

AGREEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL DOLPHIN CONSERVATION PROGRAM

22ND MEETING OF THE PARTIES

LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA (USA)
30 OCTOBER 2009

DOCUMENT MOP-22-06

'ECOSYSTEM-FRIENDLY' CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

The 21st meeting of the Parties to the AIDCP in June 2009 discussed the issue of an 'ecosystem-friendly' certification system, elaborated in Document MOP-21-08, *Elements for consideration in a tuna certification system*, prepared by the Secretariat for that meeting (appendix). It was suggested that such a system might be implemented in two stages. The first stage would be limited to certifying, if certain criteria are met, that the catches in the purse-seine fishery on tunas associated with dolphins be designated 'ecosystem friendly', and would be handled strictly within the AIDCP. The second stage would involve more complicated considerations associated with IATTC conservation and management measures.

This document, prepared by the Secretariat at the request of the Parties, elaborates the first-stage idea, as a concrete basis for further discussion.

In the first stage, only those tuna fisheries involving vessels with Dolphin Mortality Limits (DMLs) would be eligible to receive the 'ecosystem friendly' certification. As noted in section 2 of Document MOP-21-08, the following elements would be requirements for certification:

1. No tuna would be certified unless the IATTC has a resolution in force, based upon a scientific recommendation, for the conservation and management of yellowfin and bigeye tuna.
2. Only tuna tracked by the current AIDCP system for tracking and verifying tuna would be eligible for certification.
3. Only tuna caught by vessels with an observer on board would be eligible for certification.
4. Tuna would be certified only if meets the criteria that was not caught in contravention of any AIDCP measures or any IATTC measures on conservation of yellowfin and bigeye tuna.
5. The fishing captain aboard the vessel is on the AIDCP list of qualified captains.

For the first stage, the above elements would be the requirements for certification for vessels with DMLs. If the Parties decide to pursue this approach, a draft resolution could be prepared incorporating these elements as the basis for an 'ecosystem friendly' certification.

The Secretariat considers that its proposals in Document MOP-21-08 could also be the basis for the second stage of implementing the system.

Appendix

AGREEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL DOLPHIN CONSERVATION PROGRAM

21ST MEETING OF THE PARTIES

LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA (USA)

5 JUNE 2009

DOCUMENT MOP-21-08

ELEMENTS FOR CONSIDERATION IN A TUNA CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

This issue has been discussed during the past few meetings of the Working Group to Promote and Publicize the AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification System. Several Parties have expressed interest in developing a system, under the auspices of the AIDCP and the IATTC, to allow vessels that have caught tuna in accordance with the rules of the two agreements to certify and label this tuna in an appropriately positive manner.

The 12th meeting of the working group acknowledged that considerable work needed to be done before this issue could be advanced, and agreed that the IATTC needed to be closely involved in this initiative. In this regard, the working group considered that it might be useful to create a joint AIDCP-IATTC working group to study the idea in more detail. It also decided that the issue should be considered further in the next meeting of the Parties to the AIDCP, and asked the Secretariat to prepare a document to facilitate that discussion.

1. GENERAL

The certification and tracking system would be developed jointly by the AIDCP and IATTC, since it relates to measures established in both instruments.

Certification would require compliance with relevant measures agreed in the framework of the AIDCP and the IATTC. Other factors might also be considered in the certification.

Certification would be awarded by vessel trip, at the conclusion of each trip, and would be subject to the conditions in section 2 of this document. Data recorded by on-board observers would form the basis for this system.

Tracking of the certified tuna would commence once it is landed, to ensure the integrity of the certified catches.

A joint IATTC-AIDCP working group should be established, to develop and follow up on the certification system.

The use of the certification by Parties would be voluntary.

Consideration needs to be given to what the system would be called. The name should reflect the sustainability of the fishery, or its lack of harmful effects on the ecosystem.

Consideration should be given to which species and fisheries are to be certified. The system could be limited to certifying catches of yellowfin, bigeye, and skipjack tunas only, or extended to other species which are the subject of IATTC management measures, such as albacore. It could apply to catches by all gears, or to the purse-seine fishery only, or to all vessels or only to those over a certain capacity or size.

2. REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION

The requirements below are based only on the certification of yellowfin, bigeye, and skipjack tunas caught by purse-seine vessels.

No tuna would be certified unless the IATTC has a resolution in force, based upon a scientific recommendation, for the conservation and management of yellowfin and bigeye tuna.

Only tuna tracked by the current AIDCP system for tracking and verifying tuna would be eligible for certification.

Only tuna caught by vessels with an observer on board would be eligible for certification.

Only tuna caught by vessels on the IATTC Regional Vessel Register would be eligible for certification.

Tuna would be certified only if meets all the following criteria:

- i. It was caught in the eastern Pacific Ocean by a vessel on the IATTC Regional Vessel Register;
- ii. It was not caught in contravention of any AIDCP measures or any IATTC measures on:
 - a. conservation of yellowfin and bigeye tuna;
 - b. bycatch;
 - c. sharks or seabirds; and
- iii. If caught during fishing in association with dolphins, the fishing captain aboard the vessel is on the AIDCP list of qualified captains.

Upon the adoption of a new IATTC or AIDCP measure, this list would be reviewed and, if necessary, amended.

3. CERTIFICATION AND TRACKING SYSTEMS

The certification and tracking systems would be implemented and administered in a manner similar to the current AIDCP dolphin-safe certification system and system for tracking and verifying tuna, but would be operated independently of those systems.

Each competent national authority would be responsible for implementing the system within its territory. The national programs adopted to fulfill these responsibilities should include periodic audits and spot checks. Also, the Parties should develop an international verification program. .

The certification system would be reviewed periodically by an *ad hoc* joint IATTC-AIDCP working group, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the system and its procedures, and make recommendations to the Parties as necessary.

The IATTC Secretariat would be responsible for verifying the validity of the certificates.

4. PROCESSING AND MARKETING

Tuna processors should maintain records complete enough to allow the processed tuna to be traced back to its point of origin.

Parties should utilize the certification program to promote the capture and commercialization of tuna caught in accordance to the relevant rules of the IATTC and AIDCP.

5. PUBLICITY

- a. The certification system and its benefits would be publicized by providing information to interested governmental and non-governmental entities, companies involved in catching, trading, processing, and marketing tuna and tuna products, fishermen's organizations, and non-governmental organizations.