

# Report of the Eleventh Meeting of the Catch Documentation Scheme Working Group

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Held by videoconference,  
25 February 2025

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**DISTRIBUTION:**

Participants in the Meeting  
IOTC CPCs  
Chairperson IOTC  
Chairperson IOTC Compliance  
Committee  
Chairperson IOTC Scientific  
Committee

**BIBLIOGRAPHIC ENTRY**

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## Acronyms

CCSBT	Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna
CDS	Catch Documentation Scheme
CMM	Conservation and Management Measure (of the IOTC; Resolutions and Recommendations)
CoC	Compliance Committee
CPC	Contracting Party (Member) or cooperating non-contracting Party
e-CDS	Electronic Catch Documentation Scheme
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna
ICD	IOTC Catch Document
sICD	Simplified IOTC Catch Document
IOTC	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
MCS	Monitoring, Control and Surveillance
PEW	PEW Charitable Trusts
WPICMM	Working Party on the Implementation of Conservation and Management Measures

## HOW TO INTERPRET TERMINOLOGY CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT

This report has been written using the following terms and associated definitions so as to remove ambiguity surrounding how particular paragraphs should be interpreted.

***Level 1: From a subsidiary body of the Commission to the next level in the structure of the Commission:***

**RECOMMENDED, RECOMMENDATION:** Any conclusion or request for an action to be undertaken, from a subsidiary body of the Commission (Committee or Working Party), which is to be formally provided to the next level in the structure of the Commission for its consideration/endorsement (e.g., from a Working Party to the Scientific Committee; from a Committee to the Commission). The intention is that the higher body will consider the recommended action for endorsement under its own mandate, if the subsidiary body does not already have the required mandate. Ideally this should be task specific and contain a timeframe for completion.

***Level 2: From a subsidiary body of the Commission to a Contracting Party or Cooperating Non-Contracting Party (CPC), the IOTC Secretariat, or other body (not the Commission) to carry out a specified task:***

**REQUESTED:** This term should only be used by a subsidiary body of the Commission if it does not wish to have the request formally adopted/endorsed by the next level in the structure of the Commission. For example, if a Committee wishes to seek additional input from a CPC on a particular topic, but does not wish to formalize the request beyond the mandate of the Committee, it may request that a set action be undertaken. Ideally this should be task specific and contain a timeframe for the completion.

***Level 3: General terms to be used for consistency:***

**AGREED:** Any point of discussion from a meeting which the IOTC body considers to be an agreed course of action covered by its mandate, which has not already been dealt with under Level 1 or level 2 above; a general point of agreement among delegations/participants of a meeting which does not need to be considered/adopted by the next level in the Commission's structure.

**NOTED/NOTING:** Any point of discussion from a meeting which the IOTC body considers to be important enough to record in a meeting report for future reference.

***Any other term:*** Any other term may be used in addition to the Level 3 terms to highlight to the reader of the IOTC report, the importance of the relevant paragraph. However, other terms used are considered for explanatory/informational purposes only and shall have no higher rating within the reporting terminology hierarchy than Level 3, described above (e.g., **CONSIDERED; URGED; ACKNOWLEDGED**).

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## Background information

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) Performance Reviews (2009 and 2015) contained recommendations that the IOTC should develop a comprehensive Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) system, including a Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) In particular:

- i. IOTC should develop a comprehensive Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) system through the implementation of the measures already in force, and through the adoption of new measures and tools such as possible on-board regional observers' scheme, a possible catch documentation scheme as well as a possible system on boarding and inspection. *Recommendation 51, [IOTC-2009-PRIOTC01-R](#) - 56 pp.*
- ii. the IOTC should continue to develop a comprehensive MCS system through the implementation of the measures already in force, and through the adoption of new measures and tools such as a possible catch documentation scheme, noting the process currently being undertaken within the FAO. *Paragraph 149 (a), [IOTC-2016-PRIOTC02-R](#): 86 pp.*

These recommendations were adopted by the Commission and were the basis for an in-depth appraisal for the development of an electronic CDS (e-CDS) for the IOTC, and the results of the appraisal were presented at a workshop in Maputo, Mozambique, on 12 February 2019. This workshop recommended that a Working Group be constituted to guide the development of a CDS Strategy. The recommendation was subsequently endorsed by the second meeting of the Working Party on the Implementation of Conservation and Management Measures (WPICMM02), the Compliance Committee (CoC16) and the Commission (S23).

Subsequently, eleven Catch Documentation Scheme Working Group (CDSWG) meetings have been held. In response to a recommendation from the third meeting of the CDSWG, the Commission endorsed the Terms of Reference for the Working Group in November 2020. The fourth meeting of the CDSWG (CDSWG04) was the first meeting after the endorsement of the Terms of Reference. This report provides a record of the eleventh meeting of the CDSWG (CDSWG11), as agreed to by the participants of that meeting.

## 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

1. The meeting was held online, via Zoom, on 25 February 2025.
2. The List of Participants is presented in [Appendix 1](#). A total of 44 participants attended the meeting. The meeting was chaired by Dr Indra Jaya (Indonesia).

## 2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MEETING

3. The CDSWG11 **ADOPTED** the agenda provided in [Appendix 2](#).
4. The CDSWG11 **AGREED** with the meeting arrangements.

## 3. ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS

5. The CDSWG11 **ADMITTED** one observer and Invited Experts in the list of participants in [Appendix 1](#).

## 4. PRESENTATION BY THE CONSULTANT - IOTC CATCH DOCUMENTATION SCHEME (CDS) CONCEPT PAPER UPDATE

6. The CDSWG11 **NOTED** paper [IOTC-2023-CDSWG09-02](#) on IOTC Catch Documentation Scheme Strategy (v4) and paper [IOTC-2023-CDSWG09-03](#) on IOTC Catch Documentation Scheme Strategy Companion (v1).
7. The CDSWG11 **NOTED** paper [IOTC-2024-CDSWG11-02](#) on IOTC Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) and the proposal for a Resolution on an IOTC Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS), which introduces the IOTC CDS Concept Paper.
8. The CDSWG11 **RECALLED** that during its previous meeting, many participants noted that they had not had sufficient time to consider the paper, and it was agreed that participants be given four weeks to provide their input on the IOTC CDS Concept Paper.
9. The CDSWG11 **NOTED** that input was provided by participants from only three CPCs.
10. The CDSWG11 **NOTED** paper [IOTC-2025-CDSWG11-02 Add1 Rev1](#), which provides a summary of substantive issues that the CDSWG need to resolve to inform the advancement of the Concept Paper.
11. The CDSWG11 **NOTED** that IOTC CDS Contact Officers can assign Flag Official roles to vessel representatives, enabling them to issue IOTC Catch Documents (ICD) or Simplified IOTC Catch Documents (sICD) and thereby reducing the burden on the flag State CPC.

## 5. REVIEW AND DISCUSSIONS - IOTC CATCH DOCUMENTATION SCHEME (CDS) CONCEPT PAPER UPDATE

12. The CDSWG11 **NOTED** that some of the issues raised are of a substantive nature and may require further work by the CDSWG and additional amendments to the Concept Paper and draft Resolution and **FURTHER NOTED** that this will impede submitting any proposal to the upcoming meeting of the Commission (S29).
13. The CDSWG11 **NOTED** that the Consultant's contract had expired in December 2024, and that any new consultant contract would require consideration by the Standing Committee on Administration and Finance (SCAF) and the Commission's consent, due to cost implications.

14. The CDSWG11 **NOTED** that it has reached a stage where further analytical work from the recruited Consultant is no longer required and that the next step is to engage in discussions and taking decisions.
15. The CDSWG11 **AGREED** to establish a decision framework to systematically address each element of the framework that require a decision in order to progress the work on an IOTC CDS.
16. The CDSWG11 **EXPRESSED CONCERNS** regarding the low level of participation and emphasized the need for more inclusive discussions involving all CPCs, given the high importance and financial and human resource impacts that implementing a CDS will have on national administrations.
17. The CDSWG11 **AGREED** to request the Commission to clarify the rationale for introducing a CDS or any other working group (WG) in the future, considering the capacity and financial limitations expressed by developing States and CPCs with artisanal fleets.
18. The CDSWG11 **NOTED** that these constraints are also evident across the IOTC, as CPCs and the Secretariat must allocate resources and capacity to engage effectively across multiple working parties.
19. The CDSWG11 **EXPRESSED CONCERNS** on the scope and relatively short timeframe proposed in the Concept Paper and **NOTED** that these are up to the final decisions of the Commission.
20. The CDSWG11 **NOTED** that ICCAT is expected to conclude its discussions on its CDS next year and **FURTHER NOTED** the similarities between the ICCAT and IOTC schemes.
21. The CDSWG11 **NOTED** the proposal to pause the work of the CDSWG and to await the outcome of ICCAT's proposal to implement a CDS for tropical tuna species, which can be adapted to the IOTC needs in the future. No CPC expressed their objection on this proposal.
22. The CDSWG11 **NOTED** that the proposed e-CDS envisages an auditing log that records all changes, including user responsible and date and time of modifications and **FURTHER NOTED** that IOTC CDS Contact Officers can only edit data sets related to their CPCs, ensuring that errors can be corrected without causing unnecessary delays or holdouts in fish shipments.
23. The CDSWG11 **NOTED** that the following clarifications on the description of the ICD and sICD:
  - Section 1c. labelled as “Vessel”: “Type” data field refers to the vessel type and will be automatically populated from the e-RAV.
  - Section 2a. labelled as “Fishing Dates”: “Fishing Start Date” and “Fishing End Date” data fields are intended to be completed by the vessel master. This section could be simplified, as the critical information concerns the start and end dates of the fishing trip, which determine when the catch document applies.
  - Sections requiring confirmation from users are designed to facilitate movement between elements involving different persons, ensuring that a section is completed in full before proceeding to the next stage of the process.
  - Section 2i (ICD) and 2f (sICD) labelled as “Recipient”: on its last column describes a built-in validation rule to ensure that received weight is not greater than verified weight. Similarly, other built-in validation rules may be included to ensure consistency on fish processing types reported.
24. The CDSWG11 **AGREED** to make the following changes to the Concept Paper:
  - Revise the language to clearly distinguish between IOTC CDS Contact Officers, Flag Officials and vessel representatives, ensuring that the latter are also authorized to issue an IOTC Catch Document.
  - Use the term “confirmation” for vessel operators, while using “validation” or “certification”

for government authorities.

- Modify the language of section 2e (Vessel Representative Confirmation) of the ICD to clarify that, in the case of transshipments, the obligation to confirm and finalise the document rests with the receiving vessel.
  - Strengthen the language to prevent illegal operators from using the e-CDS, and to restrict its access to CPCs and properly authorised vessels.
25. The CDSWG11 **NOTED** that additional work would be required for implementing the CDS, such as compiling a list of companies, including vessels not in the e-RAV, in order to provide the necessary access to the e-CDS.
26. The CDSWG11 **NOTED** that implementing an e-CDS would require increased capacity at the level of CPCs for the issuance, completion and validation of ICDs and sICDs.
27. The CDSWG11 **NOTED** the need for CPCs to work collectively to gain a better understanding and assess their general staffing requirements to inform discussions and enable informed decision-making.
28. The CDSWG11 **NOTED** the proposed methodology for assessing CPCs' staffing requirements and **FURTHER NOTED** that aggregated data could be used to support this evaluation.
29. The CDSWG11 **NOTED** the suggestion that, alternatively, moving to the direct implementation of phase 1 could be a valid mechanism to inform other phases of the process.
30. The CDSWG11 **AGREED** that CPCs can provide additional feedback on the Concept Paper after the current meeting.

## 6. PRESENTATION BY THE CONSULTANT - DRAFT RESOLUTION ON AN IOTC CATCH DOCUMENTATION SCHEME UPDATE

31. The CDSWG11 **NOTED** the proposal for a Resolution on an Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) presented in paper [IOTC-2024-CDSWG11-02](#).
32. The CDSWG11 **RECALLED** that during the previous meeting of the CDSWG, many participants noted that they had not had sufficient time to consider the paper, and it was agreed that participants be given four weeks to provide their input on the draft Resolution.
33. The CDSWG11 **RECALLED** that a shared document was created to facilitate feedback and **NOTED** that three responses were received from CPCs.
34. The CDSWG11 **NOTED** paper [IOTC-2025-CDSWG11-02 Add1 Rev1](#), which provides a summary of substantive issues that the CDSWG need to resolve to inform the advancement of the draft Resolution.
35. The CDSWG11 **NOTED** that, unlike CCSBT and ICCAT, which are transitioning from a paper-based to an electronic CDS, the IOTC is in a unique position to define and build an electronic CDS from scratch to support its objectives.

## 7. REVIEW AND DISCUSSIONS - DRAFT RESOLUTION ON AN IOTC CATCH DOCUMENTATION SCHEME UPDATE

36. The CDSWG11 **AGREED** to delete “and CDS Contact Officers will be responsible for their CPC’s user management and access in the e-CDS” to avoid duplication with paragraph 4, defining the IOTC CDS Contact Officer.

37. The CDSWG11 **AGREED** to substitute in paragraph 43 “CPCs are” for “The Commission is”, as it relates to a Commission’s responsibility
38. The CDSWG11 **AGREED** to add “gear type” to the table in Annex II on Simplified IOTC Catch Document.
39. The CDSWG11 **NOTED** the challenges expressed by CPCs with artisanal vessels in meeting the objectives of the CDS and in implementing the timeframe indicated for Phase 2.
40. The CDSWG11 **NOTED** the suggestion that the implementation of an e-CDS should consider the operational realities of smaller-scale fisheries, which produce comparatively lower yields per trip, often requiring catches across multiple vessels and trips to be pooled to form a single viable export consignment and **FURTHER NOTED** the suggestion that a sICD including vessels in an aggregated manner could create significant potential loopholes in the traceability of fish products and, therefore, defeat the purpose of having a CDS.
41. The CDSWG11 **NOTED** the potential solution presented by the Consultant, which involves eliminating the re-export document and introducing a new export document presenting the list of all catch documents associated with the consignment.
42. The CDSWG11 **AGREED** that CPCs can provide additional feedback on the draft Resolution after the current meeting.

## 8. DATE OF THE NEXT CDSWG MEETING

43. The CDSWG11 **AGREED** that, based on the advice of the Commission, the Chairperson will communicate the next possible meeting date.

## 9. ANY OTHER MATTERS

44. The CDSWG11 **NOTED** that there were no other matters.
45. The Report of the meeting was adopted by correspondence on 13 March 2025.

## APPENDIX 1 LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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**APPENDIX 2**  
**AGENDA OF THE MEETING**

**ELEVENTH MEETING OF THE CATCH DOCUMENTATION SCHEME WORKING  
GROUP**

24 January 2025

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**Date:** 25 February 2025

**Location:** Online

**Platform:** Zoom

**Time:** 1100–1500 hrs Seychelles time

**Chair:** Dr Indra Jaya (Indonesia)

**Vice-chair:** Dr Ansuman Das (India)

1. **OPENING OF THE MEETING** (Chair)
2. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MEETING** (Chair/Plenary)
3. **ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS** (Chair)
4. **PRESENTATION BY THE CONSULTANT - IOTC CATCH DOCUMENTATION SCHEME (CDS) CONCEPT PAPER UPDATE** (Secretariat/Consultant)
5. **REVIEW AND DISCUSSION - IOTC CATCH DOCUMENTATION SCHEME (CDS) CONCEPT PAPER UPDATE (CDS)** (Plenary)
6. **PRESENTATION BY THE CONSULTANT - DRAFT RESOLUTION ON IOTC CATCH DOCUMENTATION SCHEME (CDS) UPDATE** (Secretariat/Consultant)
7. **REVIEW AND DISCUSSION - DRAFT RESOLUTION ON IOTC CATCH DOCUMENTATION SCHEME (CDS) UPDATE** (Plenary)
8. **DATE OF NEXT CDSWG MEETING** (Plenary)
9. **ANY OTHER MATTERS** (Plenary)