

**RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT ON ESTABLISHMENT OF A
STANDING CATCH DOCUMENT SCHEME WORKING GROUP (CDS WG)**

RECALLING that ICCAT agreed at the 2019 Annual Commission meeting that detailed discussion should be continued without prejudging the future course of development of Catch Document Schemes (CDS);

FURTHER RECALLING that the Ad Hoc Working Group on CDS, established by the *Resolution by ICCAT Establishing an ICCAT Working Group on a Catch Document Scheme* (Res. 21-21), exchanged views among CPCs on the expansion of CDS to other ICCAT species;

RECOGNIZING the ever-increasing market demand for fishery products whose legality are verified;

NOTING the successful development and implementation of an electronic bluefin tuna Catch Documentation Scheme in ICCAT;

RECALLING the *Recommendation by ICCAT on a process towards the establishment of a catch certification scheme for tuna and tuna-like species* (Rec. 12-09);

EMPHASIZING the need to implement a risk-based approach with respect to CDS;

MINDFUL of the Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes adopted by FAO in 2017, which set out guidance to States, RFMOs, regional economic integration organizations, and other intergovernmental organizations when developing and implementing new CDS, or harmonizing or reviewing existing CDS;

RECOGNISING that the Convention amendment process consisted of two parts, *i.e.*, the first part focused on the review of the Convention and the second part focused on developing specific amendments, and a similar two-step approach could be a good way to proceed with the discussion on this issue;

NOTING the concern that the number of Working Groups has been increasing and the need to streamline the work of the Commission;

**THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF
ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT) RECOMMENDS AS FOLLOWS:**

1. A Standing Catch Document Scheme Working Group (CDS WG) shall be established. The CDS WG shall also incorporate the function of and replace the eBCD Technical Working Group, which includes review of the technical specifications of eBCD and possible improvements.
2. The CDS WG is open to all CPCs and accredited observers.
3. The CDS WG will elect its own Chair.
4. Simultaneous interpretation in the three ICCAT languages (English, French, Spanish) will be provided during the meetings of the CDS WG.
5. The CDS WG shall first consider which species and the product types should be covered by any CDS, taking into account the factors specified in paragraph 1 of Rec. 12-09. With a view to facilitating the implementation of any expanded CDS by CPCs, a phased/step-by-step approach should be considered, including technical approach. The CDS WG will then decide on details of the operational and technical aspects of the CDS, based on the information/views provided by CPCs, particularly regarding practical and technical considerations with respect to the design and implementation of any CDS, including the following:

- a) What practical and technical difficulties exist with respect to the design and implementation of CDS and how they might be overcome;
 - b) Whether it is feasible and appropriate to expand the eBCD system to other species, or if developing a separate electronic system is more appropriate;
 - c) What capacity development programmes for developing CPCs may be needed to support their implementation of any expanded CDS;
 - d) How to avoid duplication with existing national and international schemes and reducing the workload of exporting CPCs, if possible; and
 - e) How to ensure compatibility between CDS being developed or implemented in other tuna RFMOs.
6. The CDS WG shall also deal with technical issues related to the eBCD and possible expansion of the eBCD to other species if considered the appropriate tool.
 7. The CDS WG shall, as far as possible, identify the key components to facilitate the implementation of any expanded CDS, including taking into account the special needs and requirements of developing CPCs, in both the design and implementation of such schemes, among others.
 8. From 2024 to 2026, the CDS WG shall hold a meeting at least once a year unless otherwise decided by the Commission. If the CDS WG is held in-person, it should preferably be held in conjunction with an intersessional meeting, particularly the IMM Working Group, so that the Meeting Participation Fund can be efficiently utilized to support the participation of developing CPCs. If the CDS WG is held in conjunction with an IMM Working Group meeting, the total duration of these two meetings should be no more than five days, unless otherwise decided by the Commission. The CDS WG may meet to discuss technical issues related to the eBCD whenever the Chair of the CDS WG considers it necessary and logistically feasible.
 9. The CDS WG will, if appropriate, develop and submit a draft recommendation on any expanded CDS to the 2026 Commission meeting or earlier, if possible. If the CDS WG cannot submit the draft recommendation in 2026, it shall propose a new workplan to the Commission for approval.
 10. This Recommendation shall repeal and replace the *Resolution by ICCAT establishing an ICCAT Working Group on a Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS)* (Res. 21-21).