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**REGIONAL WORKSHOPS ON AWARENESS BUILDING IN  
FISHERIES ECOLABELLING, AQUACULTURE CERTIFICATION,  
CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT AND BENCHMARKING**

**Cape Town, South Africa, 5–6 August 2015  
Bangkok, Thailand, 31 August–1 September 2015  
Santiago, Chile, 8–9 September 2015**



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**PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT**

This document was prepared by the Aquaculture Branch of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department of FAO based on the outcomes of the three regional workshops on awareness building on fisheries ecolabelling, aquaculture certification, conformity assessment and benchmarking held in Cape Town, South Africa, 5–6 August 2015; Bangkok, Thailand, 31 August–1 September 2015; and Santiago, Chile, 8–9 September 2015.

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#### ABSTRACT

This document consists of reports of three regional workshops held in Africa, Asia and Latin America, with the view to address the concerns raised by the Members during approval of the Evaluation Framework to assess the conformity of public and private certification schemes with the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification, at the Seventh Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries' Sub-Committee on Aquaculture (COFI:AQ), held in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, from 7–11 October 2013. The regional workshops also endeavoured to increase the awareness of the FAO Guidelines and the Conformity Assessment Frameworks and the GSSI Global Benchmark Tool among stakeholders.

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**ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

CCRF	Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
COFI	FAO Committee on Fisheries
COFI:AQ	FAO Committee on Fisheries' Sub-Committee on Aquaculture
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FI	FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department
ISO	International Organization for Standards
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU-IBAR	African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources



## **BACKGROUND**

### **Seafood certification**

Driven by concerns that some forms of aquaculture and fisheries are environmentally unsustainable, socially inequitable and that products are not safe for consumers, there have been attempts, over the years, to respond to the consequent public perceptions and market requirements. In this regard, food safety standards were elevated and international trade regulations tightened. Policy and regulations governing environmental sustainability were put in place in many countries, requiring aquaculture producers and fisheries to comply with more stringent environmental mitigation and protection measures. In order to respond to these environmental and consumer concerns and to secure better market access, there is increasing interest in the certification of seafood.

Seafood certification schemes are being developed and implemented at international and country levels. The certification of aquaculture farms, inputs and marketing, wild capture fisheries and processors is being introduced, either individually or in a coordinated manner, to credibly demonstrate that production and harvesting practices are not polluting, disease transmitting, ecologically threatening and/or socially irresponsible. Some countries are attempting to introduce state-mediated certification procedures to certify that aquaculture and wild capture fisheries products are safe to consume and farmed or harvested in accordance with certain environmental and social standards.

### **FAO Guidelines**

After a transparent and exhaustive consultative process, FAO developed three guidelines for seafood certification:

1. FAO Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries, originally adopted by the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in 2005, were adopted in revised form by the Twenty-eighth Session of COFI in 2009.
2. FAO Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Inland Capture Fisheries, adopted by the 29<sup>th</sup> session of the COFI in February 2011.
3. Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification, which were approved by the fifth session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries' Sub-Committee on Aquaculture (COFI:AQ), held in Phuket, Thailand from 27 September to 1 October 2010 and subsequently endorsed by the 29<sup>th</sup> session of the COFI in February 2011.

### **Conformity assessment frameworks**

Responding to the requests made by Members at COFI and COFI:AQ FAO developed an evaluation framework for assessing the conformity of ecolabelling schemes against FAO Guidelines on ecolabelling of fish and fishery products and an Evaluation Framework to assess the conformity of public and private certification schemes with the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification.

### **Conformity assessment framework for aquaculture certification schemes**

This Evaluation Framework was developed in accordance with the minimum criteria and requirements set out in the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification. Aquaculture stakeholders can use the Assessment Framework to evaluate aquaculture certification schemes against the criteria in the framework. Aquaculture certification schemes that meet the requirements set out in the Evaluation Framework should be considered as being in compliance with the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Session of the Sub-Committee, held in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, from 7–11 October 2013, approved the draft Evaluation Framework with reservations from some countries. The Sub-Committee stated that the draft Evaluation Framework should be a useful and comprehensive tool that includes all aspects necessary to assess compliance with the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification. The Sub-Committee stated that when implementing the Evaluation Framework international agencies such as World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Organisation on Animal Health (OIE) should be involved within their remits. Some Members expressed concerns regarding the Evaluation Framework. The concerns expressed by the Members are as follows:

- The implementation of the Evaluation Framework should not create technical barriers to trade, should be gradual in implementation with pilot phases at national and regional levels and should not affect resource limited smallholders;
- Adequate capacity development for implementation of the FAO Guidelines for Aquaculture certification should be ensured through FAO technical assistance mechanisms;
- Open ended questions in the Evaluation Framework should be linked to relevant international standards mentioned in the certification guidelines;
- The Evaluation Framework should be amended and revised as necessary, taking into consideration the knowledge gained during the implementation phase.

### **Current concerns on certification**

As seafood production increases to meet rising global demand, so have concerns of members of the seafood supply chain, consumers and NGOs over the impact that production is having on the environment. One way of providing assurances of more sustainable practices in both aquaculture production and wild capture fisheries is the use of seafood certification schemes. The increase of seafood certification schemes has led to confusion among producers, retailers and consumers over how to recognize a credible certification scheme. This confusion is making decision-making more difficult, and seafood costlier for everyone.

## **Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI)**

The Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI) is a unique global platform and partnership of seafood companies, NGOs, experts, governmental and intergovernmental organizations working towards more sustainable seafood for everyone. For the first time these parties have come up with a collective, non-competitive approach to provide clarity on seafood certification and ecolabelling, and ensure consumer confidence in certified seafood.

They have done this by creating a Global Benchmark Tool for seafood certification schemes, following at the heart of the process the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF), the FAO Guidelines for Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine/Inland Capture Fisheries and the FAO Technical Guidelines for Aquaculture Certification (FAO Guidelines).

GSSI's Global Benchmark Tool includes *GSSI Requirements* that are based on the CCRF and the FAO Guidelines and which seafood certification schemes must meet to be recognised by GSSI. GSSI has also created *GSSI Indicators*, which allows schemes to show their diverse approach and help stakeholders understand where differences between schemes may exist. These indicators are grounded in the CCRF and other related FAO documents, ISO normative standards and ISEAL codes.

This shared solution will make information available across the seafood supply chain to drive change and lower costs. For producers, it means more options to choose the scheme that is right for them and reduce the need for multiple audits to respond to customer requirements. For seafood buyers, it means simpler, more consistent data to guide their purchasing decisions. And for NGOs it means more open and checked information to support doing more to preserve the planet.

Through its Global Benchmark Tool GSSI works towards its collective objective to minimize the overall environmental impact of how we catch, grow and deliver seafood to meet a growing global demand.

## **FAO Aquaculture Certification Guidelines and GSSI's Global Benchmark Tool**

FAO member countries have approved the FAO Guidelines for Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine/Inland Capture Fisheries and the FAO Technical Guidelines for Aquaculture Certification (FAO Guidelines) and are currently engaged in implementing the FAO Guidelines in partnership with both public and private sectors and the civil society. FAO is a partner to GSSI and supports the development of a common benchmark tool for seafood certification schemes to create a level playing field. FAO affirms that the benchmark needs to be consistent with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) and the FAO Guidelines.

## **Proposed regional workshops**

With the financial assistance from the European Commission and organized in partnership between FAO, GSSI and a national competent authority, three regional workshops were held in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The purpose of the workshops was to address the concerns raised by the Members, and also to increase the awareness of the FAO Guidelines and the Conformity Assessment Frameworks and the GSSI Global Benchmark Tool among stakeholders.

### **REGIONAL WORKSHOP 1 – AFRICA**

The Africa Regional Workshop was hosted by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) South Africa. It was held at the DAFF Marine Research Aquarium Centre, Seapoint, Cape Town, South Africa during 5–6 August 2015. The workshop was participated by a group of public and private sector representatives from selected African countries and regional organisations See Appendix 1 for the list of participants. The workshop programme is given in the Appendix 2.

#### **Report of the Workshop 1**

The workshop was ceremonially opened by Ms Sphokazi Ndudane, the Deputy Director General Fisheries of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries South Africa.

The presentations made during the workshop is given in Appendix 2.

Following introductory remarks by FAO and GSSI, Dr Rohana Subasinghe explained the objectives of the workshop. Then Dr Kevern Cochran made presentation on the FAO's work on fisheries standards and certification. He explained the chronological sequence of events led to approval of the Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries. These Guidelines were adopted by FAO Member States in 2005 and further revised and approved in 2009. The Guidelines for Ecolabelling of Inland Capture Fisheries was adopted by COFI in 2011 and the same year Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification have also been adopted by COFI. The presentation addresses several important aspects of the Fisheries Ecolabelling Guidelines, including sustainability considerations, minimum substantive requirements, ecosystem considerations, and methodological diversity. Participants appreciated Dr Cochran's presentation as highly informative on the subject.

Dr Subasinghe made a presentation depicting the current status of global aquaculture, issues and concerns for the coming decades, and the robust consultative process led to the development and adoption of the Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification by the FAO membership in 2011.

## Scope of Guidelines:

- The Aquaculture Certification Guidelines provide guidance for the development, organization and implementation of credible aquaculture certification schemes.
- Guidelines should set forth the minimum substantive requirements and criteria for granting a certificate (certification) of an aquaculture system, practice, or a product.
- Certification schemes may apply additional or more stringent requirements and criteria.
- The guidelines consider a range of issues which should be considered relevant for the certification in aquaculture, including: a) animal health and welfare, b) food safety and quality, c) environmental integrity and/or d) social responsibility associated with aquaculture.
- An aquaculture certification scheme may address one or all of these issues.
- There is an extensive national and international legal framework in place for various aspects of aquaculture and its value chain, covering such issues as aquatic animal disease control, food safety and conservation of biodiversity.
- Legislation is particularly strong for processing, export and import of aquatic products. Recognised competent authorities are normally empowered to verify compliance with mandatory national and international legislation.
- Other issues such as environmental sustainability and social responsibility may not be covered in such a binding manner and open the opportunity for voluntary certification as a means to demonstrate that a particular aquaculture system is managed responsibly.
- Credible aquaculture certification schemes consist of three main components: standards, accreditation, and certification.
- The guidelines therefore cover: (i) standard setting processes required to develop and review certification standards; (ii) accreditation systems needed to provide formal recognition to a qualified body to carry out certification; and (iii) certification bodies required to verify compliance with certification standards.
- Developing and implementing a certification scheme may be undertaken by any entity qualified to do so in accordance with the requirements of these guidelines.
- The entities that may undertake standard setting, accreditation, or certification include, *inter alia*, Governments, NGOs, private sector groups (e.g. producer or trade associations), civil society arrangements, or consortia comprising some or all of these different stakeholder groups, as long as there is no conflict of interest for any of the entities involved.
- The guidelines provide information on the institutional and organisational arrangements, including governance requirements, for aquaculture certification.

Mr Mark Prein of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Germany presented the GIZ experience in value chain improvement through certification in fisheries and aquaculture. He explained several GIZ supported projects in different parts of the world, led and leading towards certification of fish and fishery products from those fisheries or production facilities.

Mr Herman Wise of the GSSI presented their experience and involvement in seafood certification. He explained the call, reasons and background for establishing GSSI. He presented the goals and objectives of GSSI. More sustainable seafood for everyone is the vision of GSSI and the mission of GSSI is to ensure confidence in the supply and promotion of certified seafood as well as to promote improvement in the seafood certification schemes. The objectives are to:

- Provide an international multistakeholder platform for collaboration and knowledge exchange in seafood sustainability.
- Develop an internationally agreed set of requirements and indicators to measure and compare the performance of seafood certification schemes, in order to facilitate their implementation and use.
- Build, operate and maintain a common, consistent and global benchmark tool for seafood certification schemes.

- Reduce cost by eliminating redundancy and improving operational efficiency of seafood certification schemes thereby increasing affordability and flexibility within the supply chain.

GISS does:

- Drive change towards sustainability through a multi-stakeholder process.
- Deliver recognition of seafood certification schemes aligned with the FAO Guidelines.
- Increase comparability and transparency in seafood certification.
- Enable informed choice for procurement of certified seafood.

GSSI does not:

- Undertake any accreditation or certification.
- Develop or own any standards.
- Rank certification schemes.
- Define sustainable or responsible seafood.
- Permit any consumer facing labelling about its recognition.
- Make policy for any business or scheme.

He also explained that GSSI is currently only focused on environmental issues. GSSI partners recognize the importance of social issues and the work of global organizations in this area. Going forward GSSI is committed to exploring how social issues may be addressed in the seafood supply chain.

Several presentations on national seafood certification experiences in Africa were made. Among those were Namibia, South Africa and Zambia. African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) also made a presentation on their programmes supporting responsible and equitable fish trade and marketing and how certification efforts will complement both national and AU-IBAR objectives in improving sustainable fish trade and marketing in Africa.

Following presentation of the review on seafood certification in Africa by Mr Blessing Mapfumo, FAO presented the consultative process led to the development of the evaluation framework for assessing conformity of public and private certification schemes with the FAO technical guidelines on aquaculture certification. The framework has been presented to the Seventh Session of the COFI:AQ held in St. Petersburg, Russia in 2013 and was approved with few remarks from some members. This workshop, first of a series of three, is held in response to the comments made by the members during COFI/AQ/VII and intends to bring broad advice and consensus to address the comments. The outcomes of the workshops will be presented to the Eighth Session of the COFI:AQ held in Brasilia, Brazil in October 2015.

GSSI informed the workshop that they are developing a Benchmark Tool, grounded in the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF), the FAO Guidelines for Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine/Inland Capture Fisheries and the FAO Technical Guidelines for Aquaculture Certification (FAO Guidelines). The Tool includes Essential Components that are based on the CCRF and the FAO Guidelines and which seafood certification schemes must meet to be recognized by GSSI. GSSI has also created Supplementary Components, which allows schemes to show their diverse approach and helps stakeholders understand where differences between schemes may exist. These Supplementary Components are grounded in the CCRF and related FAO documents, ISO normative standards and ISEAL codes.

Seafood certification schemes go through a seven step Benchmark Process to be recognized by GSSI. The expert led process involves objective assessments made against the Benchmark Framework. The process has been designed to be independent, impartial and transparent. The Benchmark Framework includes GSSI Essential Components which a seafood certification scheme must meet for recognition, and GSSI Supplementary Components which allow schemes to show their diverse approach and help stakeholders understand where differences exist.

Once a seafood certification scheme has gone through the Benchmark Process and is found in alignment with all GSSI Essential Components it will be publicly recognized by GSSI. GSSI will then publish a statement and a Benchmark Report.

During and following presentations, participants engaged in discussion and dialogue on various aspects on fisheries ecolabelling and aquaculture certification. All participants agreed that the workshop has been very effective in better understanding ecolabelling and certification and the respective roles of certifiers, FAO, GSSI and the national governments. Participants found the collaboration between FAO and GSSI as useful and worthy. The workshop ended looking forward to see the outcomes of the workshop series and the decisions of the Eighth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture.

## **REGIONAL WORKSHOP 2 – ASIA**

The Asia Regional Workshop was hosted by the Royal Thai Department of Fisheries. It was held at the Centara Grand Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand during 31 August to 1 September 2015.

The workshop was participated by a group of public and private sector representatives from selected Asian countries and regional organisations See Appendix 3 for the list of participants. The workshop programme is given in the Appendix 4.

### **Report of the Workshop 2**

Eco-labeling and certification have become an important requirement of market access and international fish trade. FAO/GSSI/Thai DoF Workshop on Awareness Building in Fisheries Ecolabelling, Aquaculture Certification, Conformity Assessment and Benchmarking, which was held from 31 August to 1 September 2015 at Centara Grand Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand. Was attended by 50 participants from 12 countries (Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Viet Nam, and USA) representing fisheries authorities, academia and industry.

Opening speeches were delivered by DOF, FAO, GSSI and GIZ and stressed the increasing importance of eco-labelling and certification and the need for technical assistance and capacity building. Several participants made presentations on national aquaculture certification schemes and efforts. A review of aquaculture certification schemes, BMPs and GAPs in Asia was also presented. Presentations by the countries and GSSI gave the opportunity to gauge the status of development in this area at the regional and country levels. The introductory and technical presentations made during the workshop are outlined in the Appendix 4. During and following presentations, participants interacted, discussed and went through rounds of questions and answers. These dialogues managed to significantly increase the awareness about FAO's work in this area, FAO/GSSI collaborative work programme and partnership, various aspects of aquaculture certification and conformity assessment and to demystify the concept, principles and operating procedures of eco-labelling, certification, conformity assessment and benchmarking amongst the participants.

From the national aquaculture certification status presented by the Asian country representatives attending the workshop, it was clear that different countries are at various levels of development in eco-labelling and certification. However, there is clear evidence that tangible progress has been made in the region over the past few years on aquaculture certification.

The issue of how small-scale farmer certification could be organized remains one of the top concerns of both industry and the governments. Most of the discussions had during the First African Regional Workshop evidently applied to the situation in Asia.

An ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Shrimp GAP was developed based on the relevant FAO instruments. Likewise, several national standards (e.g. IndoGAP, VietGAP, MayGAP, etc.) are being promoted and their implementation pursued. Participants agreed that the GSSI benchmarking tool is a good opportunity to enable the assessment and eventually recognition of the regional and national schemes by the international market.

### **REGIONAL WORKSHOP 3 – LATIN AMERICA**

The Latin America Regional Workshop was hosted by the Undersecretariat for Fisheries and Aquaculture Chile. It was held at the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, Santiago da Chile during 8–9 September 2015. The workshop was participated by a group of public and private sector representatives from selected Latin American countries and regional organisations. See Appendix 5 for the list of participants. The workshop programme is given in the Appendix 6.

#### **Report of the Workshop 3**

The FAO regional representative for Latin America and the Caribbean, Ms Eve Crowley, and the Director of the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Service (SERNAPESCA) of Chile, Mr José Miguel Burgos opened the workshop and welcomed all participants.

Participants had the following expectations of the workshop:

- to learn about implementing fisheries ecolabelling and aquaculture certification,
- to learn more about the costs and benefits of certification and ecolabelling, in particular added value and price premiums through ecolabelling,
- to understand the relevance of FAO certification guidelines and GSSI benchmarking tool for moving forward with national ecolabelling and certification initiatives, and
- to improve sustainability of national seafood sectors, including food safety by implementing ecolabelling and certification and learning from other countries' experiences

Several countries explained their national aquaculture certification initiatives and how they are planning to move forward. They requested FAO's assistance and technical support for these initiatives. Some countries expressed their concern about GSSI benchmarking tool might bring additional challenges to small-scale farming sector certification efforts. Concerns were raised if GSSI process may duplicate efforts in certification and wanted to know more about GSSI's benchmarking tool and the programme.

Through the presentations and dialogue between the participants and FAO/GSSI experts, participants became more aware of the FAO aquaculture certification guidelines, its role and status. Participants were also made to understand that increasing number of aquaculture certification schemes has led to confusion among producers, retailers and consumers over how to recognize a credible seafood certification scheme. This confusion is causing decision-making more difficult, and seafood costlier, for everyone.

In this respect, it appears that GSSI presents a solution to this problem. For the first-time members of the seafood supply chain, NGOs, governmental and intergovernmental organizations and a number of independent experts have come up with a collective, non-competitive approach to provide clarity on seafood certification and ensure consumer confidence in certified seafood. They have done this by following the reference documents at the heart of the process: the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF), the FAO Guidelines for Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine/Inland Capture Fisheries and the FAO Technical Guidelines for Aquaculture Certification (FAO Guidelines). GSSI used this foundation to create a Global Benchmark Tool for seafood certification schemes.



GSSI's Global Benchmark Tool includes GSSI Essential Components that are based on the CCRF and the FAO Guidelines and which seafood certification schemes must meet to be recognized by GSSI. GSSI has also created GSSI Supplementary Components, which show a seafood certification scheme's diverse approach and help stakeholders understand where differences exist. They are defined by the GSSI Expert Working Groups and grounded in the CCRF and other related FAO documents, ISO normative standards and ISEAL codes.

This shared solution will make information available across the seafood supply chain to drive change and lower costs. For producers, it means more options to choose the scheme that is right for them and reduce the need for multiple audits. For seafood buyers, it means simpler, more consistent data to guide their purchasing decisions. And for NGOs it means more open and checked information to help promote environmental sustainability.

Through its Global Benchmark Tool GSSI works towards its collective objective to minimize the overall environmental impact of how we catch, grow and deliver seafood to meet a growing global demand.

Participants appreciated the useful and valuable information provided by the experts which clarified many concerns they had in mind regarding aquaculture certification. They also respected the opportunity for exchanging and comparing experiences across countries on aquaculture certification, during this workshop. Some participants valued the good opportunity to align with other countries regarding perceptions on sustainable aquaculture and fisheries production.

The workshop stressed that certification can add value to seafood production but that governments also have the responsibility to explain to their producers that aquaculture production under certification has benefits. Certification is considered as being a valuable instrument for responsible resource use and to address issues at production level as well as public concerns. It was also highlighted that certification could act as an instrument for education and capacity building at production level.

Workshop participants agreed to discuss with their respective peers to promote a stronger governmental use of aquaculture certification by creating links to national regulations. They highlighted the government's responsibility in supporting the private sector to deal with emerging challenges confronted with aquaculture certification.

There was consensus that there remain concerns on certification as it can act as strong restriction, increasing dependency on specific buyers when mutual recognition of standards is missing. In this regard, participants strongly welcomed the GSSI Global Benchmark Tool initiative as it will help to install robust and credible reference points for certification and bring about a more objective discussion. Training on how to use this tool and its outcomes would be very helpful.

The workshop expressed its concern towards the fast spreading of aquaculture certification initiatives by both public and private sectors, and the potential consequences on the market access for small-scale producers. The workshop appreciated the efforts of FAO in this regard and strongly requested FAO to continue capacity building and training in aquaculture certification to support the governments in their efforts in strengthening market access of small-scale producers.

While appreciating the value of information provided by the workshop, participants also appreciated the complexity of those information provided. Participants therefore stressed the need to continue such outreach activities to inform relevant stakeholders across industry, retail, governments and NGOs on robust and credible certification as well as the related tools and initiatives.

The workshop highlighted the level of competencies within FAO and GSSI in aquaculture certification, and expressed their strong expectations towards the implementation of the Aquaculture certification guidelines and the benchmarking tool and requested for further progress updates, potentially in a similar setting.

## ADDRESSING THE CONCERNS REGARDING THE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

During the three regional workshops, specific targeted discussions and deliberations were held to bring consensus on how to address the above concerns. Following are the cumulative responses of the participants attending the three workshops, to the four concerns expressed:

1. *The implementation of the Evaluation Framework should not create technical barriers to trade, should be gradual in implementation with pilot phases at national and regional levels and should not affect resource limited smallholders;*

The workshops concluded that Evaluation Framework will not create technical barriers to trade, instead, the Framework and the initiatives such as GSSI Benchmarking Tool, will bring more clarity to the aquaculture certification process, provide opportunity for the certification bodies to develop and implement their certification schemes in par with the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification, bring harmonization among certification schemes and make aquaculture certification a robust process. They agreed that the implementation should be gradual in with pilot phases at national and regional levels. They also agreed that the Evaluation Framework, when implemented properly, will not affect resource limited smallholders in finding better markets.

2. *Adequate capacity development for implementation of the FAO Guidelines for Aquaculture certification should be ensured through FAO technical assistance mechanisms;*

The workshops unanimously agreed that capacity development for implementation of the FAO Guidelines for Aquaculture certification is paramount and all efforts should be made to bring relevant technical assistance to member states using appropriate mechanism.

3. *Open ended questions in the Evaluation Framework should be linked to relevant international standards mentioned in the certification guidelines;*

During and after the regional workshops, the Evaluation Framework has been reviewed, revised, and to the extent possible the open ended questions in the Evaluation Framework have been linked to relevant international standards mentioned in the certification guidelines. It was noted that this issue has already been clearly addressed in the Certification Guidelines and the paragraph 13 of the Certification Guidelines reads as “These guidelines for voluntary certification schemes are to be interpreted and applied in their entirety in a manner consistent with national laws and regulations and, where they exist, international agreements”.

4. *The Evaluation Framework should be amended and revised as necessary, taking into consideration the knowledge gained during the implementation phase.*

All regional workshops agreed that the Evaluation Framework should be amended and revised as necessary, taking into account of the knowledge and experience gained during implementation. Such requests should come from the Member States through the COFI process.

### Finalised Evaluation Framework

After addressing the reservations expressed by some countries during the Seventh Session, the Evaluation Framework has been reviewed, revised and finalised. The Evaluation Framework will be presented to the Ninth Session of the Sub-Committee, for information and follow-up advice, as requested by the Eighth Session of the Sub-Committee, held in Brasilia, Brazil from 6–10 October 2015.

**APPENDIX 1****FAO/GSSI/DAFF South Africa Workshop on Awareness Building in Fisheries Ecolabelling,  
Aquaculture Certification, Conformity Assessment and Benchmarking.****5–6 August 2015****DAFF Marine Research Aquarium Centre, Seapoint, Cape Town, South Africa****List of participants****ANGOLA**

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## APPENDIX 2

**FAO/GSSI/DAFF South Africa Workshop on Awareness Building in  
Fisheries Ecolabelling, Aquaculture Certification,  
Conformity Assessment and Benchmarking  
5–6 August 2015  
DAFF Marine Research Aquarium Centre  
Seapoint, Cape Town, South Africa**

### Workshop programme

Date and time	Activity
Wednesday 5 August	
08:00 – 09:00	Registration
09:00 – 09:30	Inauguration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remarks by Sphokazi Ndudane, DDG Fisheries South Africa</li> <li>• Remarks by Herman Wisse, Secretary General, GSSI</li> <li>• Remarks by Rohana Subasinghe, Chief, Aquaculture Branch, FAO</li> </ul>
09:30 – 10:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of participants, their involvements and expectations</li> </ul>
10:00 – 10:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecolabelling of fisheries and fishery products: the FAO's role so far – Kevern Cochran</li> </ul>
10:30 – 11:00	Refreshments/Group Photo
11:00 – 11:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certification of aquaculture: the FAO's role so far – Rohana Subasinghe</li> </ul>
11:30 – 12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seafood certification: experiences from GIZ – Mark Prein</li> </ul>
12:00 – 12:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seafood certification: experiences from GSSI – Herman Wisse</li> </ul>
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seafood certification: experiences from African region</li> </ul>
15:00 – 15:30	Refreshments
15:30 – 17:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seafood certification: experiences from African region</li> </ul>

Thursday 6 August	
09:00 – 10:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape analysis of seafood certification in Africa – Blessing Mapfumo</li> </ul>
10:00 – 10:30	General discussion
10:30 – 11:00	Refreshments
11:00 – 11:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conformity assessment on ecolabelling of fish and fishery products – Herman Wisse</li> </ul>
11:30 – 12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conformity assessment of aquaculture certification – Rohana Subasinghe</li> </ul>
12:00 – 12:30	Discussion
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 14:45	Benchmarking: GSSI Global Benchmark Tool – Herman Wisse
14:45 – 15:15	Discussion
15:15 – 16:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressing the Member concerns on aquaculture conformity assessment framework – Rohana Subasinghe</li> </ul>
16:00 – 16:30	Refreshments
16:30 – 17:00	General discussion on way forward



**APPENDIX 3**

**FAO/GSSI/Thai DoF Workshop on Awareness Building in Fisheries Ecolabelling,  
Aquaculture Certification, Conformity Assessment and Benchmarking  
31 August–1 September 2015  
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## APPENDIX 4

### FAO/GSSI/Thai DoF Workshop on Awareness Building in Fisheries Ecolabelling, Aquaculture Certification, Conformity Assessment and Benchmarking

**31 August–1 September 2015  
Centara Grand Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand**

#### Workshop programme

Date and time	Activity
Monday 31 August	
08:00 – 09:00	Registration
09:00 – 09:30	Inauguration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remarks by Waraporn Prompoj, DDG Thai Department of Fisheries</li> <li>• Remarks by Lahsen Ababouch, Director, FIP/FI, FAO</li> <li>• Remarks by Herman Wisse, Programme Manager, GSSI</li> <li>• Remarks by Mark Prein, Head of Fisheries and Aquaculture, GIZ</li> </ul>
09:30 – 10:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of participants, their involvements and expectations</li> </ul>
10:00 – 10:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecolabelling of fisheries and fishery products: the FAO's role so far – Lahsen Ababouch</li> </ul>
10:30 – 11:00	Refreshments/Group Photo
11:00 – 11:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certification of aquaculture: the FAO's role so far – Rohana Subasinghe</li> </ul>
11:30 – 12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seafood certification: experiences from GIZ – Mark Prein</li> </ul>
12:00 – 12:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seafood certification: experiences from GSSI – Herman Wisse</li> </ul>
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seafood certification: experiences from Asia region</li> </ul>
15:00 – 15:30	Refreshments
15:30 – 17:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seafood certification: experiences from Asia region</li> </ul>
Date and time	Activity
Tuesday 01 September	
09:00 – 09:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape analysis of aquaculture certification in Asia – Rohana Subasinghe</li> </ul>
09:45 - 10:30	General discussion
10:30 – 11:00	Refreshments



11:00 – 11:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conformity assessment of aquaculture certification – Rohana Subasinghe</li></ul>
11:30 – 12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• GSSI Global Benchmarking Tool based on the Conformity Assessment Framework and its present status – Herman Wisse</li></ul>
12:00 – 12:30	Discussion
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Piloting Benchmarking: Asian Experience</li></ul>
15:00 – 15:30	Refreshments
15:30 – 16:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Seafood certification: private sector aspirations and experience</li></ul>
16:30 – 17:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion on the way forward</li></ul>

**APPENDIX 5****FAO/GSSI Workshop on Awareness Building in  
Fisheries Ecolabelling, Aquaculture Certification,  
Conformity Assessment and Benchmarking****8–9 September 2015****FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, Santiago, Chile****List of participants****ARGENTINA**

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## APPENDIX 6

**FAO/GSSI Workshop on Awareness Building in  
Fisheries Ecolabelling, Aquaculture Certification,  
Conformity Assessment and Benchmarking**

**8–9 September 2015**

**FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, Santiago, Chile**

**Workshop programme**

<b>Date and time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Tuesday 8 September	
08:00 – 09:00	Registration
09:00 – 09:30	Inauguration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remarks by Mr Jose Miguel Burgos, Fisheries and Aquaculture Service, Government of Chile</li> <li>• Remarks by Ms Eve Crowley, FAO Representative in Chile</li> <li>• Remarks by Mr Kai Niklas Wehner, Manager, GIZ</li> <li>• Remarks by Rohana Subasinghe, Chief Aquaculture Branch, FAO</li> </ul>
09:30 – 10:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of participants, their involvements and expectations</li> </ul>
10:00 – 10:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecolabelling of fisheries and fishery products: the FAO's role so far - Rohana Subasinghe</li> </ul>
10:30 – 11:00	Refreshments/Group Photo
11:00 – 11:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certification of aquaculture: the FAO's role so far – Rohana Subasinghe</li> </ul>
11:30 – 12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seafood certification: experiences from GIZ – Kai Niklas Wehner</li> </ul>
12:00 – 12:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seafood certification: experiences from GSSI – Kai Niklas Wehner</li> </ul>
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seafood certification: experiences from LAC region</li> </ul>
15:00 – 15:30	Refreshments
15:30 – 17:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seafood certification: experiences from LAC region</li> </ul>

Date and time	Activity
<b>Wednesday 9 September</b>	
09:00 – 09:40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations by Ecuador and Argentina</li> </ul>
09:40 - 10:40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations from private sector</li> </ul>
10:40 – 11:10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coffee</li> </ul>
11:10 – 11:40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape Analysis on the status of fisheries ecolabelling and aquaculture certification in Latin America – Carolina O’Ryan</li> </ul>
11:40 – 12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion</li> </ul>
12:00 – 12:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FAO Conformity Assessment Framework – Rohana Subasinghe</li> </ul>
12:30 – 13:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GSSI Global Benchmarking Tool based on the Conformity Assessment Framework and its present status – Kai Niklas Wehner</li> </ul>
13:00 – 14:30	Lunch
14:30 – 15:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General discussion on regional needs for improving the status of fisheries ecolabelling and aquaculture certification in Latin America</li> </ul>
15:30 – 16:00	Workshop wrap-up and closure

With the financial assistance from the European Commission and organized in partnership between FAO, GSSI and a national competent authority, three regional workshops were held in Africa, Asia and Latin America with the view to address the concerns raised by some FAO Members on the Evaluation Framework for assessing conformity of public and private aquaculture certification schemes with the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification, at the Seventh Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries' Sub-Committee on Aquaculture held in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, from 7–11 October 2013. The regional workshops also endeavoured to increase the awareness of the FAO Guidelines and the Conformity Assessment Frameworks and the GSSI Global Benchmark Tool among stakeholders. This document presents the reports of the three workshops.

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