

**Report of the First Meeting of the Standing Catch Document Scheme Working Group
(CDS WG)
(hybrid, Madrid, Spain, 4 March 2024)**

1. Opening of the meeting

The Executive Secretary, Mr Camille Jean Pierre Manel, welcomed all the attendees and the First Meeting of the Standing Catch Document Scheme Working Group (CDS WG) was opened by the Chair, Mr Neil Ansell.

2. Nomination of Chair

It was recalled that the CDS Working Group, adopted during last year's Special Meeting of the Commission, underwent the approval of the transition from its initial status as an ad hoc group to a standing group. This transition involves taking over the responsibilities and objectives previously carried out by the eBCD Technical Working Group (eBCD TWG).

In accordance with para 3 of Rec. 23-22 and Mr Neil Ansell was elected as Chair.

The Chair requested a volunteer to act as rapporteur and the ICCAT Secretariat agreed to take on this responsibility.

3. Adoption of Agenda

The Chair briefly outlined the agenda and asked CPCs to present any matters to be included.

The Agenda was adopted and is contained in **Appendix 1**.

The List of participants is contained in **Appendix 2**.

4. eBCD system overall state of play

4.1 Annual Report of User Support Service

TRAGSA presented their report "Implementation of the eBCD System - State of play of eBCD project (January –December 2023)", noting the statistics on the processing of requests and incidents from eBCD users throughout 2023.

It was observed that the months aligning with the fishing season in the Mediterranean (May, June, July) recorded the highest volume of reported issues on the eBCD system. Additionally, a breakdown of the predominant types of incidents was provided.

TRAGSA provided an overview of the status of all development work, offering detailed explanations and illustrating examples of those that warrant additional attention during this meeting.

5. Review/progress of eBCD system developments and received cost/time estimate(s)

5.1 Issues developed and updated in Production Environment

5.1.1. REFERENCE 92: TRANSSHIPMENTS LINKED WITH EBCD (PARA 92 REC. 21-08)

Paragraph 92 of the Recommendation by ICCAT amending the Recommendation 19-04 amending Recommendation 18-02 establishing a Multi-annual Management Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean (Rec. 21-08) establishes that transshipment declaration shall be linked to the electronic bluefin tuna catch document (eBCD) system to facilitate data cross-checking. Development was requested on 12 April 2023.

This functionality was **uploaded to the eBCD system in January 2024**.

5.1.2. REFERENCE 5.5.5: DEVELOPMENT OF FUNCTIONALITY TO ALLOW GROUPING OF FISH FROM THE SAME FLAG ORIGIN/SAME JFO (FIRST PHASE: CAGE REGISTRATION)

It was noted that Panel 2 (paragraph 100 of [Recommendation by ICCAT amending the Recommendation 18-02 establishing a Multi-annual Management Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean \(Rec. 19-04\)](#)) requested that the eBCD TWG study the consideration of the regrouping of fish, in intra-farm transfers, in a new cage by assigning this operation a new eBCD with its own code. Such a grouping would be within the same flag origin/same joint fishing operation (JFO). To address this proposal, the first phase should be to make a record of cages, as the cage field is currently a free text field. Japan also noted that this development would be important for the development of growth rates, as it is necessary to have a register of cages. This first phase, "Cage registration", was approved for development at the First Intersessional Meeting of the eBCD TWG in January 2023. The development was requested in April 2023.

During its presentation of the newly implemented development of cage registration, TRAGSA described the procedures for exchanging cages between farms using the introduced functionality. However, emphasis was placed on two critical considerations that must be adhered to during the operation of the cages to ensure the integrity of cage traceability:

- The exchange of cages between farms requires the deactivation and reactivation of the cages involved, and the current functionality only defines the definitive deactivation of a cage. Therefore, this behaviour should be modified so that a Secretariat profile can reactivate a cage if necessary.
- Although uncommon, some flags have the same cage identifier on several of their farms. Using a format in the identifier that clearly identifies the cage by both the flag and the farm to which it belongs would be essential to eliminate potential traceability problems during the exchange of cages between farms.

The issues raised by TRAGSA are also described in detail in the document "Updates regarding ongoing developments and clarifications".

Morocco agreed with TRAGSA that, since there are exchanges of cages between farms, the uniqueness of the cage identifier formats per flag/farm is imperative in order to ensure traceability. It also considered that in the case where a cage is permanently transferred to another farm, the option to deactivate the cage on the donor farm should also be permanent, creating a new cage for the donated cage on the destination farm. On the other hand, in the case of exchange of cages with fish, precision in the definition of the procedure is crucial to ensure traceability.

The EU pointed out that the uniqueness of cages in farms is already defined in paragraph 148 of Rec. 22-08 so there is no need to add further regulation in this respect. The EU also asked TRAGSA about the procedure for caging identifiers once they have been sent to the Secretariat and initialised in the system. In particular, they asked for clarification on how to proceed in the next campaign: do the current identifiers remain active or do they all have to be resubmitted.

Morocco pointed out that paragraph 148 of [Recommendation by ICCAT amending the Recommendation 21-08 establishing a Multi-annual Management Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean \(Rec. 22-08\)](#) only defines uniqueness in terms of the flag, but does not specify anything in terms of the farm. TRAGSA agreed with Morocco that uniqueness per farm within a flag is important. Regarding the EU's question, for the next campaign all registered cages will remain active and only in the case that new cages need to be added or removed would it be necessary to inform the Secretariat for updating in the eBCD system.

The Chair recalled that since Rec. 22-08 only states that the identifier must have "at least" certain figures, it would not be necessary to modify it if more figures were to be added to reference the farm in the identifier. The Chair also asked TRAGSA whether the necessary changes (reactivation of the cages and modification of the identifier) would require a development cost.

The US agreed with Morocco and the Chair and noted that once the cost estimate had been made and the format of the identifier decided, it may be necessary to review the text of the paragraph 148 of Rec. 22-08. TRAGSA considered that with the implementation of the updated "Cage Register", it is feasible to establish a search engine within the system for all BCDs containing cages with available fish, eliminating the need for the second phase of the grouping proposal, which brings more difficulties in safeguarding traceability.

Morocco deemed the alternative proposed by TRAGSA as viable but emphasized that it would involve a quantitative management of the eBCD cages. Should other CPCs disagree with this approach, a return to the initial grouping proposal would be necessary.

The US stressed that it still has doubts about the guarantees for safeguarding traceability in line with the initial grouping proposal.

The Chair concluded that the discussion should continue upon receipt of the time/cost for the second phase.

Final decision: Agreed for cost/time for second phase of the proposal, as well as for implementing the current functionality that allows the Secretariat profile to reactivate cages.

5.1.3. REFERENCE 6.1: FARMING CAPACITY (PARAGRAPH 26 OF REC. 21-08)

It was recalled that under paragraph 26 of the [Recommendation by ICCAT amending the Recommendation 19-04 amending Recommendation 18-02 establishing a Multi-annual Management Plan for Bluefin tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean \(Rec. 21-08\)](#), the ICCAT Secretariat compiles statistics on the annual amount of caging (input of wild caught fish), harvesting, and export, by farm CPC, using the data in the eBCD system. The eBCD TWG is required to consider the development of such a data extraction functionality, and until such a functionality becomes available, each farm CPC reports these statistics to the ICCAT Secretariat. These statistics shall be made available on the ICCAT website subject to confidentiality requirements. Development was requested in April 2023.

The EU has expressed interest in extending access beyond the Secretariat to include the relevant CPCs. In response, Morocco clarified that the limitation of access to the report exclusively to the Secretariat is outlined in Rec. 21-08 paragraph 26.

This functionality was **uploaded to the eBCD system in January 2024**.

5.1.4. REFERENCE 2019-8 (35): TRADES COMPANIES OF OTHER COUNTRIES ADAPT THE SYSTEM TO ALLOW ACCESS TO NCP

The requirements for the creation of the different profiles for non-CPC countries to access the system. Development was requested on 12 April 2023.

The US emphasized the importance of this, citing a notable increase in commercial activity with these NCP countries. They expressed their desire for the swift implementation of this development into production.

TRAGSA confirmed that this functionality, currently in the Secure Testing Environment (SEC), will soon be in the CPC test environment so that all parties can provide feedback before moving the functionality to production.

This proposal is **under development** and will soon be in the CPC test environment.

5.1.5. INCLUDE THE 'PLAUSIBLE' TRANSFORMATIONS OF DECLARED PRODUCTS BETWEEN DIFFERENT SECTIONS

'Plausible' transformations of declared products between different sections were discussed for inclusion into the eBCD system (i.e. 'gutted and gilled' cannot be followed by 'whole'). At the January 2023 intersessional meeting of the eBCD TWG, the United States presented a document outlining plausible transformations for several BFT products. Based on this document, the functionality of the proposal was defined and its development was subsequently updated in the test environment (CPC) in May 2023, pending WG approval.

TRAGSA presented a demonstration, using screenshots, illustrating how this functionality would operate to enable diverse presentations within the system based on selections made in the drop-down controls. Additionally, it was highlighted that this feature is currently accessible within the CPC test environment.

This proposal **is developed** and available in the CPC test environment. As there was no objection from any CPC and everyone is aware of such a development, it was decided that the functionality will now be uploaded to the production environment.

5.2 Issues cost estimated but not requested

5.2.1. PARAGRAPH 102 OF REC. 21-08: ICCAT REGIONAL OBSERVER PROGRAMME (ROP)

In accordance with paragraph 102 of Recommendation by ICCAT amending the Recommendation 19-04 amending Recommendation 18-02 establishing a Multi-annual Management Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean (Rec. 21-08), by way of derogation from paragraph 101, harvesting from farms up to 1,000 kg per day and up to a maximum of 50 t per farm per year to supply the fresh bluefin tuna market, may be authorized by the relevant CPC provided that an authorized inspector from the farm CPC is onsite for 100% of such harvests, and controls the entire operation. The authorized inspector shall also validate the harvested quantities in the eBCD system. In this case, the regional observer's signature should not be required in the harvest section of the eBCD. Cost/time estimates were requested, and requirements were sent on 27 September 2022.

The Chair recalled that during the [Second Meeting of the eBCD Technical Working Group](#), held in June 2023, it was determined that approving this proposal would only make sense if CPCs intended to implement the exemption. At the subsequent 16th Meeting of the IMM, no notable interest was expressed in its implementation. Nevertheless, Türkiye requests that this CDS WG engage in a discussion on this proposal, expressing their interest in its implementation.

The EU informed the group that they may also implement this derogation, having adjusted its legal framework accordingly, and therefore supports the adoption of the proposal. The EU is interested in TRAGSA's perspective on the implementation of this derogation within the system.

TRAGSA stated that the requirements have already been submitted and it is only awaiting approval of the proposal to start development.

Morocco stated that the derogation is already clearly defined in paragraph 102 of Rec. 21-08. Norway joined the EU and Morocco in endorsing the proposal.

Morocco suggested that for the effective implementation of the functionality, it would be beneficial to incorporate a form of parameterization that enables the monitoring of the use of this derogation in the system.

The US pointed out that, in its view, this derogation was aimed at addressing the needs of small local markets. Given Türkiye's interest in using this exception, it would be insightful to know in more detail the specific markets in which it intends to apply it. In this regard, the Chair proposed that this matter could also be addressed in Panel 2.

The EU proposed that, given TRAGSA's previous recognition of the complexity and cost associated with this development arising from the system's automatic assessment of compliance with the derogation - the competent authorities (inspectors) should be responsible for assessing these data which would bring significant cost savings in the development.

TRAGSA confirmed that the primary complexity and cost of the proposal are mainly attributed to the system's evaluation of compliance with derogation conditions. However, TRAGSA cautioned that, because the development requirements date back to 2022, they are unable to give a more precise answer as to what specific elements of the development defines its complexity and cost.

Morocco proposed to incorporate two boxes in the harvesting section, which would allow the competent authorities to indicate whether or not the section should be signed by a Regional Observer, thus relieving the system of this responsibility.

Final decision: Revised cost/time needed for the proposed scenario where authorities are responsible for determining whether or not the section should be subject to derogation.

5.2.2. REFERENCE 5.5.3: TRANSPORT AREA WITHIN TD SECTION TO BE MANDATORY AND INCLUDE DATES OF DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL

Paper copies of the eBCD are used during transportation and in marketing places, with the risk that some eBCDs are duplicated. The EU proposed, considering whether to use on a mandatory basis, the section for transport means in the trade section of the eBCD to add information on the transport means used, as well as whether to add the dates of departure and arrival. The possibility is to be discussed of accessing the eBCD system on the basis of further explanations from the EU about the scope of the enlarged access proposed. A cost/time estimation was requested and requirements were sent in September 2022.

The EU was interested in the status of this proposal since it was postponed due to the absence of a CPC that had originally voiced their reservations.

The Chair clarified that they had already reached out to the absent CPC, Türkiye, to inform them of the details already discussed on this proposal. To facilitate progress, the Chair suggested to continue discussing in full transparency with all CPCs.

TRAGSA recalled that it submitted the proposal requirements in September 2022 and then listed the fields designated to accompany the transport document upload area. It informed that the inclusion of this information would not be mandatory, thus avoiding that the section would be blocked in case the data are not available at the time of registration.

The EU expressed the view that if certain fields listed by TRAGSA were not mandated, the usefulness of the proposal would be compromised. To address this concern, it proposed amending the Recommendation to designate the Date of Transport and Authority fields as mandatory at a minimum.

Final decision: Open, deferred to Panel 2.

5.2.3. QUESTION FROM JAPAN ON OBTAINING THE NECESSARY DATA FOR THE CALCULATION OF GROWTH RATES

Japan was exploring the feasibility of enabling the eBCD system to provide officials of importing CPCs with access to data related to the growth rate calculations conducted by exporting CPCs. Currently, this information is shared with Japan by these CPCs on a voluntary basis upon request.

At the last eBCD WG Intersessional Meeting in June 2023, TRAGSA was mandated to explore the possibilities for providing the proposal "1.1.8. Question from Japan on obtaining the necessary data for the calculation of growth rates" with the necessary guarantees of confidentiality for the information involved and to analyze whether it would be feasible to send alerts via email by the eBCD system, when deviations are recorded in the calculation of growth rates.

Japan answered the two questions in the document "Updates regarding ongoing developments and clarifications" regarding growth rates:

- *Can responsible Administrators of importing CPCs/Flags also have access to this information?*

Yes, given the central role of the importing country in this proposal, the precise determination of the growth rate is crucial to prevent fraud. To achieve this, the importing CPC requires access to information regarding the growth rates of the exporting CPC's cages but does not need access to trade information from a third country cage as long as the growth rate of the cage is available.

Japan underscored the utility of this proposal in eliminating the administrative burden for exporting CPCs to engage in extensive information exchanges with importing CPCs.

- *Would it also be necessary to create a new specific page to manage these data through a Secretariat profile?*

Japan is flexible regarding the need for the creation of a separate page to handle the information.

Lastly, Japan requested clarification from TRAGSA on how it perceives the feasibility of issuing alerts when a deviation in growth rates is identified by the system.

In response to Japan's inquiry, TRAGSA clarified that the system merely extracts information from the database and presents it in the report without conducting an analysis. As a result, it cannot evaluate the presence of a deviation in the rates. Consequently, in their view it is the responsibility of the user requesting the report to assess and determine the occurrence of any deviation.

The EU agreed on the condition that the importing CPC has access to the importer's data providing that the data are exclusively related to the import. Given the importance of having the data related to all harvests/trade from each cage in the growth rate calculations, they underlined that any required information from sources not directly associated with the import should be anonymized to ensure confidentiality. The EU emphasized the question of whether the system should make the calculations, regardless of its ability to send alerts for deviations.

Morocco concurred with Japan to endorse the development outlined in Recommendation 22-08, specifically in paragraph 27, but exclusively for farm CPCs, as articulated in paragraph 26 ("Farm CPCs shall endeavor to ensure that the growth rates derived from the eBCDs are coherent with the growth rates"). However, concerning importing CPCs, Morocco agreed with the EU and, emphasizing paragraph 26 of the Recommendation, which explicitly addresses data protection. Hence, if an importing country seeks access to all data in this respect, TRAGSA is encouraged to develop a functionality that guarantees confidentiality.

Japan mentioned that, if the email alert is not feasible for the system, the next option is to have a field in the Harvesting Information section of the eBCD, which displays the deviation of the growth rate from the SCRS growth table. Japan considered the analysis of the growth rate in the eBCD system to be feasible as it involves relatively simple calculations. The methodology for these calculations will be presented in Panel 2. Japan emphasized that to derive a reliable growth rate, it is imperative to calculate it for the entire cage.

TRAGSA clarified that calculations for a specific cage on a farm would occur when a user runs the report. It concurred with Japan, stressing the need to have all relevant data associated with the cage to ensure accurate calculations.

Morocco determined that although from a technical point of view for the obtaining of the growth rate it is of utmost importance that calculations are made after the completion of all harvesting operations in a cage, nevertheless the availability of all data involved requires extreme caution. If only the final value of a growth rate is to be shared, confidentiality could be safeguarded. Japan responded that a system in which the growth rate is updated as each harvest occurs is a possible approach.

The Chair concluded that aspects of this discussion, including on the exchange of data and confidentiality, would best be followed up by Panel 2.

Japan confirmed that its proposal entails requesting the accurate growth rates, hence involves allowing the system access to the growth rates of cages relating to trades they have imported, but does not require access to information on harvests or exports to other countries. It aligns with the Chair's view that the proposal should be addressed in Panel 2.

Final decision: Open, deferred to Panel 2.

5.3 Issues where cost/time estimation has been requested

5.3.1. Reference 4.1: CROSS-CHECKS THE TOTAL CATCH'S AVERAGE WEIGHT AND THE SAMPLINGS AVERAGE WEIGHT. TAGGING

The United States asked if the system cross-checks the total catch's average weight and the samplings average weight. TRAGSA confirmed that the system does not undertake or report on any differences. The option of reporting to Administrators when these figures exceed a certain % of tolerance was discussed (e.g., an email sent to administrators, but no inconsistency shown in the system).

TRAGSA noted that, to analyze and estimate cost/time accurately, it requires clarification on whether the cross-checks involve a calculated value to be provided to the system or if it is a fixed value or dependent on other factors. In essence, more information is needed to understand how to execute these cross-checks effectively.

The US recalled that this proposal stems from paragraph 5 of the [Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 21-18 on the application of the eBCD system \(Rec. 22-16\)](#) which states that "Alternatively for those fisheries concerned by the derogations to minimum size under the Recommendation by ICCAT Establishing a Multi-Annual Management Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean Sea (Rec. 18-02), CPCs may instead provide the approximate weight of individual fish within the catch upon offloading, which is determined through representative sampling". This derogation is implemented by the EU, and its proposal suggests uploading the sampling results into the eBCD system for automated cross-checks to monitor whether the derogation is being properly applied.

The EU explained that its authorities already have a mandate that all landed fish be weighed, and there is an annual report that collects all the information concerning this derogation. Therefore, the EU did not consider it necessary for this information to be uploaded into the eBCD system, nor is there any Recommendation requiring this, and therefore did not see any need for the development of the proposal.

The US was of the opinion that, while there is no requirement to upload sampling information into the eBCD system, the automation of cross-checks was useful. The US agreed to meet bilaterally with the EU to understand precisely the procedure accompanying the verification of this derogation.

Final decision: Remains open.

5.3.2. Reference 8.2.2: PROTECT THE PRIVACY OF AUTHORITIES IN THE EBCDS

The EU considers that it is important to know internally (for the validating authorities) who has validated the eBCD, however they would prefer that this information is not visible on the printed version of an eBCD. It is requested that when validating an eBCD it should not be necessary to include the name of the person validating the eBCD, but that it should be possible to include an agent number.

TRAGSA presented a series of examples showing the different versions, both on-screen and in print, illustrating how the confidentiality of authority names would be maintained. The issues raised by TRAGSA are also described in detail in the document "Updates regarding ongoing developments and clarifications".

The EU agreed with the implementation of the proposal presented by TRAGSA. Regarding the reports, the EU enquired about the roles that have access to them, expressing that based on these roles, it would assess the necessity of concealing the names of the authorities.

Morocco considered that, in agreement with the EU and as proposed by TRAGSA, the names should only be visible by the validating flag. In the event of access to the data by other parties, confidentiality should be preserved. Morocco also noted that the form of the section present in the [Recommendation by ICCAT amending and replacing Recommendation 18-13 on an ICCAT Bluefin Tuna Catch Documentation Programme \(Rec. 23-21\)](#) will need to be amended accordingly to be consistent with the proposal.

Japan emphasized that, concerning the on-screen version of the eBCD, having access to the name of the authority or, if not available, the validating entity is crucial for users trying to contact the validator as well as for securing traceability. In summary, if confidentiality requires hiding the authority's name, it is essential, at a minimum, to display the validating entity.

TRAGSA confirmed that all users currently have access to reports featuring a validator, irrespective of whether these users belong to the validating flag or not.

The EU proposed to restrict the access of certain roles to reports in the same way as is done in the eBCD on screen.

Morocco considered it essential to know the relation between the reports and the roles that access them in order to make well-informed decisions.

TRAGSA clarified that currently the reports in which the names and surnames of the authorities that have validated a section appear are as follows:

- Flag's Raw Data
- BCD's Raw Data
- Help Traceability

The roles that have access to these reports have or do not have access depending on the entities with which they are associated. Similarly, for reports exclusively displaying data for a specific flag, all users affiliated with that flag will have access to the validator data.

In the case of the "BCD's Raw Data" report, users could see data from other flags because this report was designed to show information from the previous sections of a BCD section independently of the responsible flag.

Japan reiterated that by displaying the name of the validating entity, rather than the validator's details, confidentiality could be preserved.

The Chair suggested that the most effective way to clarify and discuss further this matter and facilitate a decision is for TRAGSA to provide a detailed list of each report with the current corresponding access roles.

Final decision: Open, TRAGSA will provide a list as suggested.

5.4 List of issues considered "Open"

5.4.1. REFERENCE 5.5.6. MORTALITY DURING TOWING VOYAGE

Some CPCs reminded the CDS WG of the difficulties faced declaring mortality during the towing voyage. TRAGSA noted that a procedure existed, although some CPCs explained that this mortality should be reflected in chronological order and not in the caging section. TRAGSA explained that this could be done with a new section that could allow declaring dead fishes chronologically.

At the Second Intersessional Meeting of the eBCD TWG in June 2023, the EU presented a document reflecting mortality in different eBCD scenarios. TRAGSA considered two of the three options feasible. For the last option, related to the recording of information on lost, stolen and escaped fish, a new section may be necessary, as it was impossible to reuse the natural mortality section as it was not definitive. As in the natural mortality section, fish may be marketable.

TRAGSA noted that it has not yet received a formal request for the elaboration of the cost/time estimate.

Final decision: Agreed for cost/time analysis.

5.4.2. TOOL TIPS FOR PRODUCT PRESENTATIONS

At the Second Intersessional Meeting of the eBCD TWG in June 2023, the possibility of including a "tool tip" to help users to choose the presentation of the product was discussed. This tool tip will consist of an image and/or a description of the chosen presentation. When a product presentation is selected, an icon will appear next to the drop-down menu which, when hovering or clicking on it, will display an image and description corresponding to the selected product presentation.

The US reminded that this supplementary development complements the earlier proposal of plausible proposals submitted by TRAGSA. Given that this falls within the scope of the maintenance budget, they encouraged the CDS WG to proceed with its approval.

Final decision: Approved to be developed under the maintenance budget.

5.4.3. REFERENCE 2.4.2. MODIFICATION OF A TERM IN THE JFO FORM OF THE PRINTED BCD

During the First Intersessional Meeting of the eBCD TWG in January 2023, the US conveyed that they had some confusion regarding the terminology used in the printed version of the eBCD, specifically related to JFOs. The US expressed a readiness to collaborate with TRAGSA to standardize the terminology presented by the system in this domain.

TRAGSA presented screenshots of the printed version of JFOs information, illustrating that it displayed the same wording as specified by the Recommendation.

The US clarified that, irrespective of the current alignment of the printed version with the Recommendation's wording, the objective of this proposal is to rectify the discrepancy between the printed version and the on-screen version.

In the on-screen version, a column is present where the vessel responsible for the catch is marked with an X, but this column is absent in the printed version. To address this concern, the US suggested the inclusion of a simple "contextual help feature", similar to the one introduced in the Plausible Presentations Tooltips proposal. This feature would provide descriptive information to the user, explaining which of one of the vessels is responsible for the catch and its significance within a JFO.

The US concluded by mentioning that they have screenshots of the latter proposal, which they can share with TRAGSA to help implement the solution described above.

Final decision: Open, the US and TRAGSA will collaborate bilaterally to establish the desired implementation of this proposal.

5.4.4. REFERENCE 3.1. INITIAL DISCUSSION OF REFLECTING 'PROCESSING ON BOARD IN THE EBCD SYSTEM

This proposal is renamed "Processing Information Section" and its discussion is described in point 6 of this report: "Consideration of any new eBCD developments".

5.4.5. REFERENCE 3.2. BLOCK OF EBCDS WHEN THE BFT IS EXHAUSTED IN A CAGE

At the Second Intersessional Meeting of the eBCD TWG in June 2023, the EU presented a proposal to develop a functionality for authorities to block an eBCD when all the tuna in the cage have already been caught (the cage is empty), but the eBCD still shows that there are some fish available. As stereoscopic cameras are not sufficiently accurate, the cage may be empty even though the eBCD still shows fish available. The possibility of blocking an eBCD by CPC authorities when these cases occur was requested.

TRAGSA requested a concrete example of this scenario involving cages to study, enabling a thorough analysis and the formulation of corresponding requirements.

The EU stated that they will contact TRAGSA/Secretariat to provide the example requested by TRAGSA.

Final decision: Open, the EU will provide an example to TRAGSA.

5.4.6. REFERENCE 3.4. INTERANNUAL COMPARISON OF TAG'S CODES

The eBCD system should conduct the comparison of label codes not only for a specific year but also for preceding years.

TRAGSA noted that it has not yet received a formal request for the elaboration of the cost/time estimate.

Final decision: Agreed for cost/time analysis.

5.4.6. REFERENCE 3.5. DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE APPLICATION OF eBCD IN THE PILOT PROJECT FOR THE SHORT-TERM LIVE STORAGE OF BLUEFIN TUNA (NORWAY)

At the 23rd Special Meeting of the Commission in 2022, a Resolution was adopted to initiate a pilot project on the short-term live storage of bluefin tuna. The Norwegian fishing plan, endorsed in March 2023, delineates the allocation of eighteen tons of bluefin tuna for a scientific pilot study in Norway. The study aims to assess the feasibility of storing bluefin tuna in cages while ensuring fish quality. If the pilot study achieves its objectives, and the bluefin tuna are ready for harvest in 2023, the catch will be integrated into the eBCD system.

Norway reported that following the discussion in the eBCD TWG and IMM in 2023, no modifications were required in the eBCD system. Norway concluded that should the pilot project transition into a full-scale initiative at some point, then the eBCD system would need corresponding modifications for which further discussions may be needed.

Final decision: No further discussion needed until after the end of the pilot project.

6. Consideration of any new eBCD developments

6.1 Processing Information Section

Recommendation 23-21, amending Recommendation 18-13, introduces a new section titled "8. Processing Information" tasked with collecting information pertinent to dead farmed tunas and dead tunas caught by traps destined for processing vessels.

TRAGSA outlined its initial analysis of this section suggesting the creation of a section that would include both trade and processing information. For fish from a caging section, the new section would be inserted after the harvesting section, while for dead tuna from a trap catch, it would follow the catching section. This proposed functionality necessitates the introduction of two new roles: Processing Vessel Representative and Processing Vessel Master.

The specific fields to be included in this new section would need to be determined, but preliminary considerations include exporter's data, importer's data, processing details, and validation (excluding "Transportation description" in this case).

Japan specified that, as per the Recommendation, Processing Information (Section 8) is listed before Trade Information (Section 9). However, in practical terms, tuna processing typically occurs after commercialization. Therefore, in the eBCD, the sequence should reflect the actual process. It would be necessary to incorporate flexibility to add both sections accordingly.

Final decision: Agreed for cost/time analysis.

6.2 List of 3 potential new functionalities/reports requested by the EU

The EU briefly presented the 3 functionalities required and described in the document "Standing Catch Document Scheme Working Group - (Agenda item 6)":

1. The current eBCD system lacks the possibility to incorporate an intermediate trading company (other than the one associated with the receiving farm) in the trade of live fish, due to the restriction to only one trading company per farm. The EU proposed a revision of the eBCD section to allow for the association of more than one company, specifically allowing for an intermediate company involved in this type of trade.

2. The EU is tasked with generating an annual report based on data extracted from the system concerning EU derogations under paragraphs 5b and 5d of Rec. 22-16. Automating this feature within the system would facilitate access to summary data on the implementation of the two derogations for any CPC, eliminating the current labour intensive process required by each flag to extract information and streamlining the annual reporting process.
3. It would be beneficial for the eBCD system to include a report on importers/exporters and their summary data. This report would enable CPCs to retrieve the number and names of importers/exporters validated as users in the eBCD by the CPC, along with the quantities traded by each importer/exporter.

Finally, the EU requested clarification as they had noticed that some data collected in the CP30 report by the system on re-exports appear not to coincide with accurate data on actual exports.

TRAGSA highlighted that, with regard to the first point/functionality, the eBCD system obtains farm information from the Secretariat's databases, where a single company is defined for each farm. Although no requests have been received from CPCs to include an intermediary company for farms, a possible solution to address this point would be to add in the Live Trade section a sub-section for the inclusion of the intermediary company. Defining the role of these intermediary companies in commercialization and determining whether their flag always corresponds to that of the farm would be essential issues to address the proposal: a case study could help to clarify the requirements.

Concerning the proposed new reports (second and third points), TRAGSA requested comprehensive details, including the constituent fields of each report, the user roles that will be granted access to the report, and the requisite search filters.

It was agreed that EU and TRAGSA would collaborate to define all the details needed to finalize the proposals and whether any specific cases needed to be presented to help define the requirements.

Final decision: Open, the EU and TRAGSA will work together bilaterally to define the different proposals.

7. Future eBCD intersessional work as required

In the interests of time and efficiency of the CDS WG intersessional work, the Chair informed that cost/time estimates received from TRAGSA during the intersessional period will be circulated to the CDS WG for approval. He would also work with the Secretariat and TRAGSA to facilitate any technical questions and follow-up by correspondence if needed.

The Chair reminded everyone that the next meeting of this CDS WG is scheduled for June 2024.

8. Overview of eBCD budgetary and contractual matters

The Chair requested the Secretariat to provide an update on the budgetary status of developments, as there has been no detailed discussion in the working group since STACFAD defined the budgets for the eBCDs system. This information would help to prioritize essential developments.

The Secretariat stated that the budgetary situation is currently satisfactory. It recalled that the budgets adopted last September did not include any specific item for new developments, as sufficient funds were already available. For years there has been a specific fund for the eBCD so that any annual surplus in the budget is carried over to the next year: thus, there is €340,000 available, which is deemed adequate for addressing ongoing developments.

The EU raised two questions regarding financial matters:

- How specifically is the support of the eBCD system funded?
- Suggested that any non-essential development, not stemming from a Recommendation, should come with a proposal for financial support from the initiating CPC.

The Secretariat clarified that eBCD support is integrated into the overall eBCD budget and does not have a distinct line item.

9. Any other eBCD matters

9.1 Removal of obsolete inconsistencies from the eBCD System

The kilos of dead fish recorded in the transfer section exceeds the kilos live traded. Check the figures recorded in both sections.

The No. of fish stated in the transfer is not consistent with those reported in the previous section.

The inconsistencies shown in the table above signal potential errors in fish count or weight within Transfer (TR) sections before the 'Parallel Transfers' update. This last functionality, 'Parallel Transfers', designed to improve the handling of dead fish records, has made these inconsistencies obsolete. Now, the new system accurately addresses dead fish issues, and the remaining inconsistencies cause confusion by falsely suggesting errors in the relevant sections.

TRAGSA had notified that two inconsistencies/alerts had become obsolete in terms of usability and, consequently, would no longer be present in the system.

9.2 Clarification regarding the requirements of canned fish

The Secretariat explained that in the past, due to the lack of a specific definition in the system they had considered that canned tuna did not require to be accompanied by an BCD/eBCD. However, recent doubts and discussions with a CPC had arisen about the appropriateness of this approach. Therefore, the working group's opinion was sought to address this matter.

The US asked what was the trigger for this issue, including whether there had been growth in the canned tuna market since in the past it was felt that canned tuna was not relevant to be considered under the BCD Programme.

The Secretariat clarified that, although the precise quantities are not known, a change in the trend has been detected and the Secretariat has therefore consulted the CDS WG. The Secretariat added that there is currently no record of canned tuna in the eBCD system, and the only way to do so would be to select the "Other" presentation as there is no defined option for this type of tuna.

Final decision: Deferred to Panel 2.

9.3 ICCAT Vessel Number new format

At present, when a vessel changes flag, its ICCAT number, which incorporates the flag code, must be altered, resulting in disparate identifiers for the same vessel. This poses procedural and traceability challenges. To address this issue, the Secretariat proposed modifying the ICCAT vessel number format to avoid the flag being part of the ICCAT number. This proposal was accepted by the Commission.

The new format of the ICCAT No. shall be "AT0999999" {"AT0" + 6 digits {9: 0...9}}, where the final part of the numeric part of the new code corresponds to the current numeric identifier of the vessel in the Secretariat's database (the rest is filled in with zeros).

The Secretariat explained that the implementation of the vessel module in the IOMS (Integrated Online Management System) requires the modification of the vessel identifier format which affects the eBCD system, and consequently requires changes to the eBCD system with corresponding costs. The Secretariat encouraged the CDS WG to respond to the questions posed in the document "ICCAT Vessel Number new format" (at this meeting or by correspondence) which require deciding in which sections/reports of the eBCD system it would be appropriate for the old eBCD system format to accompany the new one. Given the lack of time at the meeting, it would agree that CPCs could respond by correspondence.

10. Adoption of the report and adjournment

It was agreed that the report would be adopted by correspondence.

Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Election of Chair
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. eBCD system overall state of play
5. Review/progress of eBCD system developments and received cost/time estimate(s)
6. Consideration of any new eBCD developments
7. Future eBCD intersessional work as required
8. Overview of eBCD budgetary and contractual matters
9. Any other eBCD matters
10. Adoption of the report and adjournment

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