

**REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE AD HOC WORKING GROUP
ON A CATCH DOCUMENT SCHEME**
(Online, 4-5 April 2022)

1. Opening of the meeting and meeting arrangements

The Chair of the Permanent Working Group (PWG), Mr. Neil Ansell (EU), opened the meeting and gave the floor to the Executive Secretary, Mr. Camille Jean Pierre Manel, who noted the meeting arrangements and introduced the participants.

Contracting Parties (CPs) present at the meeting were Algeria, Belize, Canada, China (P.R), Egypt, El Salvador, the European Union, Guatemala, Guinea (Rep.) Honduras, Japan, South Korea (Rep.), Morocco, Mexico, Senegal, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. The Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities, or Fishing Entities (CNCPs) were Bolivia, Chinese Taipei and Costa Rica. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) participated as an intergovernmental organization.

Montenegro attended the meeting as a non-Contracting Party.

The Observers present at the meeting were Pew Charitable Trusts (PEW) and Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF).

The List of Participants is attached as **Appendix 2**.

2. Election of Chair

Mr. Neil Ansell was elected Chair of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on a Catch Document Scheme.

3. Nomination of Rapporteur

The Japanese delegation collectively served as rapporteur.

4. Adoption of agenda

The Agenda was adopted (**Appendix 1**).

5. Presentation of FAO Technical Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes

The Chair introduced Dr. Shelley Clarke from FAO who presented FAO's latest report "Understanding and implementing catch documentation schemes – A guide for national authorities". The presentation focused on setting key data elements (KDEs), data verification and full supply chain traceability to maintain legal provenance.

A CPC questioned the difference between legal provenance and traceability. In response, Dr. Clarke clarified that traceability is just a matter of labelling products and keeping track of them throughout the supply chain and does not require identifying whether they are legally sourced or not. However, a fisheries product could be of legal provenance, and traceable, and still become illegal if, for example, it was stored at the wrong temperature or handled in violation of other relevant laws. Traceability is a part of legal provenance, which can be established by tracing all the steps and procedures throughout the supply chain. She also noted that traceability from the catch at sea to landing would be more challenging than establishing traceability of fish products on land, as existing tracing systems for other purposes, such as food safety, might be utilised for the latter case.

A CPC asked how to create a system to verify the validity of catch documents and how to standardise such systems among CPCs. The presenter from the FAO responded that every country does not need to develop the same system as long as such a system can ensure legal provenance.

6. Presentation by an Observer on aligning Regional Fisheries Monitoring Organisation (RFMO) catch documentation schemes to combat IUU fishing

WWF made a presentation highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of current RFMO catch documentation schemes (CDSs). The presenter suggested aligning each RFMO's CDS with others and harmonising them in the future, in particular by including recommended key data elements (KDEs).

7. Overview of existing SDP / CDS schemes

The Working Group reviewed the history of the statistical document programs (SDPs) and/or catch document programmes that have been implemented in tuna RFMOs as well as domestic import regulations implemented by several CPCs.

a) ICCAT and Other RFMOs

ICCAT introduced the SDP for bluefin tuna in 1993, which was then converted to the CDS in 2008. The electronic CDS for bluefin tuna was introduced in 2011. The SDPs for bigeye tuna and swordfish were introduced in 2002. The SDP for bigeye tuna covers only frozen products.

The Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) introduced its SDP for southern bluefin tuna in 2000 and then converted it to the CDS in 2010. The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) introduced the SDP for bigeye tuna in 2002 and 2003, respectively. Like ICCAT's SDP for bigeye tuna, the SDPs for bigeye tuna by the IOTC and IATTC cover only frozen products.

A CPC emphasised that other RFMOs, including the Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and IOTC, have been discussing introduction of a CDS, and the IOTC established a Working Group on CDS which is similar in its mandate to this ICCAT Working Group.

b) CPCs

The United States introduced its Seafood Import Monitoring Program (SIMP), clarifying that SIMP is not a domestic CDS, but rather an import data requirement program, wherein importers are required to maintain chain of custody documentation and report certain information regarding these species to the U.S. Government via an electronic interface - the International Trade Database System. The U.S. Government does not specify a format for the chain of custody documentation maintained by importers nor does it require exporters to validate chain of custody documentation.

The EU explained its Catch Certification Scheme under its IUU Regulation that entered into force in 2010. Their own scheme requests more information than the ICCAT SDP (e.g., vessel master, transshipment, transportation) and covers not only frozen products but also fresh and processed products.

Japan introduced its import regulations that would come into effect in December 2022. It stated that the species subject to the regulations do not include tuna species at this stage but will be reviewed every two years.

8. Discussion points

The Working Group agreed to discuss each discussion point referring to a working paper prepared by Japan.

a) Objectives of CDS

Japan suggested that combating IUU fishing and improvement of data quality should be two pillars of the objectives of any potential future CDS pursued by ICCAT.

Some CPCs stated that before the objectives of a new CDS should be established, this Working Group should evaluate whether any new CDS is required or appropriate in addressing specific issues concerning ICCAT fisheries. To this end, these CPCs suggested conducting a gap analysis to evaluate the advantages of expanding the CDS for other ICCAT species, considering factors provided in Recommendation 12-09. Japan, while sharing the value of such a gap analysis, expressed its concern that returning to the Recommendation adopted ten years ago would send a message that ICCAT has not made any progress for a decade. Japan believed that ICCAT should accelerate the discussion on CDS bearing in mind the increasing market demand for the products whose legalities are duly certified. Japan also drew the concerned CPCs attention to the result of the risk analysis contained in the document [“A proposed way forward for discussion on catch document schemes”](#) submitted to the 2021 Commission meeting by Japan.

Some CPCs asked whether eBCD data are indeed used to check Task 1 data. The Secretariat responded that the SCRS reviews total catch amounts calculated from eBCD to verify its consistency with Task 1 data. It also noted that such cross-checking is not plausible for bigeye and swordfish since i) the coverage of the SDP is limited, and ii) some CPCs submit information gathered from SDPs in a way that their catch amount in the Atlantic cannot be distinguished from catches made in other oceans.

b) Species that might be covered by a new CDS in ICCAT

Japan suggested that all the major ICCAT species other than BFT (i.e., bigeye, yellowfin, swordfish, albacore and skipjack) should be subject to a new CDS. It also believed that a potential new ICCAT CDS should be a fishery-based CDS, as opposed to a trade-based CDS, considering the advantage of its inclusiveness by covering fish products that are both internationally traded and domestically consumed.

A CPC mentioned that expansion of species subject to the CDS is not a problem because that CPC has a statistical system in place that was originally developed to meet the requirements under the EU's Catch Certificate Scheme. However, since that system does not cover fish products that are destined to domestic consumption, if the ICCAT CDS is to be fishery based, several structural changes in the system as well as administration would be necessary and, thus, there would be a need for further time to implement the CDS.

Another CPC suggested that bigeye and swordfish, which are currently subject to the SDP, should be covered by the CDS first by a CDS, after which consideration could be given to expanding the scope to include other ICCAT species.

Other CPCs noted that the current SDP for bigeye does not cover fresh products and canned products; thus, converting the bigeye SDP to a CDS covering all types of products would be a way forward. They also noted that bigeye is caught together with skipjack and yellowfin by purse seine fisheries; thus, introducing a CDS for bigeye would and probably should have implications for other tropical tuna species.

Several CPCs highlighted their practical difficulties in estimating catch amounts by species in the purse seine fishery for tropical tunas. While they are now making efforts in strengthening their observer programs, there is no reliable data to estimate catch composition at this stage. The Working Group agreed to explore this issue further while noting purse seine catches are reported by species in Task 1.

c) Practical and technical difficulties

Japan introduced several existing solutions to address the challenges in implementing a CDS. For example, in the case of eBCD, when catch quantities are small (i.e., less than 1 ton or three fish), the logbook or the sales note can be used as a temporary BCD, pending the validation of a formal eBCD within a certain time frame (i.e., 7 days). Japan requested CPCs that may face practical and technical difficulties in implementing a CDS to share their challenges in detail so that the Working Group could collectively discuss possible solutions.

d) Utilization of the eBCD system for other species and what modifications would be needed

There was general agreement that any new ICCAT CDS should be electronic while there might be exceptional cases where paper catch documents can be used temporarily.

Some CPCs suggested that the eBCD system should be utilized for other species, while another CPC believed that possible additional requirements, such as accommodating mixed stock fisheries and canned products could make the utilization of the eBCD system a challenge, in particular for tropical tunas. The potential costs to expand the eBCD system in these different ways, and to maintain the expanded system, would also need to be explored.

e) Enhancement of the capacity of developing CPCs

In the discussion paper, Japan requested that developing CPCs that are participating in the BFT eBCD share their experience in addressing any challenges, Morocco stated that, while it had difficulties initially in introducing CDS to thousands of artisanal fishing vessels, the derogation for small catches where the sales notes can be used as a temporary eBCD effectively alleviated such challenges. They also noted that the eBCD system facilitated the process for their artisanal vessels, which may not necessarily be authorised to target BFT, to use the system for trading BFT under the bycatch provision.

Japan proposed to establish a list of available capacity building projects/funds that developing CPCs could access if necessary.

f) Avoiding duplication with existing schemes and reducing the workload of exporting CPCs

Japan stated that if a possible future ICCAT Catch Document could be used to replace a catch documentation under CPCs' domestic import regulation systems, there would be an incentive for ICCAT CPCs to expand the scope of the CDS to apply to more species. To this end, the EU agreed to provide detailed requirements of its catch certification program vis a vis ICCAT's current SDPs to assist the CDS WG in evaluating the minimum elements it would need to see in any new ICCAT CDS.

g) Ensuring compatibility with other tuna RFMOs

Japan suggested that, like the IOTC, ICCAT should consider possible collaboration with other RFMOs that are developing and/or implementing CDS in their fisheries to explore potential ways to harmonise systems, including any new CDS that ICCAT might decide to develop. This was generally supported by Working Group members.

9. Workplan and/or next steps

The Working Group agreed to the workplan subject to further editorial changes (**Appendix 3**).

10. Coordination with the eBCD Technical Working Group (eBCD TWG)

The Working Group agreed that coordination with the eBCD TWG was important. As a first step, the CDS WG would provide a general explanation of the considerations being given to the possible expansion of CDS to other ICCAT species rather than detailed discussion. It also agreed to ask the eBCD developer, TRAGSA, its initial view on the possibility of adapting the eBCD system for use with other ICCAT species.

11. Other matters

No other matters were raised.

12. Adoption of Report and closure

The CPCs agreed that the report would be adopted by correspondence. The Chair noted that an update of the work of the CDS WG would be provided to the Working Group on Integrated Monitoring Measures (IMM WG) when it met in early June 2022.

The Chair thanked everyone present for their contributions and closed the meeting.

Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting and meeting arrangements
2. Election of Chair
3. Nomination of Rapporteur
4. Adoption of Agenda
5. Overview of existing SDP / CDS schemes:
 - a) ICCAT
 - b) Other RFMOs
 - c) CPCs
6. Presentation of FAO Technical Guidelines “Understanding and implementing catch documentation schemes – A guide for national authorities”
7. Presentation by an Observer on aligning RFMO catch documentation schemes to combat IUU fishing
8. Initial consideration of:
 - a) species that might be covered by any potential new CDS in ICCAT
 - b) practical and technical difficulties in CDS design and implementation and possible solutions
 - c) ensuring compatibility with other tuna RFMOs CDSs and avoiding duplication for ICCAT CPCs
 - d) utility of the eBCD system for other ICCAT species and potential modifications
9. Capacity needs of developing CPCs to support CDS implementation
10. Workplan and/or next steps
11. Coordination with the eBCD TWG
12. Reporting to the Commission
13. Other matters
14. Adoption of Report and closure

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Draft workplan of the *ad hoc* Working Group on Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS WG)

(Presented by Japan)

Recognizing the need for further discussion on the issues in ICCAT fisheries (e.g., IUU risk, data gaps) and whether CDS is an appropriate solution for them, without prejudice to the scope of any future CDS, the CDS WG agreed to work intersessionally as follows:

Information Collection and Sharing

CPCs are encouraged to provide information/views on the following by the end of July 2022:

1. Extent of risk of IUU fishing and related activities, data gaps, and other relevant factors including those provided for in the *Recommendation by ICCAT on a Process towards the Establishment of a Catch Certification Scheme for Tuna and Tuna-Like Species* [Rec. 12-09] associated with specific fisheries particularly for Tropical tuna including potential measures other than CDS to address identified risks, if any;
2. With a focus on Tropical tuna, describe the current practices as requested below and identify what challenges in implementation, including administrative burdens and cost implications, your CPC might face if ICCAT created a catch documentation scheme for ICCAT species other than BFT to track product from the catch to the final market.
 - i. How are ICCAT tropical tunas (bigeye, yellowfin, and skipjack) in mixed stock fisheries, especially in purse seine fisheries, identified during or after harvest? How are the amounts of each species currently measured for catch reporting?
 - ii. What challenges have you encountered in measuring or estimating the amount of bigeye, skipjack and yellowfin caught in your mixed stock fisheries to meet current ICCAT reporting requirements? What solutions have you found for such challenges that could be useful for other CPCs?
 - iii. Does your industry engage in canning of ICCAT tropical tunas, or send tropical tunas to canneries in other countries? If so, what role do canneries play in differentiating and measuring the amounts of each species harvested for ICCAT reporting purposes?
 - iv. For small scale fisheries, how are these catches documented/recorded at the time of the first domestic transaction?
 - v. What specific challenges did developing CPCs have when implementing eBCD and how were they overcome?
3. How could any new CDS avoid duplications and ensure interoperability with existing domestic import control schemes, eBCD, and potential CDS in other tuna RFMOs? To that end, the EU should provide additional information on what it considers to be missing from ICCAT SDP compared to the EU catch certificate. CPCs may also wish to provide initial views on data standards/Key data elements (KDEs).
4. Areas where capacity building is necessary and any available capacity building programs/funds that could be accessed by developing CPCs.

The Secretariat will compile the above information and make it available to all CPCs, then submit to the next CDS WG meeting in 2023.

Timeline

2022

Integrated Monitoring Measures (IMM) WG (8-11 June)

- Briefly review the progress of the CDS WG

PWG/COM (14-21 November)

- Review the progress of the CDS WG

2023

CDS WG (TBD, possibly in conjunction with the IMM Meeting)

- Review the information submitted by CPCs and the Secretariat;
- Continuation of the discussion on whether to expand the scope of the CDS to other species;
- Formulate a recommendation to the Commission, if possible.

IMM WG (TBD)

- Briefly review the progress of the CDS WG

PWG/COM (TBD)

- Decision on whether expansion of CDS is valid and necessary