

## Progress of work and plan for 2023 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 2023 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 the 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 seven 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](#)
- [6<sup>th</sup> Meeting - 14 February 2022, IOTC-2022-CDSWG06-R Rev1](#)
- [7<sup>th</sup> Meeting – 29 September 2022, IOTC-2022-CDSWG07-R](#)

An [eighth meeting](#) is scheduled for 13 February 2023, prior to the WPICMM06.

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

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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.

The 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CDS Working Group made seven agreements, which were endorsed by the Compliance Committee at its 19<sup>th</sup> Session, and which are reproduced below:

**CONSOLIDATED LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CDSWG05 MEETING**

CDSWG05 (Para. 23) 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.

CDSWG05 (Para. 24) AGREED that the factors to be considered for selecting species may be Stock Status, IUU Risk, Level of International Trade, Difficulty of Implementation and Any Other Factor.

CDSWG05 (Para. 25) AGREED that the nature of the fisheries (whether they catch all three tropical tuna species) is a factor that should also be included.

CDSWG05 (Para. 26) 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.

CDSWG05 (Para. 27) AGREED that that the table in Slide 10 of Discussion Paper IOTC-2021-2021-CDSWG04-01 be completed, in order to help the Commission to agree or not with the recommendations of the CDSWG.

CDSWG05 (Para. 28) AGREED that Total Allowable Catch or Harvest Control Rules can incentivise underreporting so other species (in addition to BET, SKJ and YFT) may be included later, once the CDS has started.

CDSWG05 (Para. 31) AGREED that there is in fact no need to define artisanal fisheries but there is a need to define the segments of those fleets that might need special consideration.

The 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CDS Working Group made two agreements and one reaffirmation, which were endorsed by the Compliance Committee at its 19<sup>th</sup> Session, and which are reproduced below:

**CONSOLIDATED LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CDSWG06 MEETING**

CDSWG06 (Para. 40) REAFFIRMED the agreement that IOTC would develop its own system with potential for data exchange.

CDSWG06 (Para. 55) AGREED that all fish exported, irrespective of vessel size, must be covered by the CDS, albeit in a simplified form.

CDSWG06 (Para. 61) AGREED to estimate costs of the CDS once the information had been received from CPCs regarding the application of a CDS to the artisanal sector as well as from other RFMOs' secretariats regarding additional information on operational and administrative issues.

**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.

The 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CDS Working Group made five agreements, which are reproduced below:

**CONSOLIDATED LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CDSWG07 MEETING**

The CDSWG07 (Para. 20) AGREED that the CDS should cover, initially, all vessels harvesting and trading tropical tunas in the international market.

The CDSWG07 (Para. 22) AGREED to follow a two-stage approach, starting with a trade-based CDS that is later upgraded into a fisheries-based CDS.

The CDSWG07 (Para. 32) AGREED that the draft document will be reviewed by the CDSWG at its next meeting with the aim of proposing the Draft IOTC CDS Strategy to the next Compliance Committee (CoC20) in 2023.

**Basic design**

i) Species to be covered by IOTC CDS, taking into account stock status, IUU risk, level of international trade and the difficulty of implementation

in the first instance, the CDS could cover tropical tunas (bigeye tuna, yellowfin tuna and skipjack tuna), then other IOTC species step by step.

The CDSWG07 (Para. 16) AGREED that although the primary focus for a CDS should be the tropical tunas (bigeye, skipjack and yellowfin), there was merit to consider to include swordfish within the scope of the CDS and FURTHER AGREED to follow a stepwise approach for the inclusion of this species

The CDSWG07 (Para. 20) AGREED that the CDS should cover, initially, all vessels harvesting and trading tropical tunas in the international market.

The CDSWG07 (Para. 22) AGREED to follow a two-stage approach, starting with a trade-based CDS that is later upgraded into a fisheries-based CDS.

**Status**

**Completed** Elements incorporated in draft Strategy and its companion

[IOTC-2023-CDSWG08-02](#)

**Strategy**

The CDSWG07 (Para. 32) AGREED that the draft document will be reviewed by the CDSWG at its next meeting with the aim of proposing the Draft IOTC CDS Strategy to the next Compliance Committee (CoC20) in 2023.

**Status**

**Ongoing.** Discussed at the 8<sup>th</sup> CDSWG. Further discussions to take place at the next meeting(s).

Consideration of an IOTC CDS Strategy [IOTC-2023-CDSWG08-02](#), justified and supported by its Companion [IOTC-2023-CDSWG08-03](#), as commented on by the 8<sup>th</sup> CDSWG.

**RECOMMENDATION/S**

That the WPICMM06:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2023–WPICMM06–09 on the progress of work and plan for 2023 of the Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) Working Group (WG).
- 2) **NOTE** the availability of the IOTC CDS strategy at the CDSWG08.