

Progress Report on Harmonization and Improvement of T-RFMO Trade Tracking Programs and development of Catch Documentation Systems

Jointly Prepared by the Five Secretariats

1. Introduction

Kobe Course of Actions

The 2007 Kobe Course of Actions (KCoAs) included, inter alia, technical work associated with the: “Harmonization and improvement of the trade tracking programs and, as appropriate, development of catch documentation including tagging systems as required¹.” This paper reports on action by the t-RFMOs since then to progress this task.

Follow-up Technical Meeting

The KCoAs also established, as a follow-up mechanism, a technical working group (WG) consisting of appropriate experts from the t-RFMOs which was asked to discuss the technical work mentioned above. The WG met in July 2007 in Raleigh, USA.

After reviewing the then-current trade-tracking programs in the various t-RFMOs, the WG noted that traceability from catch to market was a key area for improvement. The WG identified other areas where improvements to SDPs could be made and noted that two t-RFMOs were developing or implementing Catch Documentation Systems (CDS).

Several proposals for improving SDPs or implementing CDS were presented at the Raleigh WG meeting. However, there was no general consensus on how to harmonize or improve the programs in all t-RFMOs. In this sense, the work of the WG was incomplete, although it is clear that some of the ideas discussed then ended up being considered subsequently by several of the t-RFMOs.

2. Description of SDPs and CDS in the five t-RFMOs

This section describes the trade tracking systems of the five Commissions, with emphasis on the current situation.

2.1 CCSBT

During June 2000, the CCSBT introduced a Trade Information Scheme (TIS) for southern bluefin tuna. In this scheme, a CCSBT Statistical Document must be issued for all exports of southern bluefin tuna (SBT) by CCSBT Members² and a CCSBT Re-Export Certificate must be issued for all re-exports of SBT. The scheme requires Members to ensure that all imports of SBT are accompanied by the appropriate TIS form and that the form is validated by an authorised competent authority in the exporting country/fishing entity. Copies of completed TIS forms are sent from importing countries/fishing entities to the CCSBT Secretariat where they are used to maintain a database for monitoring catches and trade. In addition, lists of all documents issued are sent by exporting

¹ This document uses the terms SDP and CDS generally as follows:

A Statistical Document Program (SDP) traces the international trade of a fishery product:

Export -> Import/market

A Catch Documentation System (CDS) traces movement of the product from capture to market:

Catch -> Landing -> Export -> Import/market

Catch -> Landing -> Domestic/market

² Within this text, a reference to “Members” also includes “Cooperating Non-Members” of the CCSBT.

countries/fishing entities to the CCSBT Secretariat for conducting reconciliations between exports and imports of SBT and for recording trade of SBT from Member to non member countries. Further information on the CCSBT TIS is available at:

www.ccsbt.org/docs/pdf/about_the_commission/trade_information_scheme.pdf

During its annual meeting in October 2006, the CCSBT agreed to implement a Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) for SBT, with the details to be finalised inter-sessionally for implementation on January 1, 2008. However, it was not until October 2008 that CCSBT Members reached agreement on the details for the CDS, which is now scheduled for implementation on January 1, 2010.

The CCSBT CDS incorporates both documentation and tagging of individual SBT. It extends the CCSBT TIS to include landings of domestic product, transshipments, the stocking of farms and the tagging of individual SBT. Five basic documents are involved, these being:

- Farm Stocking Form, which records details of the SBT catch placed in farms;
- Farm Transfer Form, which records transfer of SBT between farms;
- Catch Monitoring Form, which records SBT catch/harvest and other details for transshipments/exports/domestic landings/imports;
- Re-export or Export after Landing of Domestic Product Form, which tracks SBT that are re-exported or exported after being landed as domestic product; and
- Catch Tagging Form, which records the details (including tag number, length and weight) of each tagged fish.

All forms issued and received will be sent to the CCSBT Secretariat for central data management and reporting. The first four forms will be sent in either paper or electronic versions, but due to the large number of records involved, the catch tagging form will be processed by Members and sent to the Secretariat in electronic form only. The design of the CCSBT CDS forms are being reviewed and improved prior to implementation of the scheme.

Further details of the CCSBT CDS are available at:

www.ccsbt.org/docs/pdf/about_the_commission/Resolution_CDS.pdf

2.2 IATTC

IATTC Bigeye Tuna Statistical Document Program

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) adopted, on June 24, 2003, a Resolution C-03-01 establishing an IATTC bigeye tuna statistical document program.

This resolution was approved as part of an effort to combat IUU fishing, in recognition of the fact that bigeye tuna is the main target species of “flag of convenience” fishing operations and that most of the bigeye harvested by such fishing vessels are exported to Parties, especially to Japan.

The resolution established that IATTC Parties, by March 1, 2003, require that all bigeye tuna, when imported into the territory of a Party, be accompanied by an IATTC Bigeye Tuna Statistical Document or an IATTC Bigeye Tuna Re-export Certificate. At the initial stage of the program, the statistical documents and the re-export certificates are required only for frozen bigeye products. Bigeye tuna caught by purse seiners and baitboats and destined principally for canneries are not subject to this statistical document requirement.

The IATTC Bigeye Tuna Statistical Document is validated by a government official or other authorized individual or institution of the flag State of the vessel that harvested the tuna, or, if the vessel is operating under a charter arrangement, by a government official or other authorized

individual of the exporting state, and the IATTC Bigeye Tuna Re-export Certificate must be validated by a government official or other authorized individual or institution of the state that re-exported the tuna.

The Commission and the Parties importing bigeye tuna have the obligation to contact all the exporting countries to inform them of this Program. Also, each Party has the obligation to provide to the IATTC Secretariat sample forms of its statistical document and re-export certificate required with bigeye tuna imports. The Parties which import bigeye tuna are obligated to report the data collected by the program to the Secretariat each year.

The IATTC Secretariat maintains a password-protected web page that provides access to information on government officials or other individuals and institutions authorized to validate the IATTC Bigeye Tuna Statistical Document and Re-export Certificate.

The Commission requests the non-Parties which import bigeye tuna to cooperate with implementation of the Program and to provide to the Commission data obtained from such implementation.

Tuna Tracking Program under AIDCP

The IATTC Secretariat serves as the Secretariat for the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP). During the fifth meeting of the Parties to the AIDCP, held in San Salvador, El Salvador, June 15, 2001, the Parties adopted the Resolution A-01-02 to establish procedures for AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification.

The resolution established a certification of AIDCP *dolphin safe* tuna and tuna products. This certification is voluntary for each Party, and is issued for tuna captured in sets in which there is no mortality or serious injury of dolphins. Also, any tuna caught in sets in which dolphins were intentionally encircled by vessels without a dolphin mortality limit or whose captain is not on the List of Qualified Captains maintained by the Secretariat, is not considered to be dolphin safe.

Also agreed during the meeting in El Salvador was a system for tracking and verifying tuna. The purpose of this system is to enable dolphin safe tuna to be distinguished from non-dolphin safe tuna from the time it is caught to the time it is ready for retail sale. The system is based on the premise that dolphin safe tuna shall, from the time of capture, during unloading, storage, transfer, and processing, be kept separate from non-dolphin safe tuna. To this end the system is based on a Tuna Tracking Form (TTF) and additional verification procedures.

A fundamental element of the tracking system is the procedure whereby AIDCP observers, required to be on board all vessels carrying capacity greater than 363 metric tons record during the set which tuna is dolphin safe. Dolphin safe tuna is kept in separate wells on the fishing vessel.

The Party within whose jurisdiction the tuna is unloaded or, as appropriate, the flag state of the vessel, is responsible for issuing the *AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certificate* (Certificate) in accordance with the mentioned System for Tracking and Verification of Tuna. The Certificate includes the date; the corresponding TTF number; the weight of the tuna by species; if processed, type of processing and processor lot number; and the signature of the competent national authority, deposited with the Secretariat.

2.3 ICCAT

In ICCAT, the first statistical documentation scheme for Atlantic bluefin tuna (BTSD) was adopted in 1992 for frozen products. The programme was extended to fresh products in 1993 and was replaced by the Bluefin Tuna Catch Document Scheme in 2007 (Rec. 07-10, now replaced by Rec. 08-12; see below).

Bigeye Tuna and Swordfish SDPs.

In 2001, SDPs were adopted for swordfish (SWOSD) and bigeye tuna (BETSD). All swordfish and frozen bigeye that is imported to the territory of a CPC, with the exception of bigeye caught by purse seine and baitboat and destined principally for the canneries in the ICCAT Convention area, shall be accompanied by a duly validated ICCAT Statistical Document. Exported products must be accompanied by a statistical document that includes essential information including administration seals and technical references to vessels and fishing gear. Non-Contracting Parties which import bigeye tuna or swordfish from the ICCAT Convention Area are requested to cooperate in the implementation of the Programme and to provide to the Commission data obtained from such implementation.

Validation. Contracting Parties exporting products that are covered by the SDPs are required to transmit to the Secretariat a list of institutions and, if applicable, the individuals, authorized to validate the ICCAT Statistical Documents. This information is available to Contracting Parties in a password-protected Web Site.

Data Reporting. Contracting Parties that import products that are covered by the SDPs submit bi-annual reports on import data. These are circulated to all Contracting Parties and examined by the Commission.

Bluefin Tuna CDS

ICCAT adopted the Bluefin Tuna Catch Document Scheme (BCD) in 2007, and revised it in 2008 in light of the experience gained from initial implementation. The scheme also tracks re-exports (BFTRC). With this scheme, only completed and validated BCDs guarantee the importation or exportation of bluefin tuna into or from the territory of ICCAT Contracting Parties. Any shipment not accompanied by a completed and validated BCD shall not be accepted by the importing Contracting Party, except where all bluefin tuna are tagged in lieu of validation. Copies of validated BCD or BFTRC are to be sent to the Secretariat (by electronic means whenever possible). The Secretariat enters specific information extracted from these in a database on a password-protected section of the ICCAT website where Contracting Parties can access the information for all BCDs and BFTRCs that are related to a given catch.

Validation. The BCDs must be validated by an authorised government official, or other authorised individual or institution of the flag State of the vessel or the State of establishment of the trap or farm that harvested the bluefin tuna. The BFTRCs shall be validated by an authorised government official or authority. Similar to the SDP, information on validation authorities is maintained on a password-protected web site for CPCs to consult. Numbering. Each Contracting Party shall develop a unique numbering system for BCDs and communicate this system to the Secretariat. Tagging. Contracting Parties which tag all bluefin tuna available for sale must send to the Secretariat a summary of the implementation of the tagging programme and, as appropriate, tag samples. Reporting. All Contracting Parties which traded in bluefin tuna shall provide an annual report to the ICCAT Secretariat by for the preceding year.

Further information on ICCAT's SDPs and CDS can be found in:

<http://www.iccat.int/en/RecsRegsresults.asp?cajaYear=checkbox&cajaKey=checkbox&cajaType=checkbox&selectGroup=SDP&cajaAct=checkbox&selectidioma=all&textidioma=&Submit=Search>

2.4 IOTC

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission adopted a Bigeye Tuna Statistical Document Programme at its Sixth Session, in 2001. The Programme, which came into effect on July 1, 2002, exempts tuna caught by purse seiners and pole and line (bait) vessels and destined principally for the canneries in the IOTC Convention Area. Furthermore, it was agreed that the Programme will initially apply only to frozen

bigeye products, in recognition of the fact that several practical problems need to be addressed before the Programme is extended to cover fresh products.

The implementation of the Programme requires that all bigeye tuna, when imported into the territory of a Member³, be accompanied by an IOTC Bigeye Tuna Statistical Document or in the case when bigeye tuna are re-exported, by an IOTC Bigeye Tuna Re-export Certificate. The Programme makes provision for the Statistical Document and the Re-export Certificate to be validated by an authorised government official or other authorised individual or institution of the State which is exporting or re-exporting bigeye tuna. For the benefit of concerned authorities in the importing State, the IOTC maintains a password protected webpage that provides access to information on government officials or other individuals and institutions authorised to validate IOTC Bigeye Tuna Statistical Document and Re-export Certificate.

The IOTC Secretariat has minimal involvement in the implementation of the Programme; besides maintaining the list of government officials or other individuals and institutions authorised to validate documents under the Programme, the Secretariat also compiles data received from importing States. Reports compiled by the Secretariat are circulated for each semester with a reminder to Members which export bigeye tuna to examine the information with a view to reconcile it against their records. Concerned Parties are urged to exchange copies of statistical documents and re-export certificates to facilitate this process. Members which export bigeye tuna are required to provide a report on the results of the afore-mentioned examination to the Commission annually. A report on the implementation of the Programme is also presented by the Secretariat to the Compliance Committee annually.

Non-Members which import bigeye tuna from the IOTC Convention Area are requested to cooperate in the implementation of the Programme and to provide to the Commission data obtained from such implementation.

A proposal to revise the Programme and extend its application to fresh-tuna products was put before the Compliance Committee during the Twelfth Session of the Commission, in 2008. While some Members believed that enough time had passed since the inception of the Programme and that it was time to make the reporting of fresh-tuna products compulsory, others indicated that implementation was not straightforward and that they are still unable to make the institutional changes required to make it possible to include fresh tuna products in the Programme. No consensus was reached on this matter and consideration of this proposal was deferred to a future Session.

Further information on the IOTC Bigeye Tuna Statistical Document Programme is available at:

http://www.iotc.org/English/resolutions/reso_detail.php?reso=17

2.5 WCPFC

Despite numerous discussions in its Technical and Compliance Committee, WCPFC has not yet developed a CDS or SDP.

3. Conclusions

The technical work to improve trade-tracking systems and to introduce, as appropriate, CDS that was agreed to in 2007 in Kobe, has been partially fulfilled. A subsequent meeting of technical experts highlighted some of the aspects that needed improvement, but reached no consensus. However, several t-RFMOs have made progress since. Notably, CDSs have been adopted for bluefin tuna by CCSBT (to be implemented in January 2010) and by ICCAT (operative since June, 2007).

³ In this text, reference to "Member(s)" also includes "Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties" of IOTC.

Guidance from the meeting on whether catch documentation schemes should be developed more extensively by t-RFMOs would be useful. If this is recommended, further efforts may require continued discussion among experts, perhaps in the form of a second technical working group meeting.