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منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة  
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联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food  
and  
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Organisation  
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pour  
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et  
l'agriculture

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## EXPERT CONSULTATION ON DATA FORMATS AND PROCEDURES FOR MONITORING, CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE

**BERGEN, NORWAY**  
**25 to 27 OCTOBER 2004**

### LINKAGES WITH TRACEABILITY AND ECOLABELING

1. Traceability and ecolabelling are distinct from other data-intensive activities in fisheries in that they are most often aimed at the consumer, providing assurance that the product they are purchasing is the product of responsible fisheries operations, or that it has been fished in a specific way and/or in a specific location. The aim is to give the consumer the means to give their economic support to producers, processors and retailers who run ecologically sound businesses, and to assure them that their food supply comes from a safe source and has been processed and handled efficiently and safely.
2. Ecolabelling, in general, is not new in that schemes have existed for years to label products as energy efficient. Likewise, forest products have long been marketed as being the result of responsible forestry culled from sustainable species. The use of such approaches in fisheries, however, is far more recent. Predictably, they rely upon the timely gathering of data used in other areas of fisheries, much of which is included in fishing logs.
3. An important champion of ecolabelling and traceability is the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), a non-governmental organization based in London ([www.msc.org](http://www.msc.org)). The MSC has certified the produce of a number of fisheries as being the result of practices that are sustainable in the long term, including Alaska (USA) salmon; Burry Inlet (South Wales, UK) cockles, New Zealand hoki; South West (UK) handline mackerel, Thames (UK) herring and Western Australia rock lobster.
4. The principle behind these programs is that a set of standards and performance indicators are developed for the entire chain of a fishery, from vessel to consumer. These standards and indicators are then applied to day-to-day operations and continually evaluated. The result is a product with value added and identified by the consumer by an appropriate label.
5. Despite the broad work that the MSC has carried out, it is almost certainly the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification system that, because of the very breadth of its subject, has attracted the most attention worldwide. A detailed look at this system will help to understand the role that traceability and ecolabelling can play.

## **IATTC/AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification (Tuna Tracking Form)**

6. The IATTC has a long history in the management of tunas. In recent decades, tuna catches made by purse seine vessels in the eastern tropical Pacific came under intensive review and control. This is because these tunas are found in association with dolphin schools, a unique situation known only in the eastern tropical Pacific, and fishing operations often resulted in unintentional dolphin mortality. Consequently, a large dolphin research program was developed by national and international efforts, and the resulting mortality of dolphins in association with tuna fisheries has been reduced to a minimum level.
7. In 1998, the member countries of IATTC, whose purse seiners were engaged in extensive fishing in the eastern tropical Pacific, concluded and joined the “Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program” (AIDCP). Under the AIDCP, the Parties subsequently adopted a tuna tracking system and, in July 2001, procedures for dolphin safe certification.
8. A unique feature of the eastern tropical Pacific tuna fishery is the high level of observer coverage. Almost all the tuna purse seiners are carrying official observers provided either by the IATTC or by national authorities. For the AIDCP, the IATTC staff serves as the Secretariat.

### **Objectives**

9. The AIDCP is a system for tracking tuna caught in the Agreement Area by vessels fishing under the Program. Its purpose is to enable dolphin safe tuna to be distinguished from non-dolphin safe tuna from the time it is caught to the time it is ready for retail sale. The ultimate objective is to protect dolphins from unnecessary injuries and mortality associated with tuna fishing.

### **Procedures**

10. The Tuna Tracking Form was prepared by the Secretariat and distributed through national authorities of the Parties to the national observers, or by IATTC to the observers provided by the Commission aboard the fishing vessels operating in the area. The form has an identification number for each trip (IATTC cruise number). Separate Tuna Tracking Forms (A and B) are used, one for dolphin safe tuna and another for non-dolphin safe tuna. Records and endorsement of operational information are made for each set. The observer decides if dolphin mortality or serious injury has occurred in the set. Two groups (dolphin safe and non-safe) are kept in separate wells and recorded on the Form, initialed by both the observer and the chief engineer.
11. At the end of the trip, documents are signed by the captain (only those on the List of Qualified Captains maintained in the Secretariat) and the observer.
12. At landing or transshipment, total quantities are confirmed. If the vessels unload catches to the flag country and the fish are processed in that country, the Tuna Tracking Form will be submitted to its national authorities and flag States should track the tuna. If the tuna are to be processed in the country other than flag, the country where the tuna are processed has responsibility of tracking (the Tuna Tracking Form will be submitted to the authority of that country with a copy to the flag State). These documents are treated as confidential and eventually submitted to the Secretariat.

13. When more than two thirds of the catch is unloaded, the trip is considered to be terminated and a new Tuna Tracking Form is provided. The remaining catch (less than one third) is treated as the first entry.
14. If the catches are transshipped, dolphin safe and non-safe tunas can be carried together as long as they are separated by net. When unloaded, they are kept in separate bins with a reference to the corresponding Tuna Tracking Form number. These two categories of tunas are not be processed on the same line at the same time, and processed products are traceable to the corresponding Tuna Tracking Form numbers.
15. Thereafter, all the sales of whole or a part of the catches must be identified by Tuna Tracking Form number at every step. The procedures must be established by Parties who are responsible for tracking.
16. When the processed tuna are exported, they may be accompanied by a certification, if appropriate, of its “dolphin safe” status issued by the competent national authority, including reference to the corresponding Tuna Tracking Form number.
17. Tuna unloaded by purse seiners operating in the Agreement Area, but not covered by the AIDCP, cannot not be labeled as dolphin safe.
18. The AIDCP includes provisions for auditing and spot checking through international cooperation.

### **Validation**

19. The initial validation, or determination as to whether a particular set can be designated as dolphin safe tuna, is made by the observer aboard the fishing vessel. Dolphin safe and non-dolphin safe tuna are kept in separate wells. The observer records on the Tuna Tracking Form the species and quantity of tuna loaded into each well used in that set, and both the observer and engineer initials the entry for each set.
20. The responsibilities for verification of unloading, collecting and sending Tuna Tracking Form, and tracking these tuna are complicated.
  - When the catch is processed in the flag country of the vessel, flag country is responsible.
  - When the catch is unloaded and processed in another country than flag, the country where processing is taken place is responsible.
  - When the catch is transhipped by a carrier to another country, the flag country is responsible until tuna is unloaded at the other country.
  - When unloaded to non-Contracting Parties, the flag country may make an arrangement with that country to certify the status and to submit the documents.
21. When the processed tuna are for export, a Dolphin Safe Certificate is issued to accompany those products that have been determined to be dolphin safe.

### **Required Information**

22. As mentioned earlier, the Tuna Tracking Form was developed by the Parties to the AIDCP. This form (for dolphin safe and non-dolphin safe tunas separately) requires the following items to be filled for each set:
  - Tuna Tracking Form number;
  - set date;
  - set time;

- well number where fish are stored;
  - retained catch (tonnes) by species;
  - initials of observer and chief engineer on each entry;
  - signatures of captain; and
  - summary at the end of trip (i.e. weight of fish by species in each well).
23. Dolphin Safe Tuna Certificate form and the seal to be used are attached to the Resolution. Certificate includes:
- date;
  - Tuna Tracking Form number;
  - weight of the tuna by species;
  - type of processing and processor lot number (if processed); and
  - signature of the competent national authority.
24. This program is only designed for the Agreement area and for tropical tuna purse seiners. All other tunas taken from other areas and/or different gears (e.g. longline) are not subject to the program.
25. The Secretariat serves as the center for gathering all the Tuna Tracking Form and input into the data base. Tuna Tracking Forms issued during a given month must be submitted to the Secretariat by national authorities within the first five days of the following month. The data are all confidential, but the Secretariat shall respond to a request by Contracting Parties and non-Contracting Parties with confirmation of the status of a particular shipment of tuna on the basis of the Secretariat's data base in accordance with the AIDCP rules of confidentiality.

#### **Effects**

26. There are provisions for annual evaluation of effectiveness and compliance of the Program by the Contracting Parties. The program started in July 2001, so it is too early to evaluate. Because most purse seiners fishing in the Agreement Area carry either IATTC or national observers, however, the verification of dolphin safe tuna should be much easier than other catch certification.

#### **Other Regulatory Measures**

27. There are many regulatory measures relating to the conservation of dolphins which are associated with the dolphin safe certification procedure. These measures include all of the measures included in the AIDCP and developed by the Parties to protect dolphins and reduce or eliminate dolphin mortality during fishing operations. The AIDCP and its measures are intended to reduce dolphin mortalities and serious injuries, and only when there is no dolphin mortality or serious injury in a particular set may the tuna be labeled as dolphin safe.

#### **Difficulties**

28. Because the dolphin safe certification program came into effect in July 2001, it is too early to evaluate any difficulties associated with the program.