flag States or fisheries agencies. The future development of VMS was discussed at length at the International Conference on Integrated Fisheries Monitoring in Sydney, Australia (1 - 5 February 1999).

44. The Consultation noted that electronic logbooks could facilitate the preparation of catch certificates. Various electronic logbooks have been developed by IOTC and the US National Marine Fisheries Service among others. The New Electronic Fishery-Dependent Information System (EFCL) which included at sea data entry, web interface access, and a database supporting report generation was demonstrated to the participants. Such a system could readily generate trade documents or catch certificates.

45. There was general agreement that logbooks could not be harmonized as evidenced by many attempts in the past, but it was agreed that the output from electronic logbooks could be structured so that they could automatically provide the information required for catch certificates and eventually the required information for trade documentation

#### **EVALUATION OF POSSIBLE METHODS TO HARMONIZE CATCH CERTIFICATION AND CATCH DOCUMENTATION SCHEMES**

46. The Consultation agreed that the minimum common elements of information in the documents and procedures to be followed in creating them were those in Table 1.

#### **CRITERIA FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF FISHERIES THAT WOULD BENEFIT FROM CATCH CERTIFICATION AND CATCH DOCUMENTATION SCHEMES**



47. While in principle the catch certificate and trade document schemes described in this report could be helpful for any fishery managed by an RFMO, the Consultation agreed that priority for development of new schemes should be given to fisheries that are or may be subject to significant levels of IUU fishing. Priority should also be given to fisheries that harvest the same species as others covered by catch certificate or trade document schemes to support the existing schemes of another RFMO .

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS ON CATCH CERTIFICATION AND CATCH DOCUMENTATION FOR THE FAO COFI SUB COMMITTEE ON FISH TRADE.**

48. It was recommended that:

- Table 1 and 2 be considered as a list of basic items and procedures to be included in harmonized catch certificate and trade documents.
- FAO should investigate the possibility of uniquely identifying fishing vessels.
- The terms and codes used in catch certification and trade documentation for species, fishing gear etc. should be those adopted by the CWP, and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) codes should be used for the country codes.
- FAO should design standard forms based on Table 1 and the forms already in use in consultation with the users of the forms and FAO should encourage their use by current and future schemes.
- Efforts should continue to achieve harmonization of tariff commodity codes to adequately describe the species subject to trade documentation. Where they exist such codes should be incorporated into the trade documents where a code is available.
- Consideration should be given to flag States reporting all information contained in catch certificates or trade documents to a central database used by the responsible RFMO.
- Priority for development of new schemes should be given to fisheries that are or may be subject to significant levels of IUU fishing.
- Where redundancy in catch certificate and trade document among schemes occurs, RFMOs should consult with an aim to eliminating duplicative documents and to eliminating opportunities for fraud.
- Further consideration should be given to the feasibility of developing electronic systems for producing information for catch certificates and trade documents.
- Until an electronic format is developed and implemented effort should be made to limit the size of each document to one page size A4.

- Consideration should be given to assisting developing countries in meeting the requirements of any catch certification or trade documentation scheme.

**TABLE 1**

**BASIC ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE CATCH CERTIFICATE OR TRADE DOCUMENT FORMS**

	<b>Catch Certificate</b>	<b>Trade Document</b>
• Tariff Commodity Code		✓
• Issuing Authority (Regional Fishery Body or Flag State)	✓	✓
Unique document number (which can be given by authority or by users according to specific system). Can be coded if required (e.g year of issue)	✓	✓
<b><i>Fishing vessels</i></b>		
Name	✓	✓
Identification number (registration number, call sign)	✓	
Flag state	✓	✓
Name of captain	✓	
Authority to fish (Yes/No)	✓	✓
<b><i>Fish (Landed/Transshipped/Exported)</i></b>		
• Weight of fish by species and product type	✓	✓
• Area (specific) of capture	✓	✓
• Period of capture (Start Date/End Date)	✓	✓
• Date of Landing	✓	✓
• Gear used	✓	✓

	Catch Certificate	Trade Document
<b>Person who validated the document</b>		
• Name	✓	✓
• Title/Position	✓	✓
• Authorizing Authority	✓	✓
• Address	✓	✓
• Seals and signature	✓	✓
 Exporters (or re-exporters)		
• Name	*	✓
• Company	*	✓
• Address	*	✓
• Signature	*	✓
• Weight of fish by species and by product type	*	✓
• Catch certificate number	*	✓
(if different export certification is prepared)		
• Import details if re-exportation	*	✓
(copy of original import document required)		
Importers		
• Name	*	✓
• Company	*	✓
• Address	*	✓
• Signature	*	✓
• Weight of fish by species and by product type	*	✓
• Export document and/or catch certificate numbers	*	✓
(if independent document is prepared)		
• Point of Unloading	*	✓

**\* If the product enters the international trade this information must be supplied.**

**TABLE 2**

**SUGGESTED STANDARD PROCEDURES (MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS) TO  
BE FOLLOWED**

The timing for the submission and transmission of documents should be clearly defined

**Catch certificate**

- The catch certificate should be certified by captains and transmitted to flag State authorities prior to the landing or transshipment.
- The catch certificate should be validated by the authorised officials prior to unloading. This can be done by seals and/or signature or unique number.
- The information on the catch certificate should be verified upon unloading the catch in terms of weight and species
- The original or copy of the catch certificate should be sent to flag state authorities
- The original or copy of documents should accompany all the shipments.
- Copies of the catch certificate should be transmitted by the flag State to the data centre (in most of the cases, Secretariat of the relevant fisheries management Commission)

***Trade document***

- If the information in the trade documents are derived from catch certificate, the catch certificate number must be included.
- The authorities designated by the government of the exporting or re-exporting country must verify the information included and issue validation. This can be done by seals and/or signature.
- The documents must accompany the shipment for importers to check.
- Copies of the trade documents must be transmitted by the exporting and importing countries to the data centre (Secretariat of the relevant fisheries management Commission)
- Documents must be verified by the authority of importing states
- Importing state authorities should transmit summary report of the trade documents received to the Secretariat of the relevant fisheries management Commission.

**AGENDA**

1. Opening of the Session
2. Election of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Rapporteur
- 3 Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable
4. Review the current status of catch certification and catch documentation
5. Report on the impact of catch certification and catch documentation on the fisheries in which they have been introduced
6. Linkage between logbook requirements, catch reporting and catch certification
7. Evaluation of possible methods to harmonize catch certification and catch documentation schemes
8. Criteria for the identification of fisheries that would benefit from catch certification and catch documentation.
9. Recommendations on catch certification and catch documentation for the FAO COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade
10. Adoption of the report.



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**LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

FI:HCC/2002/1	Provisional Agenda
FI:HCC/2002/2 Catch	Proposal for Harmonisation of Present Catch Certification and Documentation Programmes (Summary)
FI:HCC/2002/3	Fisheries Electronic Reporting Systems
FI:HCC/2002/Inf. 1	Provisional List of Documents
FI:HCC/2002/Inf. 2 Catch	Proposal for Harmonisation of Present Catch Certification and Documentation Programmes (Full Document)
FI:HCC/2002/Inf. 3	VMS Guidelines
FI:HCC/2002/Inf. 4	Extract from FAO Technical Paper on ecolabelling and catch certification
FI:HCC/2002/Inf. 5	Electronic Logbooks
FI:HCC/2002/Inf. 6	Tracefish
FI:HCC/2002/Inf. 7	Extract from the Report of the Sixth Meeting of the Scientific Committee of the CCSBT, Tokyo, Japan, 128 –31 August 2001
FI:HCC/2002/Inf. 8	Extract from the Report of the Eighth Annual Meeting of the Commission, Miyako, Japan, 15 – 18 th October 2001
FI:HCC/2002/Inf. 9	Recommendation by IOTC Concerning the IOTC Bigeye Tuna Statistical Document Programme