

**SIDE EVENT FROM THE FAO CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES TO
GSSI's GLOBAL BENCHMARK TOOL FOR SEAFOOD CERTIFICATION SCHEMES**

Participants of the Fifteenth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade (COFI:FT) in Agadir are invited to attend a side event on the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI) and its Global Benchmark Tool for seafood certification schemes. GSSI partners will give an update on the currently ongoing Benchmarking Process and explain GSSI's close collaboration with FAO and several member countries in the development of the Tool. Join the discussion to learn more about how GSSI's work will benefit governments and their national certification schemes, members of the seafood supply chain and which opportunities for collaboration exist.

Speakers: Audun Lem, FAO

Tim Sauler, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

Alastair MacFarlane, Seafood New Zealand

Herman Wisse, GSSI

Time / Venue: 17:00-18:00 hours, 23 February 2016 / Hotel Royal Atlas, Agadir

About GSSI

The use of seafood certification schemes has become a common way to provide assurance of more sustainable practices in aquaculture and fisheries. But the increasing number of schemes has led to confusion among producers, retailers and consumers over how to recognize a credible 3rd party seafood certification scheme. This confusion has made decision-making more difficult, and seafood more costly, for everyone.

The GSSI Global Benchmark Tool provides a unique solution to this problem. For the first time members of the seafood supply chain, NGOs, governmental and intergovernmental organizations have come up with a collective, global, non-competitive approach to provide clarity on seafood certification and ensure 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 the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine/Inland Capture Fisheries and the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification. GSSI used this foundation create a Global Benchmark Tool for seafood certification schemes.

The Tool was launched with the support from FAO at the 20th anniversary celebrations of the CCRF and strongly supported by many member countries as a "timely and practical tool to help implement the Technical Guidelines and the Evaluation Framework, to simplify certification schemes and choices by consumers, to help identify gaps in national certification schemes, to assist in capacity building and partnerships across global fish value chains, and as a means of further promoting the Technical Guidelines" (Report of the Eighth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, Brasilia, Brazil, 5-9 October 2015).