

**Report of the Second Meeting of the
Standing Catch Document Scheme Working Group (CDS WG)**
(hybrid/Brussels, Belgium, 17-20 June 2025)

1. Opening of the meeting and meeting arrangements

The Executive Secretary, Mr. Camille Jean Pierre Manel, welcomed participants to the Second Meeting of the Standing Catch Document Scheme Working Group (CDS WG). The Chair, Mr. Neil Ansell also welcomed delegates and opened the meeting.

2. Nomination of Rapporteur

The Secretariat was nominated to serve as Rapporteur for the meeting.

3. Adoption of the Agenda

The Chair recalled that in accordance with [Recommendation by ICCAT on the establishment of a Standing CDS Working Group \(Rec. 23-22\)](#), the Group was tasked with the technical aspects of the eBCD as well as the possible expansion of the CDS to other species, noting that the current meeting would predominantly deal with the latter. Japan noted that the document “Key decision points on the technical elements of a new CDS” and the presentation of this document, were applicable to agenda items 4 and 5 and could assist in guiding discussions. This approach was considered agreeable to the Group and the Agenda was adopted without changes. The Agenda is included as **Appendix 1**.

The List of participants is included as **Appendix 2**.

4. Determination of key elements on expanded CDS in ICCAT

Japan introduced the document “Key decision points on the technical elements of a new CDS” and a presentation of the document underlining the key decision points and technical elements of expanded CDS. Discussions were structured point by point following Japan’s interventions.

On the species to be covered, Japan recalled that bigeye tuna and swordfish were identified as clear priority candidates. The EU supported including both indicating flexibility on sequencing but emphasizing that both species must ultimately be covered. The US reserved its position pending further internal regulatory consultations, although noted preference for starting with Swordfish. Morocco aligned with the EU and supported moving forward with both species at the same time. Côte d’Ivoire questioned the objectives of migrating from a statistical document programme (SDP) to a CDS and underlined the importance of considering the potential challenges of including small-scale fisheries. Tunisia underlined the importance of having further discussions on this in the context of possible implications for their artisanal fleets catching swordfish.

Japan reiterated flexibility but noted that implementing both species at the same time may be challenging and hence recalling their preference to start with bigeye tuna. The Chair summarized that there was broad agreement that both species be included and encouraged further discussion on the sequencing at the Working Group on Integrated Monitoring Measures (IMM) and the Permanent Working Group for the improvement of ICCAT statistics and conservation measures (PWG).

Concerning the scope and product types to be covered in the CDS, Japan proposed that all product forms be covered (fresh/frozen, RD/GG/DR/FR/OT) in order to meet the traceability and catch based CDS objectives, while raising questions on canned products given the small share bigeye represents and the difficulties associated in mixed fisheries. The EU and Canada underlined their preference that all bigeye products be included. The US supported inclusion of canned products, while Brazil suggested this could be considered at a later stage. Following further discussions, it was agreed by the Group that all product types be included and canned products possibly phased in later subject to further discussion by the Group.

Japan underlined that a catch-based system would be pursued instead of trade-based given the need for timely monitoring of catches in relation to total allowable catches (TACs). The Group expressed their support for this approach and underlined the objective of a catch-based programme.

Japan presented “Expanded CDS data fields” designed to avoid duplication and facilitate compatibility with other schemes, in particular the EUs IUU catch certificate. The EU stressed the importance of harmonization but clarified that interoperability would not imply mutual validation. Japan requested further information on the simplified arrangements that were being used for small-scale fisheries under the EUs Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) system.

On the electronic system there was extensive discussion on whether to expand the eBCD system or develop a new platform. Egypt, the EU, Morocco and the United States indicated their support for expanding the eBCD system including on cost effectiveness versus developing a new system from scratch. Japan expressed concern over the possible high costs of adapting the eBCD system and suggested not ruling out the development of a new system. Following further discussions and the need to analyze in detail further the technical and financial options, the Chair concluded that the Group will recommend to IMM that a feasibility study and cost analysis be conducted in order to assist in the decision making on this point.

Japan presented very preliminary ideas on cost-sharing, including specific contributions by catching and trading CPCs and/or funding through the Commission budget. The Group agreed to continue these discussions intersessionally as well as in IMM but noted that the results of the feasibility study would be needed to better frame these discussions.

Japan outlined a proposed timeline leading to adoption of a draft Recommendation at the 2026 Commission meeting, subsequent system development and testing, and eventual implementation. Several CPCs once again underlined the importance of having the results of the feasibility study to guide further discussions of the Working Group before moving ahead with a proposal being submitted to PWG.

Recognizing the importance and interventions made, Japan invited further discussion on treatment of small-scale fisheries. Several CPCs noted the importance of defining criteria for small-scale vessels as well as recalling the derogations applied already in the eastern bluefin tuna measure. The Chair encouraged CPCs to submit more information for the Group to further reflect on the nature of the special consideration needed for small-scale fisheries in the context of an expanded CDS.

As regards bycatch, Japan proposed inclusion in the CDS and the Group agreed that such catches should be recorded consistent with current eBCD practice and the objectives of a catch based CDS.

On sport and recreational fisheries, the United States and Morocco recalled that catches not destined for sale would not need to be included in the CDS, although Japan noted that the tropical tuna measures did not contain such prohibitions. The Group considered this needed to be further discussed in IMM as well potentially by Panel 1 and PWG.

Concerning flag validation, Japan proposed that the flag CPC should be responsible in the case of charter arrangements pending further discussions foreseen on the ICCAT chartering measure. Several CPCs recalled that under their national systems validation rests with the flag State.

Japan suggested exploring the possibility of waiving government validation for tagged fish as in the BCD programme, also retaining the use of paper CDSs as a contingency in case of system malfunction or in trade with non-CPCs as provided for under the bluefin tuna programme. The Group agreed with the rationale although noted further discussion may be needed on specificities relevant to swordfish and bigeye fisheries and trade.

Pew underlined the importance of including both specifically, highlighting the overfished status of swordfish.

5. Consideration of the operational and technical aspects of expanded CDS

As agreed by the Group, this agenda item was already addressed under item 4.

6. Next steps and future intersessional work

The Chair summarized the main discussions including the agreement to propose a feasibility study and cost analysis to IMM. It was recalled that a draft Recommendation on the expanded CDS should be developed for consideration by the Commission in 2026 in line with [Rec. 23-22](#).

Japan indicated that it would further consider the matter and may prepare a revised document to guide future discussions.

The Chair encouraged further exchanges after IMM and intersessionally in order to move forward with the agreed workplan of the Group.

7. Consideration of any issues arising from the First Standing CDS WG Meeting in relation to eBCD and other elements

The Chair recalled the “Chairs Report on the First Meeting of the Standing Catch Documentation Scheme Working Group (CDS WG)” and the Secretariat presented a “Technological update of the eBCD system”, relating to the ageing eBCD system architecture. Following discussion, it was agreed by the Group that the related cost implications would need to be further discussed by IMM and the Commission including in the context of the proposed feasibility study which, if agreed, would follow ICCAT normal procurement rules.

8. Any other matters

No other matters were raised.

9. Adoption of the report and adjournment

It was agreed that the report would be adopted by correspondence. The Chair thanked participants for their constructive contributions and adjourned the meeting.

Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting and meeting arrangements
2. Nomination of Rapporteur
3. Adoption of the agenda
4. Determination of key elements on expanded Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) in ICCAT
5. Consideration of the operational and technical aspects of expanded CDS
6. Next steps and future intersessional work
7. Consideration of any issues arising from the First Standing CDS WG Meeting in relation to eBCD and other elements
9. Any other matters
10. Adoption of the report and adjournment

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