
**PROGRESS OF WORK AND PLAN FOR 2021 OF THE CATCH DOCUMENTATION SCHEME
(CDS) WORKING GROUP****PREPARED BY: CDS WG CHAIR**

Dear colleagues,

I hope this paper finds all of you very well and safe.

As the CDSWG Chair, I'm writing to give you my current thoughts on CDSWG situation and its 2021 plan.

In 2019 and 2020, CDSWG had two skype sessions and one in-person meeting in Kenya. The outcome and materials are available in the website below. The meetings were very productive, providing us with useful information such as situation in ICCAT and CCSBT.

<https://iotc.org/meetings/catch-documentation-scheme-cds-working-group-meeting>

Also, in 2020 we have developed the draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for CDSWG and submitted the ToR to the 17th Compliance Committee (CoC17) and 24th Session of the Commission (S24). The ToR was endorsed by S24 without change as attached. The ToR define the task of CDSWG and will be a very important basis for our future work.

I assume that many CPCs are currently busy in preparation for the Special Session in March, which will be a very important meeting. Also, a Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria (TCAC) meeting is scheduled in March 22-25. Bearing in mind that the series of meetings including the annual Session of the Commission are scheduled in the first half of June, I am planning to have a 3-day (4 hours/day) virtual meeting of CDSWG in April 26-28. I will draft a discussion paper for the meeting, taking into account past discussion in CDSWG, the outcome of the Special Session in March, as well as information in other RFMOs by approximately three weeks in advance. For my better preparation, I would appreciate receiving comments or thoughts (By latest April 19) from members of the CDS WG on the paper in advance of the virtual meeting, if any. I would like to discuss possible plans of CDSWG work during the latter half of 2021 at the virtual meeting.

Taking this opportunity, I must make a regrettable announcement. Due to personnel transfer, from the end of the 25th Session of the Commission in June 2021, I have to step down from the CDSWG Chair's position which I have voluntarily taken. While I will try my best to advance CDSWG work as much as possible until then, I would cordially ask members to nominate my successor so that the momentum is maintained.

Thanking you for your understanding and cooperation in advance.

Sincerely,

Yuki Morita (Japan)

CDSWG Chair

Appendix

IOTC Catch Documentation Scheme**Terms of Reference for the Catch Documentation Scheme Working Group**

Purpose

1. The Catch Documentation Scheme Working Group (CDSWG) will be open to all Commission members and cooperating non-members, as well as observers and external experts with relevant expertise. The Catch Documentation Working Group (CDSWG) was established with the principal task of guiding the development/proposing a blueprint and timeline (strategy) for IOTC CDS (IOTC CDS strategy).

Objective

2. The objectives of the IOTC CDS strategy are, through introduction of CDS, to contribute to following:
- a. Certification, verification and validation of products legality with a view of eliminating illegally caught products trade and ensure products traceability to final market destination.
 - b. Provision of scientific information for fisheries management.

Principle Responsibilities

3. In devising the strategy, the CDSWG shall consider the following:

(I) Reference documents and schemes

- a. The *Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes* developed by the FAO in 2017 and the report *Developing a comprehensive MCS system and an electronic Catch Documentation Scheme for IOTC* developed by a consultant in 2018 (consultant report).
- b. Existing and proposed catch documentation schemes in other RFMOs/Organisations (including ICCAT, CCSBT and CCAMLR) and in Commission members.

(II) Basic design

- a. Core components of CDS in the 3rd Meeting of the CDSWG Report (10-11 February 2020) to be further addressed in CDSWG ToRs:
 - i) Basic CDS design options 1-3 (as described in p82-86 of the consultant report)
 - ii) Species to be covered by IOTC CDS, taking into account stock status, IUU risk, level of international trade and the difficulty of implementation
 - iii) In the first instance, the CDS could cover tropical tunas (bigeye tuna, yellowfin tuna and skipjack tuna), then other IOTC species step by step.
 - iv) Design of an electronic system
 - v) Need for special consideration to artisanal fleets

(III) Operational and administrative issues

- a. The resources that would be required to implement and operate a CDS. This will necessarily include consideration of financial aspects of the IOTC, of capacity building, training programs and associated costs.
- b. Operational issues of data collection, submission, handling, analysis, reconciliation and dissemination, taking into account practical feasibility of relevant stakeholders (e.g. fishing vessels)
- c. The roles and responsibilities for certification and verification of all appropriate stakeholders (e.g. flag State authority, the IOTC Secretariat), within the framework of existing international law.
- d. Opportunities to utilize emerging technology to increase efficiency and decrease costs, with particular reference to electronic transmission of data and required forms.
- e. The integration of CDS with the overall monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) and management framework of the IOTC, including other data reporting obligations and national/regional programs (e.g. EU IUU Regulation) and avoiding duplication of work.

(IV) Timeline

- a. Possible timeline for implementation, with prioritization and/or step-by-step approach as necessary

Reporting

4. The CDSWG shall report progress to the CoC with a view to presenting the IOTC CDS strategy proposal to IOTC in 2022 that would be considered for adoption by the Commission. Once the strategy is adopted by the Commission, the CDSWG shall consider further specifics of CDS documentation and process including the preparation of draft CDS Resolution and associated forms, in accordance with the strategy as adopted.
5. The CDSWG may present relevant recommendations as it deems necessary to achieve the objectives of the IOTC CDS strategy, to the Commission and relevant subsidiary bodies.

Meetings

6. The CDSWG shall operate, to the extent possible, electronically. Face to face meetings, where necessary, should take place back-to-back with other meetings