

Report of the Tenth Meeting of the Catch Documentation Scheme Working Group

Held by videoconference,
5 to 6 November 2024

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

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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, ten 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 Tenth CDSWG (CDSWG10), as agreed to by the participants of that meeting.

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

1. The meeting was held online, via Zoom, on 5 and 6 November 2024.
2. The List of Participants is presented in [Appendix 1](#). A total of 35 participants attended the meeting. The first day of the meeting was chaired by Dr Indra Jaya (Indonesia), and the second day of the meeting was chaired by Dr. Ansuman Das (India).

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MEETING

3. The CDSWG10 **ADOPTED** the agenda provided in Appendix 2.

3. ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS

4. The CDSWG10 **NOTED** the admission of observers from PEW Charitable Trusts (PEW), Sustainable Fisheries and Communities Trust, World Wide Fund for Nature and Invited Experts and **FURTHER NOTED** that there was no objection to their attendance.

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

5. The CDSWG10 **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).
6. The CDSWG10 **NOTED** paper [IOTC-2024-CDSWG10-02](#) 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.
7. The CDSWG10 **NOTED** the consultant's presentation on the IOTC CDS Concept Paper, which provides a holistic approach on its design and outlines the e-CDS as a web-based application with restricted user access based on defined roles and responsibilities for the issuance, completion, and validation of IOTC catch documents.
8. The CDSWG10 **NOTED** that the e-CDS presented is a comprehensive concept, which aims to minimize manual data entry and transcription error, and alleviate the burden on CPCs and the IOTC Secretariat through its integration with other existing IOTC applications, such as the e-RAV.

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

9. The CDSWG10 **NOTED** that participants have not had sufficient time to thoroughly review the proposed e-CDS Concept Note.
10. The CDSWG10 **EXPRESSED** concerns that the design of the e-CDS places a disproportionate amount of responsibility for the issuance and completion of catch documents on government officials, rather than the fishing industry.
11. The CDSWG10 **NOTED** that, in the scheme proposed in the concept note, the initial issuing of the document rests with the flag State authorities, however, the responsibility for providing many of the key data elements of catch documents remain with the vessel representative, and, in specific circumstances, with importers and exporters.

12. The CDSWG10 **NOTED** that, for the Simplified IOTC Catch Document (sICD), the role of the port State Official is reduced, transferring greater responsibilities to the fishing industry in the creation of the sICD.
13. The CDSWG10 **NOTED** that the roles and responsibilities for issuing ICD or sICD vary across other RFMOs' e-CDS, involving users from flag States, coastal States, buyers or the fishing industry and **FURTHER NOTED** that assigning this responsibility to the fishing industry is perfectly feasible but may pose challenges for user accessibility and require mechanisms for data and user identity validation and verification, potentially resulting in a less robust system.
14. The CDSWG10 **NOTED** that the increased role of the fishing industry in issuing sICDs would help reduce the burden on government authorities.
15. The CDSWG10 **AGREED** on the value of an e-CDS application that incorporates data referential (drop-down lists), which enables direct communication with relevant users will minimize e-mails exchanges and streamline data processing.
16. The CDSWG10 **NOTED** that the unavailability of data sources (e.g. volume of catch traded and number of consignments) hindered the consultant's ability to conduct a robust assessment of staffing needs and costs.
17. The CDSWG10 **NOTED** that, due to their artisanal nature, some fisheries may produce comparatively less yield per trip, resulting in the catches across several vessels and trips being pooled to form one viable export consignment, thus requiring further consideration on how the e-CDS may be applied in such contexts.
18. The CDSWG10 **NOTED** that, due to the significant catch volume of IOTC species, there is a need for the CPCs to provide the volume of catch exported and estimated number of CDS documents to be produced.
19. The CDSWG10 **AGREED** that an analysis be carried out to determine the staffing requirements and associated operational costs at national level.
20. The CDSWG10 **NOTED** the consultant's explanation that the costs associated with the e-CDS application would be primarily incurred during its development phase and **FURTHER NOTED** that running costs are expected to be low.
21. The CDSWG10 **NOTED** the need to take a decision on how far along the trade chain the e-CDS should apply.
22. The participants in the CDSWG10 **AGREED** to provide their comments on the proposed CDS Resolution within four weeks after this meeting, through an online document.

6. PRESENTATION BY THE CONSULTANT - PROPOSAL FOR A RESOLUTION ON AN IOTC CATCH DOCUMENTATION SCHEME

23. The CDSWG10 **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).
24. The CDSWG10 **NOTED** the proposal for a Resolution on an Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) presented in paper [IOTC-2024-CDSWG10-02](#).
25. The CDSWG10 **NOTED** that data elements, user roles and responsibilities, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and functional specifications of the system would be covered and specified in the e-CDS application User Manual.
26. The CDSWG10 **NOTED** that the inclusion of paragraph 21.b) of the proposed CDS Resolution, was

considered necessary to close possible loopholes in the implementation of a trade-based CDS.

27. The CDSWG10 **NOTED** that paragraph 24 of the proposed CDS Resolution includes provision for CPCs to implement the additional phases of the e-CDS, on a voluntary basis, ahead of the stipulated implementation dates.

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

28. The CDSWG10 **NOTED** that participants have not had sufficient time to thoroughly review the proposed IOTC Resolution.
29. The CDSWG10 **NOTED** that ICCAT is developing an e-CDS for bigeye, and **FURTHER NOTED** that delaying comments may give the opportunity to take on board any progress and lessons learned by ICCAT.
30. The CDSWG10 **NOTED** that an exemption to the Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) should be explicitly mentioned in the proposal, since it is being managed by CCSBT and subject to its CDS.
31. The CDSWG10 **EXPRESSED CONCERNS** on the complexity of implementing an e-CDS and **NOTED** the need to revisit the proposed timeframes for the implementation of the different phases.
32. The CDSWG10 **EXPRESSED CONCERNS** on how the voluntary implementation of the e-CDS ahead of its phased plan would work in practice, considering that catch documents require completion and validation by multiple users.
33. The CDSWG10 **NOTED** that a more gradual and inclusive process to consider the scheme is needed, including individual CPC consultation.
34. The CDSWG10 **NOTED** that the development of a full-fledge e-CDS would be more cost effective.
35. The CDSWG10 **EXPRESSED CONCERNS** regarding the burden on artisanal and subsistence based non-export oriented fisheries to move from a catch estimation system to a complete enumeration system, in order to comply with the implementation of the later phases.
36. The CDSWG10 **ACKNOWLEDGED** the progress and consensus achieved in previous meetings including on the basic characteristics of the future e-CDS and priority species, while emphasizing the importance of maintaining continuity by avoiding the reopening of resolved matters.
37. The participants in the CDSWG10 **AGREED** to provide their comments on the proposed CDS Resolution within four weeks after this meeting, through an online document.

8. DATES OF THE NEXT CDSWG MEETING

38. The CDSWG10 **AGREED** to meet virtually on 25 February 2025.

9. ANY OTHER MATTERS

39. The CDSWG10 **NOTED** that there were no other matters.
40. The Report of the meeting was adopted by correspondence on 03 December 2024.

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APPENDIX 2
AGENDA OF THE MEETING

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

15 October 2024

Date: 5 and 6 November 2024

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** (Secretariat/Consultant)
5. **REVIEW AND DISCUSSION - IOTC CATCH DOCUMENTATION SCHEME (CDS) CONCEPT PAPER (CDS)** (Plenary)
6. **PRESENTATION BY THE CONSULTANT - DRAFT RESOLUTION ON IOTC CATCH DOCUMENTATION SCHEME (CDS)** (Secretariat/Consultant)
7. **REVIEW AND DISCUSSION - DRAFT RESOLUTION ON IOTC CATCH DOCUMENTATION SCHEME (CDS)** (Plenary)
8. **DATE OF NEXT CDSWG MEETING** (Plenary)
9. **ANY OTHER MATTERS** (Plenary)