



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations**

FIPM/R1120 (En)

**FAO
Fisheries and
Aquaculture Report**

ISSN 2070-6987

Report of the

**EXPERT CONSULTATION ON CATCH DOCUMENTATION
SCHEMES (CDS)**

Rome, 21–24 July 2015

Report of the
EXPERT CONSULTATION ON CATCH DOCUMENTATION SCHEMES (CDS)
Rome, 21–24 July 2015

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The mention of specific companies or products of manufacturers, whether or not these have been patented, does not imply that these have been endorsed or recommended by FAO in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned.

The views expressed in this information product are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of FAO.

ISBN 978-92-5-108922-4

© FAO, 2015

FAO encourages the use, reproduction and dissemination of material in this information product. Except where otherwise indicated, material may be copied, downloaded and printed for private study, research and teaching purposes, or for use in non-commercial products or services, provided that appropriate acknowledgement of FAO as the source and copyright holder is given and that FAO's endorsement of users' views, products or services is not implied in any way.

All requests for translation and adaptation rights, and for resale and other commercial use rights should be made via www.fao.org/contact-us/licence-request or addressed to copyright@fao.org.

FAO information products are available on the FAO website (www.fao.org/publications) and can be purchased through publications-sales@fao.org.

PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

The FAO Expert Consultation on Catch Documentation Schemes was convened in Rome, 21–24 July 2015, at the request of the thirty-first session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI). It was organized following the United Nations General Assembly call to initiate elaboration of guidelines for catch documentation schemes (CDSs) (paragraph 68 of the UN General Assembly Resolution on Sustainable Fisheries of 9 December 2013). The present document is the report of the Consultation.

The Expert Consultation brought together an international panel with relevant expertise and experience in the design and implementation of CDSs and related systems. Its aim was to produce draft voluntary guidelines for CDSs, formulated in accordance with the principles COFI outlined at its thirty-first session, to be submitted for adoption at the thirty-second session of COFI, subject to prior review by the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade and further technical consultation processes as deemed appropriate.

FAO. 2015.

Report of the Expert Consultation on Catch Documentation Schemes. Rome, 21–24 July 2015.
FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 1120. Rome. Italy.

ABSTRACT

The UN General Assembly Resolution on Sustainable Fisheries of 9 December 2013 expresses concern for the continued threat to marine habitats and ecosystems from illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing, and also acknowledges the negative impact of these activities on food security and state economies, particularly in developing regions. The resolution recognizes FAO's established role in facilitating collaborative development by states of international instruments setting out principles and standards for responsible practices in the management, conservation and development of fisheries. It thus calls on states, *inter alia*, to initiate within FAO as soon as possible the elaboration of guidelines and other relevant criteria for catch documentation schemes (CDSs).

In response to this request, as expressed in paragraph 68 of the resolution, the thirty-first session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) (Rome, 9–13 June 2014) proposed that FAO undertake the elaboration of such guidelines for CDSs, including possible formats, based on the following principles: (a) conformity with the provisions of relevant international law; (b) not create unnecessary barriers to trade; (c) equivalence; (d) risk-based; (e) reliable, simple, clear and transparent; and (f) electronic if possible. The Committee further stipulated that assessment of schemes and formats would include cost-benefit considerations and take into account CDSs already implemented by some Member States and regional fisheries management organizations.

The Expert Consultation on Catch Documentation Schemes was subsequently convened by FAO, with the support of Norway, in Rome, 21–24 July 2015. The Consultation was tasked with developing draft voluntary guidelines for catch documentation schemes, in accordance with the above principles, to be submitted for adoption at the thirty-second session of COFI, subject to prior review by the fifteenth session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade (COFI-FT) and further technical consultation processes as deemed appropriate.

The draft CDS guidelines, attached as Appendix D of this report, represent the primary output of the Consultation. The content is divided into nine sections, reflecting the structure deemed most appropriate for organizing the content and ensuring inclusion of all necessary components. In order, the sections are: Preamble, Purpose and scope, Objective, Definitions, Principles, Application of basic principles, Special requirements of developing states, CDS recommended standards and functions, and Data requirements/formats.

CONTENTS

	Page
OPENING OF THE MEETING AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION	1
BACKGROUND TO THE CONVENING OF THE CONSULTATION	1
PRESENTATIONS OF BACKGROUND STUDY AND CITES E-PERMITTING SYSTEM	2
DISCUSSION OF INITIAL DRAFT CATCH DOCUMENTATION AND CERTIFICATION GUIDELINES AND PROPOSED REVISIONS	2
PROPOSED DRAFT VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES FOR CDSs AND FOLLOW-UP	4
 APPENDIXES	
A Agenda and timetable	5
B List of participants	7
C Opening statement by Mr Audun Lem, Deputy Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Economics Division, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department	10
D Draft voluntary guidelines for catch documentation schemes	11

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CA	competent authority
CCAMLR	Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources
CCSBT	Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna
CCS	Catch Certification Scheme
CDS	catch documentation scheme
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
COFI	FAO Committee on Fisheries
COFI-FT	COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
IGO	intergovernmental organization
IUU	illegal, unreported and unregulated (fishing)
MCS	monitoring, control and surveillance
RFMO	regional fisheries management organization
UN	United Nations

OPENING OF THE MEETING AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION

1. The Expert Consultation on Catch Documentation Schemes, hereinafter referred to as ‘the Consultation’, was held in Rome, 21–24 July 2015.
2. Eight experts and seven resource people participated. The full list of participants is attached as Appendix B.
3. Prior to the opening of the session, participants in the Consultation were provided the following documents for their information or consideration:
 - Code of conduct for responsible fisheries
 - Report of the thirty-first session of the Committee on Fisheries. Rome, 9–13 June 2014
 - Review and analysis of current traceability studies (Vincent Andre, consultant, FAO 2014), submitted to the fourteenth session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade (COFI-FT) (Bergen, Norway, 24–28 February 2014)
 - Catch documentation schemes and the impact assessment (Alastair MacFarlane and Francisco Blaha, consultants to the FAO Secretariat for the Expert Consultation on Catch Documentation Schemes, 2015)
 - Draft catch documentation and certification guidelines (Alastair MacFarlane and Francisco Blaha, consultants to the FAO Secretariat for the Expert Consultation on Catch Documentation Schemes, 2015)
4. In particular, the experts considered two background documents prepared specifically for the Consultation. The first was a study entitled Catch documentation schemes and the impact assessment, intended to inform the opening discussion. The second was an initial draft catch documentation and certification guidelines, prepared by the consultants to the FAO Secretariat, Mr Alastair MacFarlane and Mr Francisco Blaha. This draft was to serve as a basis for the draft voluntary guidelines for catch documentation schemes (CDSs) to be produced by the Consultation (hereinafter referred to as ‘the guidelines’), subject to any revisions or alterations the participants deemed necessary.
5. The meeting was called to order by Ms Jackie Alder, Chief, Products, Trade and Marketing Branch, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department. In her address to the Consultation, Ms Alder acknowledged the usefulness of CDSs in combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and in improving the traceability of fish and fishery products.
6. The opening statement was delivered by Dr Audun Lem, Deputy Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Economics Division, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department. Dr Lem thanked the participants for their attendance and reminded them that they were attending in their individual capacities only. He also thanked the Government of Norway and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) for their support and assistance in convening the Consultation. He recalled the concerns and recommendations of the UN General Assembly, expressed in the Resolution on Sustainable Fisheries of 2009, and those of COFI on IUU fishing – and the important role of trade-based measures such as CDSs in combatting those activities. The full text of Dr Lem’s statement is attached as Appendix C.
7. Dr Ahmed Al-Mazouri was elected Chairperson of the session. Dr Christopher Rogers was subsequently elected Rapporteur.
8. The agenda, attached as Appendix A, was adopted by the Consultation.

BACKGROUND TO THE CONVENING OF THE CONSULTATION

9. The original impetus for convening the Consultation was the call to states to initiate within FAO the elaboration of guidelines and other relevant criteria for CDSs, including possible formats,

expressed in the UN General Assembly Resolution on Sustainable Fisheries of 9 December 2013,¹ hereinafter referred to as ‘the resolution’.

10. FAO convened the Consultation subsequent to the thirty-first session of COFI (Rome, 9–13 June 2014), which noted the request of the UN General Assembly.² COFI “recognized that FAO would undertake to elaborate guidelines and other relevant criteria relating to catch documentation schemes, including possible formats, based on the following principles: (a) conformity with the provisions of relevant international law; (b) not create unnecessary barriers to trade; (c) equivalence; (d) risk-based; (e) reliable, simple, clear and transparent; and (f) electronic if possible The assessment of schemes and formats would include cost-benefit considerations and take into account catch documentation schemes already implemented by certain Members as well as by [regional fisheries management organizations] (RFMOs).”³

PRESENTATIONS OF BACKGROUND STUDY AND CITES E-PERMITTING SYSTEM

11. Directly following the opening of the session, Mr Francisco Blaha, consultant to the FAO Secretariat, presented the salient features of the background paper, Catch documentation schemes and the impact assessment. The paper incorporated, *inter alia*: a review of CDSs and related systems currently in place or in development;⁴ an exposition of the form and function of risk assessment processes in the context of CDSs; an overview of the impact of present schemes; and a discussion of the role of catch documentation as a traceability mechanism.

12. Mr Marcos R. Silva, Chief, Knowledge Management and Outreach Services, CITES, offered a presentation on the CITES E-Permitting System to provide an overview and to initiate discussion among participants on the form and function of the system and the specific elements that might – through the recommendations contained in the guidelines – inform the processes and practices associated with CDS development and implementation.

DISCUSSION OF INITIAL DRAFT CATCH DOCUMENTATION AND CERTIFICATION GUIDELINES AND PROPOSED REVISIONS

13. Participants were invited to offer comments on the consultants’ initial draft of the guidelines, and to put forward proposals for the Consultation’s consideration on revision or alteration of the document.

14. Before any further elaboration of the content of the guidelines, the Consultation agreed on the need to revise the basic structure of the text and to establish a table of contents outlining the order and titles of distinct sections, in order to ensure the inclusion of all necessary components of such a document. To this end, one of the experts submitted an alternative text to inform the discussion on the components of the guidelines to be developed.

15. In particular, the Consultation collectively decided on the inclusion of distinct sections in which the purpose and scope of the guidelines (Section 2 of the guidelines attached in Appendix D), their objective (Section 3), and definitions of technical terms (Section 4) are clearly established in unambiguous terms. Section 4 includes, *inter alia*, clear definitions of ‘catch documentation scheme’

¹ United Nations, Resolution A/RES/68/71 – Sustainable fisheries. Adopted by the UN General Assembly without a vote on 9 December 2013 (New York, 2013), paragraph 68.

² FAO, Report of the thirty-first session of the Committee on Fisheries. Rome, 9–13 June 2014. C2015/23 (Rome, 2014), paragraph 59.

³ FAO, Report of the thirty-first session of the Committee on Fisheries. Rome, 9–13 June 2014. C2015/23 (Rome, 2014), paragraph 60.

⁴ Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) CDS, Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) Toothfish CDS, International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) Bluefin Tuna CDS, European Union (EU) IUU catch certification schemes, a draft ASEAN CDS, and the CITES E-Permitting System.

and its two primary documents: ‘catch certificate’ and ‘trade certificate’. These sections were deemed necessary to minimize potential misinterpretation and misapplication of the guidelines.

16. As both the background document and the initial draft guidelines differentiated between RFMO-driven CDSs, market-driven schemes and potential cooperative schemes, the Consultation considered the utility of such differentiation in the development of general guidelines. It determined that the guidelines should be drafted to be potentially applicable to all situations in which a CDS would be effective in combatting IUU fishing, regardless of the interests or focus of the entity or entities initiating development of the CDS. Consequently, the guidelines were drafted without differentiating among the potential factors or circumstances that may drive interest in implementing a CDS.

17. During the course of the background study conducted for the Consultation, the COFI Bureau decided to remove ‘harmonization’ from the scope initially specified in the Report of the thirty-first session of the Committee on Fisheries.⁵ However, at the discretion of the Consultation, the term has been included in the guidelines, both as part of the section covering the purpose and scope of the guidelines (Section 2) and as part of the statement of the objective (Section 3), recognizing the overarching aim of any guidelines with broad applicability. It was also noted that the consideration of existing schemes and their possible enhancement could lead to harmonization.

18. A discussion took place on the scope of the guidelines with regard to the possibility and advisability of including elements specifically relating to in-country traceability systems, in addition to those elements relating to certification and traceability of catch entering international trade. Given the variety and complexity of in-country traceability systems – and the associated difficulty of developing guidelines, within the available time frame, that provide broadly applicable and practically useful recommendations for the development and implementation of such systems – it was decided to restrict the scope of the guidelines to certification of catch at the unloading stage and to the associated trade certification requirements when fish and fishery products enter international trade.

19. Given the established advantages and current rate and direction of technological progress in this area, the Consultation stressed the desirability of promoting development and implementation of electronic CDSs, either through the conversion of existing paper-based schemes or as entirely new schemes, and proposed that this point be reflected in the guidelines. Part (f) of Section 6 states that “Electronic systems and formats should be used to reduce the risk of falsification, facilitate documentation flow and provide greater flexibility in information requirements.” Section 8 elaborates further on e-CDSs.

20. The Consultation agreed on the advisability of including a section outlining the special requirements of developing states in terms of their capacity to effectively implement the guidelines, particularly with regard to electronic issuance of catch documentation (Section 7). Specifically, Section 7.2 encourages countries, relevant international organizations (whether governmental or non-governmental) and financial institutions (either individually or through coordination) to provide assistance and help build the capacity of developing countries to implement the guidelines effectively – including through financial and technical assistance, technology transfer and training.

21. The Consultation proposed two further principles on which the guidelines are to be based, in addition to the six put forward by COFI: (g) traceability of fish and fishery products throughout the supply chain; and (h) close cooperation between all states involved in the supply chain from catch to market. The Consultation elaborated on application of the principles in Section 6 of Appendix D, to provide guidance on the consideration of each principle in the design and specification of a CDS.

⁵ FAO, Report of the thirty-first session of the Committee on Fisheries. Rome, 9–13 June 2014. C2015/23 (Rome, 2014), paragraph 58.

22. Following extended discussion, the Consultation decided to define the scope of the guidelines in broad terms with regard to the types of fisheries to which the document is applicable. Specifically, it was emphasized that the term ‘wild capture fisheries’, as it is used in the guidelines, refers to both inland and marine capture fisheries. Thus development and implementation of CDSs intended for fish species inhabiting either (or both) of these aquatic environments can be based on the same guidelines.

23. In-depth debate took place during the course of the Consultation on a number of issues, and divergent views remained following closure of the session. In particular, one expert noted that cost-benefit considerations had not been undertaken when elaborating the draft guidelines. Moreover, this expert was of the opinion that the guidelines were now providing for special regimes and catch certificate design, rather than providing a framework for international guidelines that could fit globally. This opinion was not shared by the other experts in the Consultation.

PROPOSED DRAFT VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES FOR CDSs AND FOLLOW-UP

24. The draft voluntary guidelines for catch documentation schemes, attached as Appendix D of this report, represent the primary output of the Expert Consultation. The content is divided into nine sections, reflecting the structure deemed most appropriate for organizing the content and ensuring inclusion of all necessary components. In order, the sections are:

1. **Preamble** – containing the relevant background and impetus for formulation of the guidelines;
2. **Purpose and scope** – declaring the voluntary nature of the guidelines, their purpose and the scope of their application;
3. **Objective** – establishing the core objective of the guidelines;
4. **Definitions** – establishing a set of definitions that clarify key terms used;
5. **Principles** – outlining the set of eight underlying principles on which the guidelines are based;
6. **Application of basic principles** – offering guidance as to the application of the stated principles;
7. **Special requirements of developing states** – outlining the special requirements of developing countries in terms of their capacities to implement the guidelines;
8. **CDS recommended standards and functions** – providing a set of recommendations on specific elements that a CDS should incorporate;
9. **Data requirements/formats** – offering guidance on the data elements that should be included in a CDS.

25. The Consultation agreed by consensus to submit the guidelines to COFI-FT for review and consideration of next steps.

APPENDIX A

Agenda and timetable

Tuesday, 21 July 2015

Morning

09.00–09.45	Arrival and registration
09.45–10.15	Welcome by Audun Lem (Deputy Director, FIP, FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department)
	Introduction of participants
10.15–10.30	Nomination of Chairperson of the meeting
	Designation of Rapporteur
10.30–10.45	Adoption of the agenda
10.45–11.15	Coffee break
11.15–12.00	Presentation of the background paper
12.00–14.00	Lunch break

Afternoon

14.00–15.30	Discussion of the background paper
15.30–16.00	Coffee break
16.00–17.00	Discussion of the background paper (cont.)

Wednesday, 22 July 2015

Morning

09.00–10.30	Discussion on the purpose and function of the guidelines
10.30–11.00	Coffee break
11.00–12.00	Presentation of the draft guidelines
12.00–14.00	Lunch break

Afternoon

14.00–15.30	Further elaboration on elements of the guidelines
15.30–16.00	Coffee break
16.00–17.00	Further elaboration on the guidelines

Thursday, 23 July 2015

Morning

09.00–10.30	Further elaboration on the guidelines (cont.)
10.30–11.00	Coffee break
11.00–12.00	Presentation on the CITES E-Permitting System by Mr Marcos Regis Silva (Chief, Knowledge Management and Outreach Services, CITES Secretariat)
12.00–14.00	Lunch break

Afternoon

14.00–15.30	Further elaboration on the guidelines (cont.)
15.30–16.00	Coffee break
16.00–18.00	Further elaboration on the guidelines (cont.)

Friday, 24 July 2015**Morning**

08.00–10.30	Further elaboration on the guidelines (cont.)
10.30–11.00	Coffee break
11.00–12.00	Further elaboration on the guidelines (cont.)
12.00–13.30	Lunch break

Afternoon

13.30–19.30	Further elaboration on the guidelines (cont.) Adoption of final report/closing of meeting
-------------	--

APPENDIX B

List of participants

Experts

David Agnew

Standards Director
Marine Stewardship Council
Marine House
1 Snow Hill
London EC1A 2DH
United Kingdom
E-mail: david.agnew@msc.org

Hilde Ognedal

Senior Legal Adviser
The Norwegian Directorate of Fisheries
Postboks 185 Sentrum
5804 Bergen
Norway
E-mail: hilde.ognedal@fiskeridir.no

Christopher Rogers

Division Chief
Trade and Marine Stewardship
Office of International Affairs and Seafood
Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
US Department of Commerce (Room 10633)
1315 East West Highway
Silver Spring
Maryland 20910
USA
E-mail: christopher.rogers@noaa.gov

Isabelle Perret

Policy Officer
Fisheries Control Policy
DG MARE
European Commission
Brussels
Belgium
E-mail: isabelle.perret@ec.europa.eu

Sarah Lenel

Fishery Monitoring and Compliance Manager
Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic
Marine Living Resources
181 Macquarie St.
Hobart, TAS 7000
Australia
E-mail: sarah.lenel@ccamlr.org

Jianye Tang

Associate Professor
Shanghai Ocean University
999 Hucheng Huan Road
Pudong New District
Shanghai 201306
People's Republic of China
E-mail: jytang@shou.edu.cn

Siriraksophon Somboon

Policy and Program Coordinator
SEAFDEC Secretariat
50 Department of Fisheries
Ladyao
Chatuchak
Bangkok 10900
Thailand
E-mail: ssiriraksophon63@gmail.com

Ahmed Al-Mazouri

Director General
Fisheries Resources Development
Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
Sultanate of Oman
E-mail: ahmed.almazrui20@gmail.com

Resource people

Mauricio Remes Lenicov

Director de Control y Fiscalización
Subsecretaría de Pesca y Acuicultura
Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Pesca
Buenos Aires
Argentina
E-mail: mauriciorele@yahoo.com.ar

Mark Oates

Manager
Quick Access Computing Pty Ltd
257 Whian Road
Eureka NSW 2480
Australia
E-mail: mark@ifims.com

Gilles Hosch

Fisheries Consultant
9 via Edmondo de Amicis
I-43044 San Martino Sinzano (PR)
Italy
E-mail: gilles.hosch@fao.org

Nichol Elizabeth

General Manager
 Pioneer Food Cannery Ltd
 P.O. Box 40
 Fishing Port Exit Gate Newtown
 Tema
 Ghana
 E-mail: nichol.elizabeth@mwbrands.com

Marcos R. Silva

Chief, Knowledge Management and Outreach Services
 CITES
 E-mail: marcos.silva@cites.org

Daniel Kachelriess

Marine Species Officer
 CITES
 E-mail: daniel.kachelriess@cites.org

Christiane Klahr

Policy Officer IUU
 Fisheries Control Policy
 DG MARE
 European Commission
 Brussels
 Belgium
 E-mail: christiane.klahr@ec.europa.eu

Secretariat***FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department***

Audun Lem
 Deputy Director
 Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Economics Division
 E-mail: audun.lem@fao.org

Jacqueline Alder
 Chief
 Products, Trade and Marketing Branch
 E-mail: jacqueline.alder@fao.org

Nianjun Shen
 Fishery Industry Officer
 Products, Trade and Marketing Branch
 E-mail: nianjun.shen@fao.org

Jiaxi Wang
 Junior Professional Officer
 Fishing Operations and Technology Branch
 E-mail: jiaxi.wang@fao.org

Alastair Macfarlane
 Consultant
 E-mail: alastair.macfarlane@seafood.org.nz

Francisco Blaha
 Consultant
 E-mail: franciscoblaha@mac.com

Felix Dent
 Consultant
 Products, Trade and Marketing Branch
 E-mail: felix.dent@fao.org

Dayana Fernandes Muzzetto
Secretariat Assistant
Products, Trade and Marketing Branch
E-mail: dayana.fernandesmuzzetto@fao.org

Helene Ringen
Secretariat Assistant
Products, Trade and Marketing Branch
E-mail: helen.ringen@fao.org

Juliana Herrera Correal
Secretariat Assistant
Products, Trade and Marketing Branch
E-mail: Juliana.HerreraCorreal@fao.org

APPENDIX C

Opening statement by Mr Audun Lem, Deputy Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Economics Division, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to Rome and to FAO. I'm very grateful that you have accepted to serve as experts in this Consultation.

Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing remains one of the greatest threats to aquatic ecosystems, undermining national and regional efforts to manage fisheries sustainably and conserve aquatic biodiversity. Trade-based measures are one of a number of monitoring, control and surveillance tools for combating IUU fishing activities. One important type of trade-based measure is the catch and trade documentation schemes developed by regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs). As these schemes continue to evolve, they are being supplemented by other nationally or regionally based documentation systems, such as the European Union (EU) regulation to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing.

On 9 December 2013, the sixty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Resolution on Sustainable Fisheries. The General Assembly welcomed the ongoing work of FAO in the development of best practice guidelines for catch documentation schemes (CDSs) and traceability, and it called on states to initiate within FAO as soon as possible the elaboration of guidelines and other relevant criteria for catch documentation schemes, including possible formats.

The FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI), in its thirty-first session in Rome, 9–13 June 2014, stipulated future work relating to the harmonization of CDSs. It noted their usefulness in combating IUU fishing and welcomed initiatives to harmonize current schemes. The Committee also took note of the UN General Assembly resolution and welcomed the offer by Norway to support the convening of an expert consultation. It recognized that FAO would undertake to elaborate guidelines and other relevant criteria for CDSs, including possible formats, based on six principles. The Committee requested that the assessment of schemes and formats include cost-benefit considerations and take into account CDSs already existing in certain Member States, member organizations and in the context of RFMOs.

Finally, with the generous support of the Norwegian Government, we are able to organize the Expert Consultation on Catch Documentation Schemes. During the Consultation, you are expected to review the current status of CDSs and assess their impact. At the end of the meeting, the draft guidelines will be reviewed, improved and submitted for adoption to the fifteenth session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade to be held in Morocco early next year.

For those of you not familiar with FAO rules and procedures, I should clarify that participants in an expert consultation attend in their individual capacities and not as representatives of their governments or organizations.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks to the Government of Norway and to CITES for providing the funds necessary to hold this Consultation. I wish you fruitful deliberations over the coming days and look forward with interest to the results of your work.

I hope you have an enjoyable stay in Rome, despite all the work to be done.

Thank you very much, Ladies and Gentlemen, for your attention.

APPENDIX D

DRAFT

Voluntary guidelines for catch documentation schemes

1. Preamble

1.1 The FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI), at its thirty-first session in Rome, Italy, 9–13 June 2014, took note of paragraph 68 of the UN General Assembly Resolution on Sustainable Fisheries of 9 December 2013, and acknowledged the usefulness of catch documentation schemes (CDSs) in combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. The Committee recognized the benefit of elaborating guidelines and other relevant criteria for CDSs, including possible formats, based on principles of, *inter alia*, conformity with trade agreements, transparency, risk assessment, cost-benefit analysis and application of electronic data management.

1.2 COFI convened an expert consultation on the issue, taking into account CDSs already existing in some Member States, member organizations and in the context of regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs), with the aim of adopting the guidelines at its thirty-second session.

1.3 It is acknowledged that CDSs contribute to efforts to combat IUU fishing and provide an effective mechanism for identifying the origin of fish caught and reported in these schemes. Moreover, they assist in assuring that the fish were harvested in a manner consistent with relevant national, regional and international conservation and management measures.

2. Purpose and scope

2.1 The guidelines are voluntary. Their purpose is to provide guidance to states, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and other stakeholders in the development, implementation, review, harmonization and enhancement of CDSs for wild capture fisheries.

2.2 The scope of these guidelines applies to all wild-capture fish and fishery products landed and/or traded by states and deemed to require a CDS. They provide special consideration of the needs of developing states and small-scale fisheries in this regard.

2.3 The guidelines provide guidance in CDS development, including, *inter alia*, principles, standards, functions, data requirements and formats. They have been informed by the current best practices of established CDSs.

3. Objective

3.1 The main objective of the guidelines is to set the basic principles, recommended standards and functions that should be taken into consideration in the development, implementation, review, harmonization and enhancement of CDSs by states and IGOs.

4. Definitions

4.1 **Catch documentation scheme** – a system that tracks and traces fish from the point of capture through unloading and throughout the supply chain. A CDS records and certifies information that identifies the origin of fish caught and ensures they were harvested in a manner consistent with relevant national, regional and international conservation and management measures. The objective of the CDS is to combat IUU fishing by limiting access of IUU fish and fishery products to markets.

4.2 **Catch certificate** – an official document that records information on the harvesting and unloading of fish and includes the minimum data required by the guidelines.

4.3 **Trade certificate** – an official document that records information on the trading of fish and fishery products. It includes the minimum data required by the guidelines and may include details of processing.

4.4 **Fish and fishery products** – this term includes all species of living aquatic resources, whether processed or not.

4.5 **Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing** – the activities set out in paragraph 3 of FAO's 2001 International plan of action to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, hereinafter referred to as 'IUU fishing'.

4.6 **Landing** – the movement of fish and fishery products in any form from a vessel to dockside in a port or free-trade zone, even if subsequently transferred to another vessel.

4.7 **Supply chain** – a sequence of processes involved in the production and distribution of fish and fishery products from the point of capture to the end market. It includes fishing vessels, processors and distributors.

4.8 **Traceability** – the ability to follow the movement of fish and fishery products through specified stages of capture, processing and distribution.

4.9 **Trans-shipment** – the transfer of fish that have not previously been landed from one vessel directly to another, either at sea or in port. The offload or transfer in port of fish from a vessel to a container is a 'landing' within the definition in these guidelines.

4.10 **Unloading** – the movement of fish from a fishing vessel either by landing, transfer to tow or farm cages of live fish, or the trans-shipment of fish and fishery products.

4.11 **Fishing vessel** – any vessel of any size used for, equipped for use for, or intended for use for the purposes of fishing or fishing-related activities, including support vessels, fish-processing vessels, vessels engaged in trans-shipment and carrier vessels equipped for the transportation of fishery products, except container vessels.

4.12 **Wild capture fisheries** – this term includes any fish caught for commercial purposes from marine or freshwater areas.

5. Principles

5.1 The guidelines are based on the following principles:

- (a) conformity with the provisions of relevant international law;
- (b) not create unnecessary barriers to trade;
- (c) equivalence;
- (d) risk-based;
- (e) reliable, simple, clear and transparent;
- (f) electronic, if possible;
- (g) traceability of fish and fishery products throughout the supply chain; and
- (h) close cooperation between all states involved in the supply chain from catch to market.

6. Application of the principles

6.1 Application of the principles set out in Section 5 should be guided by the following:

- (a) Any measure taken should be consistent with the rights and obligations established by international law, in particular World Trade Organization agreements and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and should take into account the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.
- (b) When measures are introduced, the least trade-restrictive measures should be chosen to achieve the CDS objective.
- (c) Measures should be non-discriminatory and ensure that domestic and imported fish are not treated differently in the interests of even-handedness. Diverse certification schemes can provide equivalent outcomes for the purpose of international trade.
- (d) The scope and requirements of a CDS should be proportionate to the risk that IUU fishing poses to stocks and legitimate economic activities and of the introduction of IUU fish and fishery products to markets.

Risk assessment and management should include systematic identification of all risks and the implementation of all necessary measures for limiting exposure to those risks. This includes activities such as collecting data and information, analysing and assessing risk, prescribing and taking action, including regular monitoring and review, and consideration of:

- (i) effectiveness of existing monitoring, control and surveillance measures;
- (ii) risk of IUU activities by vessels and by area, and of the introduction of IUU fish and fishery products into the supply chain from catch to market;
- (iii) risk of IUU activity by vessels not operating under effective flag-state control;
- (iv) risk that the vessels in question are flying the flag of a state that has not implemented applicable international obligations.

Consideration is also needed of the impact of IUU fishing on:

- (i) biological status of the fish stock, in particular if overfished or in danger of being overfished;
- (ii) effectiveness of conservation and management measures;
- (iii) fishers' incomes, livelihoods and markets.

Based on this risk assessment process, priority should be given to situations in which implementation of a CDS is deemed an effective means of combating IUU fishing. In particular, CDS should be considered in high-risk fisheries.

- (e) Catch certificates should only contain verifiable information that is relevant, necessary and readily available. The certificate should be user-friendly, simple and clear so as to facilitate the inclusion of correct information in the document. A proposed measure should be notified, and a reasonable time should be allowed for comments before the measure is adopted. Adopted measures should be made available publicly.
- (f) Electronic systems and formats should be used to reduce the risk of falsification, facilitate documentation flow and provide greater flexibility in information requirements.
- (g) CDSs should enable fish and fishery products to be traced from catch to market.
- (h) CDSs are most effective when states involved in the supply chain cooperate in the scheme. States should seek wide multilateral engagement in development and implementation, bearing in mind their obligations to cooperate under international agreements.

7. Special requirements of developing states

7.1 The capacity of developing countries to implement the recommendations of these guidelines should be taken into account by other countries.

7.2 In this sense – and in order to achieve the objectives of the guidelines and support their effective implementation, especially regarding the electronic issuance of catch documentation – countries, relevant international organizations (whether governmental or non-governmental) and financial institutions are encouraged (individually or through coordination) to provide assistance and capacity-building to developing countries (including financial and technical assistance, technology transfer and training).

8. CDS recommended standards and functions

- **Definition of CDS objective**

A CDS should have a clear objective, enabling determination of the functions required. It should be designed to meet its objective and minimize the burden on users.

- **Definition of traceability standard**

A CDS should define the standard of traceability required to meet its objective. The traceability standard should define which segments of the supply chain are covered and to what level of detail.

- **Specified MCS controls**

Vessels participating in a CDS should be authorized/licensed by the flag state, and coastal state if applicable. A CDS should be supported by the use of monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) tools and other available information, including, *inter alia*, logbooks, vessel monitoring systems, observer data, etc.

- **e-CDS**

CDSs should be designed as centralized electronic systems (e-CDSs). The e-CDS should serve as the point of generation, issuance, validation and verification of all catch and trade certificates and should function as the repository of CDS data.

e-CDSs should minimize the burden on users throughout the supply chain. They require development of secure user access.

- **Data exchange and standards**

A CDS should adhere to global standards of information exchange and data management. Where participating states develop independent e-CDS components, they should be designed to ensure interoperability and be based on agreed international standards and formats.

- **Data input and validation**

A CDS should define roles and responsibilities for data input and validation. The private sector should initiate CDS certificates by supplying all relevant data, validated by the competent authorities (CAs), thus eliminating as far as possible the use of paper and double handling and rekeying of data.

- **Access control and defined user roles**

Access to an e-CDS should be defined and controlled through a hierarchical system of user logins and passwords that determine which parts, functions and levels of the system individual users or users' groups may access.

- **e-CDS functions and functionalities**

An e-CDS should provide functionality that allows users to interact with it through a flexible and user-friendly interface. Such functions may include, among others, routines for: recalling and rectifying certificates, printing out certificates physically, uploading scanned documentation (e.g. commercial invoices) along with data submission, or allowing private- and public-sector users to query and analyse those data accessible to them.

- **Timing of certificate issuance**

A CDS should clearly define at what points in the supply chain the initiation of certificates should be triggered. The basic principle that no catch must move to the next step in the supply chain without being covered by a certificate ought to apply as far as practically feasible, so as to minimize gaps and avenues of fraud in the system.

In general terms, and without prejudice to differences in supply chain dynamics in diverse fisheries, the adequate point in time to create the catch certificate is before unloading of the catch from the fishing vessel, while, in trade, the adequate point in time to create a trade certificate is when a consignment is being prepared for shipment and may still be inspected.

- **Document numbering**

A CDS should have system-generated, unique document numbering.

- **Competent authorities, validation and validation rules**

The primary responsibility for validation of catch certificates should remain with the flag state in all cases.

In the case of trade certificates, validation should be limited to CAs of the states that are part of the supply chain (flag, port, coastal, processing or marketing).

Cooperation mechanisms should be implemented among states to overcome problems at the time of issuance of the certificate, such as missing information, or to enhance guarantees in connection with legal status or the provenance of fish.

Supply chain CAs should be formally notified to the operator of the CDS system, and contact details should be publicly available.

- **Estimated and verified weights**

A CDS should provide processes covering unloadings in those fisheries in which they are made on the basis of estimated weights (e.g. tuna purse-seine fisheries). In such fisheries, the documentation system should provide mechanisms for following the unloaded batches – including through potential splits – all the way to the point in the supply chain in which the verified weights may be established, logged, and the final catch certificate issued and validated on the basis of verified weights.

- **Document system**

A CDS should have catch certificates and trade certificates that establish a link between the products recorded in the certificates. Other documentation may supplement certificates throughout the supply chain to ensure traceability (e.g. transport documents). Specific formats may be designed to accommodate small-scale fisheries.

- **Document system and conformance with supply chain mapping**

Before designing a CDS for a particular fishery – or set of fisheries – an exercise in supply chain mapping is strongly recommended to appraise existing supply chain dynamics. This map provides guidance on which supply chain events – or combination of events – the document system must accommodate. Events that add complexity to supply chains, and that may require special rules and mechanisms for data logging and validation, include trans-shipments, serial trans-shipments, split landings, split transfers, landings of fish on the basis of estimated weights only, grouping of batches, etc.

The CDS system must effectively accommodate current and future likely supply chain scenarios.

- **Certificate models**

Printed versions of catch and trade certificates should be based on a standard model that conforms to international standards for document formats.

- **Oversight (national, RFMO)**

A CDS requires oversight, ensuring that data are monitored and discrepancies detected. The primary onus of oversight should rest at the national level, in line with the responsibilities of flag, coastal, port, processing and market states, as defined in the CDS.

As applicable, a second level of oversight may apply at the regional level, monitoring the consistency of data flows throughout the supply chain. Data both accessed and used – and possibly published at state and regional levels to inform oversight exercises – must respect the rules of data confidentiality.

The CDS should provide guidance to states, RFMOs and/or other stakeholders on what measures of enforcement and sanctioning could be applied.

The CA should not permit entry of fish and fishery products covered by a CDS into the territory of any state without a certificate validated by the relevant CA of the supplying state.

- **Data confidentiality and protection rules**

A CDS requires standards of confidentiality and protection of data. Data of commercial and/or national sensitivity should be provided the highest level of protection under the applicable data protection rules, and mechanisms should be defined to provide access to protected data in aggregated forms. The CDS should be designed to prevent unauthorized access and protect against data loss.

- **Engagement of states not participating in a CDS**

A CDS should include a process for identifying states not participating in the CDS, but engaged in the harvest and/or trade of fish to which the CDS applies. It should promote cooperation with the non-participating states in voluntary implementation of the CDS – involving formal dialogue, information-sharing arrangements and capacity-building initiatives. The process of voluntary implementation of a CDS by a non-participating state should be incremental, cost-effective and supported by those states that do implement the CDS.

- **Exemptions (product types)**

A CDS should define what types of products are exempted from the CDS.

- **Coverage (species)**

A CDS should specify which fish species it covers, acknowledging that a CDS may cover multiple species.

- **Mass balance and reconciliation**

A CDS may include monitoring of mass balance. If mass balance reconciliation indicates inconsistencies in the supply chain, the oversight and follow-up mechanisms referred to above should be triggered to address potential compliance issues.

- **Yield-factor monitoring and definition of weights**

In order to enable mass balance reconciliation, yield factors should be considered. A CDS should define what units of measurement and product weights are to be used in certificates throughout the supply chain.

- **Future technologies**

Each CDS should consider the application of future technologies.

- **User manual/training**

User manuals must describe the operation of the CDS and, ideally, should be tailored to individual users' groups and written in the languages of those groups. Appropriate levels of training should be provided to users of the CDS.

- **Operative languages**

Due consideration should be given to the operative languages necessary to the efficient and effective functioning of the CDS.

9. Data requirements/formats

9.1. A CDS should include, as a minimum, the following data elements:

Catch certificate

- Unique, secure document number
- Identity and contact details of issuing competent authority (e.g. name, address, phone, e-mail)
- Identity of fishing vessel (e.g. name, flag, registration number, unique vessel identifier, call sign)
- Fishing dates (from ... to)
- Description of fish (e.g. species, area caught, product form, weight [kg])
- Unloading details (e.g. port/location, trans-shipment)

Trade certificate

- Unique, secure document number
- Previous trade certificate number (if applicable)
- Originating catch certificate number
- Identity and contact details of issuing competent authority (e.g. name, address, telephone, e-mail)
- Identity and contact details of exporter (e.g. name, address, telephone, e-mail)
- Date of export
- Description of fishery products exported (e.g. species, product type, weight of fish before processing, processed weight exported [kg])
- Identity and contact details of importer (e.g. name, address, telephone, e-mail)
- Transport details

The UN General Assembly Resolution on Sustainable Fisheries of 9 December 2013 calls on states, *inter alia*, to initiate as soon as possible within FAO the elaboration of guidelines and other relevant criteria for catch documentation schemes (CDSs). In response to this request, as expressed in paragraph 68 of the resolution, the thirty-first session of FAO's Committee on Fisheries (COFI) (Rome, 9–13 June 2014) proposed that FAO undertake the elaboration of such guidelines for CDSs, including possible formats, based on six specific principles. The Committee further stipulated that the assessment of schemes and formats would include cost-benefit considerations and take into account CDSs already implemented by some Member States and regional fisheries management organizations.

The Expert Consultation on Catch Document Schemes was subsequently convened by FAO, with the support of Norway, in Rome, 21–24 July 2015. The Consultation was tasked with developing draft voluntary guidelines, in accordance with the six principles, to be submitted for adoption at the thirty-second session of COFI subject to prior review by the fifteenth session of the COFI Sub-committee on Fish Trade and further technical consultation processes as deemed appropriate. The draft CDS guidelines, attached as Appendix D of this report, represent the primary output of the Consultation. The content is divided into nine sections: Preamble, Purpose and scope, Objective, Definitions, Principles, Application of basic principles, Special requirements of developing states, CDS recommended standards and functions, and Data requirements/formats.