



ROUND TABLE ON ECO-LABELLING AND CERTIFICATION IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR

The Hague, Netherlands, 22-23 April 2009

Rationale

Access to the global fisheries market has increasingly been subject to various forms of standards and labels. The FAO and OECD together with the Government of the Netherlands are therefore convening a Round Table to discuss issues dealing with the economic consequences of certification, how different standards and methods of certification may influence the market for fish and fish products, and how different actors/stakeholders in this field interact.

The Round Table will bring together prominent organisations involved in fisheries certification, representatives of the fisheries value chain elements and NGOs that have been active in the field. The purpose of the Round Table will be to inform the participants about how the industry adapts to the increasing pressures for standards, to understand stakeholder expectations with respect to the role of the public authorities and private standards in the field of standards and the role and place of standards in the market for fish and fish products.

Workshop outline

The purpose of the *Introduction Day* is to provide participants with practical information on a number of certification schemes in fisheries and to discuss the use of integrated traceability systems in general. The objective is to provide transparency in the standard and certification landscape currently facing policy makers in the area of fisheries, with an emphasis on eco-labels. Short presentations will be given by the principal eco-labelling schemes. The presentations will focus on the standard setting process, the conditions for the use of the eco-label, the certification process, and the governance of the eco-labels.

The introductory *keynote speeches* will provide an overview of recent developments related to the promotion of fish and fish products both to consumers and as business-to-business arrangements. Branding, labeling, generic marketing, promotional campaigns, including private labels and certification, are all regular features along the fisheries value chain. Their uses and audiences (retail, consumers, processors, and fishers) will be considered in these presentations. Experiences from other systems, e.g. health and sanitary, will be reviewed to see if any lessons can be learned. The roles of the public and private sectors will be reviewed, including consideration of who defines sustainability.

The purpose of the presentations of Session 2, *Objectives and Principles for Certification*, is to provide insights into the fundamental differences and commonalities that exist between certification schemes related to safety/quality, legality and sustainability in the fisheries market, based on a discussion of the objectives of the respective certification systems.

Session 3 concentrates on *Integrated Traceability*. Many certification schemes require chain of custody certification to support claims and to ensure that products can be traced from “fisheries to the consumer’s plate”. Integrated traceability offers the potential to integrate traceability requirements related to ecolabelling schemes, safety/quality standards and catch documentation schemes. Traceability requires the separation and identification of products (e.g. to trace origin or production methods), to ensure that products are traceable from catch to plate

Session 4 will introduce *Experiences with Eco-labelling Schemes* or eco-labelling schemes that are under development. The participants will explain how their standards are developed; what they cover; and who accredits the standard (e.g. the particular process involved). They will also discuss their certification methodology, i.e. who certifies and how certification takes place. Issues related to the governance of the standard setting and accreditation organisation will be covered. The participants will clarify the basis on which certified products accorded the use of the organisation’s label (separation of products, traceability etc.). Finally, the schemes’ consistency with FAO guidelines will be addressed.

The purpose of the second day, *Round Table on Eco-labelling*, is to encourage discussion on the respective roles of public authorities and private operators in the market for fisheries eco-labelling. A Round Table format has been chosen to facilitate an open and frank discussion among participants. The “effects and outcomes” session will be opened by a five minute introduction by a dedicated discussant.

Session 5 will permit Round Table participants to discuss *Eco-labels in Fisheries: Effects and Outcomes* of the wide variety of standards and certification methods, their overarching aims, their differences and similarities, their limitations, and the opportunities presented for stakeholders along the value chain. There will be five minute introductions to selected subthemes.

Session 6, *The role of private operators and public authorities in eco-labelling*, in the second half-day will focus on the roles of the private and the public sector in addressing the challenges and opportunities created by eco-labelling, and will identify potential policy options for fisheries policy makers. Participants are invited to raise a number of issues.

Session 7, *Where are we heading?*, will discuss future developments, including the implications for the economics of fisheries certification. This Session will also identify practical policy responses and options for policy makers when considering certification and eco-labelling issues in fisheries.

A detailed draft programme will be available soon.

Attendance is by invitation only. Those interested in attending should send a message to William Emerson (email: william.emerson@fao.org) with copy to Yvonne Davidsson (email: yvonne.davidsson@fao.org).