

## Progress of work and plan for 2022 of the Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) Working Group (WG)

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### PURPOSE

To provide participants at the Working Party on the Implementation of Conservation and Management Measures (WPICMM) an update on the progress of work and plan for 2022 of the Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) Working Group (WG).

### BACKGROUND

Proposals for a resolution to introduce a catch documentation scheme, especially for the major IOTC species, were unsuccessfully put forward by CPCs at the Commission's 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> (2009 – 2013) annual Sessions. As a way forward, the Commission agreed at the 17<sup>th</sup> (2013) Session to set up an IOTC Intersessional Working Party to make progress on a catch documentation scheme. An *ad hoc* Working Group, with only three active CPCs, worked to further develop a terms of reference (ToR) for a Catch Documentation Scheme Working Group, based on an outline that was presented at the Commission's 17<sup>th</sup> Session. Little progress was made after that and work on the ToR was suspended after the 19<sup>th</sup> (2015) Session of the Commission, to await the outcome of a project under the ABNJ Programme, on Tuna Traceability and CDS Best Practices.

In 2018, following the conclusion of the ABNJ's project, the IOTC Secretariat commissioned a study for the implementation of a CDS for the five major commercial species of the IOTC, including an implementation road map with associated estimated budget. The results of the study were presented in a workshop in February 2019, which preceded the WPICMM02. In its consideration of the CDS workshop report, the WPICMM02 recommended that a Working Group be constituted to guide the development of an IOTC CDS. The recommendation was endorsed by the CoC16 and S23, in 2019.

The CDS Working Group has held five meetings:

- 1st meeting - 18 December 2019, [IOTC-2019-CDSWG01](#),
- 2nd meeting - 23 January 2020, [IOTC-2020-CDSWG02](#),
- 3rd Meeting - 10-11 February 2020, [IOTC-2020-CDSWG03 R](#)
- 4th Meeting - 26-28 April 2021, [IOTC-2021-CDSWG04 R](#)
- 5th Meeting - 20-21 October 2021, [IOTC-2021-CDSWG05 R](#)

A [sixth meeting](#) is scheduled for 14-15 February 2022, prior to the WPICMM05.

The report of the previous meetings of the CDS Working Group are available as resource documents through the above links.

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The 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the CDS Working Group made seven recommendations, which were endorsed by the Compliance Committee at its 17<sup>th</sup> Session. The consolidated set of recommendations of the CDSWG03 is reproduced below:

**CONSOLIDATED LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CDSWG03 MEETING**

STATUS OF MEMBERSHIP TO THE CDSWG

The WG AGREED that the membership of the CDSWG be expanded to include all CPCs. Recognising that virtual meetings posed a challenge for the current WG, the WG also agreed that an expanded membership might require physical meetings in the future, in addition to virtual meetings.

PREFERRED CDS OPTION FROM CDS STUDY

Options 1 and 3 received similar levels of support. The WG recommended that this matter be further addressed in a CDSWG TOR.

SPECIES AND COVERAGE

The WG noted a range of factors that should be considered when identifying species. These include stock status, IUU risk, level of international trade and the difficulty of implementation. The WG agreed that, in the first instance, the CDS could cover tropical tunas (bigeye tuna, yellowfin tuna, skipjack tuna), then other IOTC species step by step.

The WG agreed that both industrial and artisanal fleets should be included in the CDS. Some WG participants indicated the need for special consideration for artisanal fleet. such as extending the CDS gradually to the artisanal fleets.

The WG recommended that this matter be further addressed in a CDSWG ToR.

MEDIUM OF IOTC CDS

The WG noted that mechanisms of international trade of tunas are increasingly moving towards electronic systems, and that ICCAT has e-CDSs and CCSBT is in the process of potential introduction of one. The WG agreed that the IOTC CDS should therefore, be an electronic system. However, some WG participants indicated that when the CDS is applied to the artisanal fleets, other approaches may be required in the short-term.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EU IUU REGULATION

The WG noted that the EU CDS allows for recognition of a CDS developed by a RFMO. The WG agreed that an IOTC CDS should accommodate the requirements of the EU market .

The WG recommended that this matter of recognition be further addressed in a CDSWG ToR, and include other market States.

OTHER MATTERS

The WG noted that financial considerations and objectives of IOTC CDS will be important in the design, development and implementation of a CDS, and agreed that this matter be further addressed in a CDSWG ToR.

The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CDS Working Group made five recommendations, which were endorsed by the Compliance Committee at its 18<sup>th</sup> Session. The consolidated set of recommendations of the CDSWG04 is reproduced below:

**CONSOLIDATED LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CDSWG04 MEETING**

CDSWG04 (Para. 5) CDSWG04 RECOMMENDED the Secretariat develop a dedicated webpage for future CDSWG meetings at the earliest stage possible, so that wider IOTC members, cooperating non-members, invited experts and observers are informed of the planned meeting.

CDSWG04 (Para. 6) CDSWG04 RECOMMENDED the Compliance Committee (CoC) and the Commission encourage those members who have not yet nominated their participants to the CDSWG to do so at the earliest possible date.

CDSWG04 (Para. 11) CDSWG04 RECOMMENDED the CoC and the Commission provide clearer guidance on interpretation and application of the “quorum rule” for subsidiary-bodies’ meetings, especially for Working Group (WG) meetings, under the IOTC Rules of Procedure taking into account above precedents.

CDSWG04 (Para. 12) CDSWG04 also RECOMMENDED the CoC and the Commission to encourage members to explicitly confirm their participation in response to invitations and to attend the meetings, for efficient organization of future meetings.

CDSWG04 (Para. 24) CDSWG04 RECOMMENDED the CoC and the Commission request the Secretariat to contact the Secretariats of ICCAT, IATTC and WCPFC and seek information on their (i) current situation of discussion for development of a CDS for tropical tunas and (ii) if any, agreed target timeframe for development, with a view to obtaining such information, by the end of August 2021. CDSWG04 NOTED that in this process the Secretariats of ICCAT, IATTC and WCPFC are not expected to seek their Members’ views for their responses.

**DISCUSSION**

The Catch Documentation System Working Group was established with the principal task of guiding the development/proposing a blueprint and timeline (strategy) for an IOTC CDS (IOTC CDS strategy). The work plan of the CDS Working Group is guided by the responsibilities given in its ToRs. They are presented below with the status of the discussions on the IOTC Catch Documentation Scheme by the CDS Working Group.

**Basic design**

i) Basic CDS design options 1-3 (as described in p82-86 of the consultant report)

CDSWG04 **NOTED** that both Options 2 and 3 had received favourable opinions from members, so both of these should still be open for consideration.  
CDSWG05 **AGREED** to drop design Option 1, in view of the current situation in the three RFMOs. While agreeing to continue to pursue options Option 2 and 3, members **AGREED** that a future IOTC CDS should be forward looking and be able to accommodate information/data exchange with other information/data management systems both internal and external to the IOTC.

**Status**

**Ongoing.** Further discussions to take place at the next meeting(s).

Consideration under “Discussion paper” on an IOTC CDS Strategy – Slide 7 to 11 [[IOTC-2021-CDSWG04-01](#)]

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.

CDSWG05 **AGREED** that the three tropical tuna species (BET, SKJ and YFT) be included, taking into consideration the criteria identified, namely Stock Status, IUU Risk, Level of International Trade, Difficulty of Implementation, the Nature of the Fisheries (what species it catches) and Any Other Factor.

**Status**

**Ongoing.** Further discussions to take place at the next meeting(s).

Consideration under “Discussion paper” on an IOTC CDS Strategy – Slide 7 to 11 [[IOTC-2021-CDSWG04-01](#)]

iv) Design of an electronic system

CDSWG03 The WG **NOTED** that mechanisms of international trade of tunas are increasingly moving towards electronic systems, and that ICCAT has an e-CDS and CCSBT is in the process of potential introduction of one. CDSWG03 The WG **AGREED** that the IOTC CDS should therefore, be an electronic system. However, some WG participants indicated that when the CDS is applied to the artisanal fleets, other approaches may be required in the short-term.

**Status**

**Ongoing.** Further discussions to take place at the next meeting(s).

Consideration under “Discussion paper” on an IOTC CDS Strategy – Slide 7 to 11 [[IOTC-2021-CDSWG04-01](#)]

## v) Need for special consideration to artisanal fleets

CDSWG05 **REQUESTED** the Secretariat to write to CPCs to seek information on which segments of their fleets would find difficulty in implementing a CDS, if it is assumed that all fisheries involved in the species covered by the CDS are included, using the text reproduced in Appendix.

**Status**

**Ongoing.** Further discussions to take place at the next meeting(s) (CDSWG06).

Consideration under “Discussion paper” on an IOTC CDS Strategy – Slide 7 to 11 [[IOTC-2021-CDSWG04-01](#)]

**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.

CDSWG05 **NOTED** that development of the software to support a CDS would be outsourced, and the long-term management and maintenance of the scheme and software would imply an increase in IOTC budget, irrespective of whether it is outsourced or not.

CDSWG05 **NOTED** that operational issues were highly technical and would have to be compatible with paper-based information gathering as this information would have to feed into the electronic system and **FURTHER NOTED** that any paper element causes difficulties for fishers, for national administrations and for the IOTC Secretariat.

CDSWG05 **NOTED** that there would be operational difficulties for small-scale or artisanal fisheries generally and in particular for implementing an electronic system, so a paper-based system could gradually move to an electronic system.

CDSWG05 **NOTED** that if it was decided not to have a tagging requirement, due to the volume of fish that will be subject to the scheme, costs would be reduced.

CDSWG05 **NOTED** that the roles and responsibilities for a segment of fishers can be reduced by declaration at landing sites, to local government offices or to processors/exporters and **FURTHER NOTED** that central government can delegate its role of validation to local structures (e.g., cooperatives/associations).

CDSWG05 **NOTED** the need for integration of CDS with other MCS measures of the IOTC and national or regional programmes.

CDSWG05 **NOTED** that an IOTC CDS would serve as a substitute for the European Union’s Catch Certification Scheme and **FURTHER NOTED** that Japan’s import certification system, which will be introduced in 2022, does not at this stage envisage covering tunas, thus, there will be no duplication between domestic trade measures and those of RFMOs.

CDSWG05 **NOTED** that in the ICCAT the Bluefin Tuna CDS is linked to their record of authorised vessels and to their record of total allowable catches, this being an advantage of an electronic system.

CDSWG05 **NOTED** that different traceability requirements of some schemes (e.g., area fished, information on fishing vessel) will have implications on confidentiality and what information would be visible or displayed in the system.

CDSWG05 **NOTED** that the information to be shared (with markets or with IOTC’s other systems) would depend on the information that will be included in the CDS.

**Status**

**Ongoing.** Further discussions to take place at the next meeting(s).

Consideration under “Discussion paper” on an IOTC CDS Strategy – Slide 12 to 22 [[IOTC-2021-CDSWG04-01](#)]

**Timeline**

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

Status
<b>Ongoing. Further discussions to take place at the next meeting(s).</b>

**RECOMMENDATION/S**

That the WPICMM05:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2022–WPICMM05–09.
- 2) **NOTE** the slow progress made by the CDSWG to draft the IOTC CDS strategy and that further discussions are required to progress the work of the CDSWG.
- 3) **RECOMMEND** that the Compliance Committee consider that the submission of a proposal for an IOTC CDS strategy be postponed to 2023.