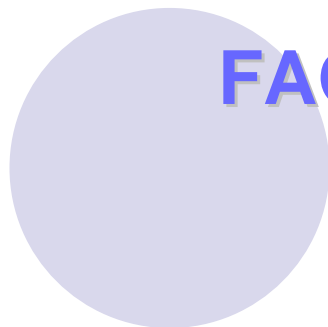


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FAO Fisheries Department

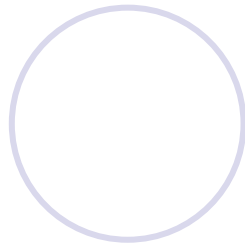


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Ecolabelling Guidelines

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Background to Ecolabelling In Fisheries

- Many commercial fish stocks are fully exploited or over-exploited
- Incidental bycatches
- Implementation of conventional fisheries management has not always been effective
- Increasing awareness by consumers and public at large
- International instruments and commitments (e.g. 1982 UN Convention; Agenda 21; 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement and 1995 Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries & IPOAs



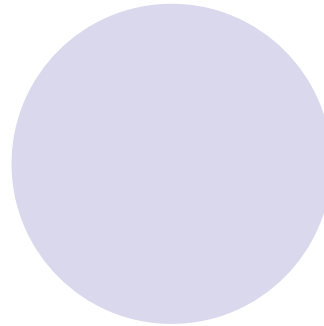
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Definition



Ecolabelling: voluntary product labelling conveying environmental information to consumers that seeks to create a market-based incentive for better management of fisheries



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Why international guidelines?

- Ecolabelling schemes could be used as new forms of barriers to trade
- The scientific basis of certification standards and criteria
- The potential difficulties for developing countries to participate in such schemes, especially the small-scale producers in these countries
- The potential confusion among traders and consumers which may derive from the utilization of a number of various and diverse product labels, themselves relating to different criteria and standards.



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Contents of FAO Guidelines

- Scope [1]
- Principles [2-3]
- General considerations [4-6]
- Terms and definitions [7–25]
- Minimum substantive requirements & criteria [26-32]
- Procedural and institutional aspects [33-151]
 - Setting of standards [40-63]
 - Accreditation [64-99]
 - Certification [100-146]

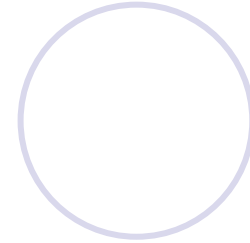
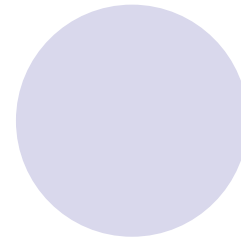


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These guidelines are applicable to ecolabelling schemes that are designed to certify and promote labels for products from well-managed marine capture fisheries and focus on issues related to the sustainable use of fisheries resources.



Principles

The following principles should apply to ecolabelling schemes for marine capture fisheries:

- Be **consistent** with UNLOS; UNFSA; FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries; WTO [2.1]
- **Recognise the sovereign rights of States** and comply with all relevant laws and regulations [2.2]
- Be of a **voluntary nature** and **market-driven** [2.3]
- Be **transparent**, including fair participation by all interested parties [2.4]



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Principles (cont.)

- Be **non-discriminatory, do not create unnecessary obstacles** to trade and allow for **fair trade and competition** [2.5]
- Provide the opportunity to **enter international markets** [2.6]
- Establish **clear accountability** for the owners of schemes and the certification bodies in conformity with international standards [2.7]
- Incorporate reliable, **independent auditing and verification** procedures [2.8]
- Be considered equivalent if consistent with these guidelines [2.9]



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Principles (cont.)

- Be based on the **best scientific evidence** available, also taking into account **traditional knowledge** of the resources provided that its validity can be objectively verified [2.10]
- Be **practical**, **viable**, and **verifiable** [2.11]
- Ensure that labels communicate **truthful information** [2.12]
- Provide for clarity [2.13]
- **Be based, at a minimum, on the minimum substantive requirements, criteria and procedures outlined in these guidelines** [2.14]
- The principle of transparency should apply to all aspects of an ecolabelling scheme including its organizational structure and financial arrangements. [3]



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General considerations

- Principles, minimum substantive requirements, criteria and procedures will **apply equally for developed, transition and developing countries** [4]
- **Involvement of States in ecolabelling schemes is desirable and should be encouraged.** It is recognized that States and, as appropriate, regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) may develop such schemes consistent with these guidelines [5]
- The **special conditions of developing and transition countries call for financial and technical assistance** [6]



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Minimum Substantive Requirements and Criteria for Ecolabels

- Sets forth the minimum substantive requirements and criteria for assessing whether an ecolabel may be awarded to a fishery. **Ecolabelling schemes may apply additional or more stringent requirements and criteria.** To be based and interpreted in accordance with international instruments. [26]



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Minimum Substantive Requirements And Criteria For Ecolabels

- Requirements are specified for each of three areas: **management systems**, **“stock under consideration”** i.e. the stock or stocks for which certification is being sought, and **consideration of serious impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem**. In developing and applying the criteria and assessing the conformity of the fishery with the standard of certification, the views and opinions of States, RFMOs and FAO should be fully considered [27]



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Unit of certification [25]

The “unit of certification” is the fishery for which ecolabelling certification is called for.

The certification could encompass: the whole fishery, where a fishery refers to the activity of one particular gear-type or method leading to the harvest of one or more species; a sub-component of a fishery, for example a national fleet fishing a shared stock; or several fisheries operating on the same resources. The certification applies only to products derived from the “**stock under consideration**”.

In assessing compliance with certification standards, **the impacts on the “stock under consideration” of all the fisheries utilizing that stock or stocks over their entire area of distribution are to be considered.**

Management systems [28]

Requirement: The fishery is conducted under a **management system** which is **based upon good practice** and that ensures the satisfaction of the requirements and criteria... The management system and the fishery operate in compliance with the **requirements of local, national and international law and regulations**, including the **requirements of any regional fisheries management organization** that manages the target stocks.



Criteria for management systems [29]

The criteria will apply to management systems for any fisheries, but it must be recognized that **special consideration** needs to be given **to small-scale fisheries** with respect to the **availability of data** and with respect to the fact that **management systems can differ substantially for different types and scales of fisheries** (e.g. small scale through to large scale commercial fisheries).



Criteria for management systems (cont.)

- **Adequate data and/or information** on status of fish stocks and adverse impacts on ecosystem [29.1]
- **Best scientific evidence** as well as consideration of relevant **traditional knowledge** provided its validity can be objectively verified [29.2 & 29.3]
- **Appropriate measures** for the conservation and sustainable use of the “stock under consideration” [29.4]
- An **effective legal and administrative framework and effective monitoring, control and surveillance** [29.5]
- **Application of precautionary approach** - absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures [29.6]



Ecosystem considerations [31]

Requirement: **Adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem** should be **appropriately assessed and effectively addressed**. Much greater scientific uncertainty is to be expected in assessing possible adverse ecosystem impacts of fisheries than in assessing the state of target stocks. This issue can be addressed by taking a **“risk assessment/risk management approach”**. For purpose of ecolabelling, the most probable adverse impacts should be considered. Those **impacts that are likely to have serious consequences should be addressed**.



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Procedural and Institutional Aspects

Structure

- Guidelines for the setting of standards of sustainable fisheries
- Guidelines for accreditation, and
- Guidelines for certification.

Principles apply equally to procedural and institutional aspects



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Governance options [37]



Initiator of the ecolabelling scheme

- Governmental
- Intergovernmental
- Non-governmental

Geographical range of the ecolabelling scheme

- National
- Regional
- International



Governance options [38]

Owner of the ecolabelling scheme may not be directly engaged in its operational affairs. Specific organization or arrangement could be:

- Public
- Non-governmental
- Private

Organization or arrangement may implement an ecolabelling scheme for one specific sector (e.g. fisheries) or may have responsibilities for various sectors



Governance options [39]

The owner of an ecolabelling scheme should engage a separate independent specialist accreditation body to take on the task of accreditation of certification bodies on its behalf. The accreditation body could be private, public or an autonomous body governed by public service rules.



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Guidelines for the setting of standards of sustainable fisheries

The standards reflect the objectives for sustainable fisheries that are being pursued through the scheme. Standards comprise quantitative and qualitative indicators of the governance system or management regime of a fishery as well as of its outcome in terms of sustainable fisheries and conservation of marine fishery resources and related ecosystems. [40]



Functions and organizational structure

- A standard setting organization or arrangement is assigned with the tasks of setting, reviewing, revising, assessing, verifying and approving standards... [44]
- Where there is no standard-setting body, the organizational structure of a standard-setting arrangement should include, *inter alia*, a **technical committee** of independent experts and a **consultation forum** whose mandates are established. Such a committee and forum should report to **legal entities**...[45]



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Transparency [46-53]

- Standard-setting organizations or arrangements should carry out their activities in a **transparent** fashion and following written rules of procedure.
 - impartial **resolution of disputes**
 - rules concerning **public notification**
 - standards should be regularly **reviewed**



Participation by interested parties [54-56]

- Development of standards ... should, wherever possible, include **representatives** of
 - fisheries management authorities,**
 - the fishing industry,**
 - fishworkers organizations,**
 - the scientific community,**
 - environmental interest groups,**
 - fish processors,**
 - traders and retailers as well as**
 - consumer associations.**
- Interested parties should be associated in the standard-setting tasks through an appropriate **consultation forum** ...



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Notification & review and revision of standards

- Notification: Before adopting a standard, the standardizing organization or arrangement should allow a period of at least 60 days for the submission of comments on the draft standard by interested parties... [57]
- Standards should be reviewed at regular published intervals and, if appropriate, revised following such reviews. Certified fisheries should be given a period of at least three years to come into compliance with the revised standards. [60]

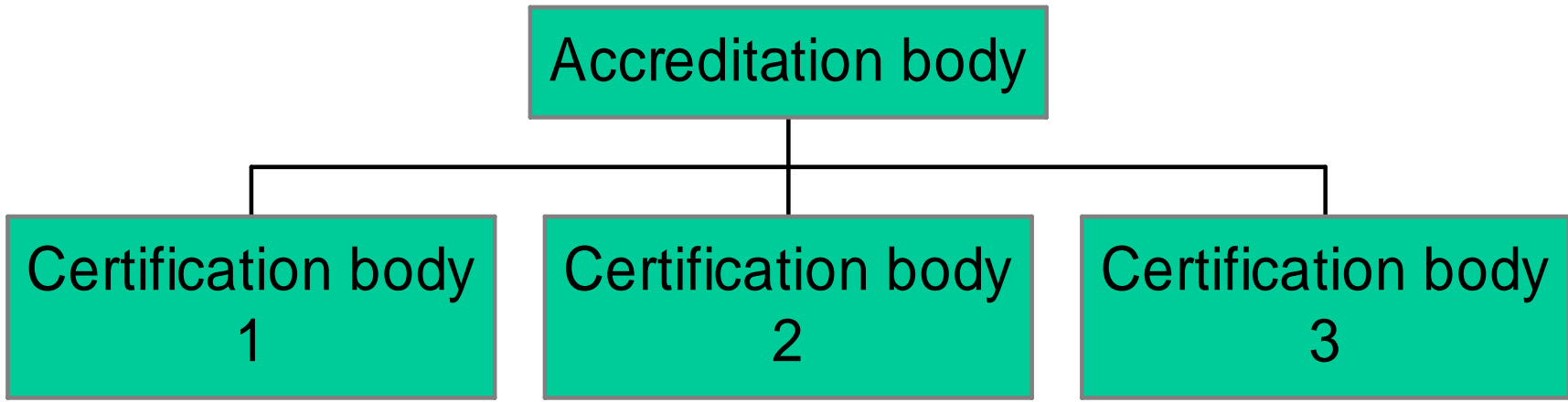


Validation of standards [63]

- In developing and revising standards, an appropriate procedure should be put in place to validate the standard vis-à-vis the minimum requirements for sustainable marine fisheries...
- Validation is also required to ensure that standards do not encompass criteria or requirements that are of no relevance for sustainable fisheries and could cause unnecessary barriers of trade or mislead the consumer.



Accreditation and Certification



Guidelines for Accreditation

Purpose:

Accreditation provides assurance that certification bodies responsible for conducting conformity assessments with sustainability standards and chain of custody requirements in fisheries are competent to carry out such tasks..... [64]



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Accreditation body requirements include:

- Non-Discrimination [67-68]
- Independence, impartiality and transparency [69]
- Human and Financial Resources [70-73]
- Accountability and reporting [74-81]
- Resolution of complaints **concerning accreditation** of certifying bodies [82-86]
- Confidentiality [87-88]
- Maintenance and Extension of Accreditation [89-91]
- Suspension and Withdrawal of Accreditation [92]
- Change in the accreditation requirements [93-96]



Guidelines for Certification [100]

Certification is the procedure by which a **third party** gives ... assurance that a product, process or service conforms to specified requirements.

Certification ... provides assurance to buyers and consumers ...

Impartial certification ... ensures that ecolabels convey **truthful information**. This is a necessary condition for the ecolabelling scheme to attain its objectives.



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Scope of certification [101-103]

Two types of assessments are required for certification:

- a) **conformity assessment** of whether a fishery conforms with the standard and related certification criteria;
- b) **chain of custody assessment** of whether adequate measures are in place to identify fish from a certified fishery at subsequent stages of fish processing, distribution and marketing.



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Certification: Requirements

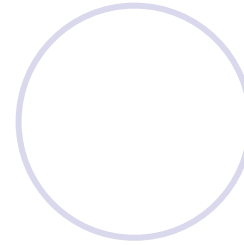
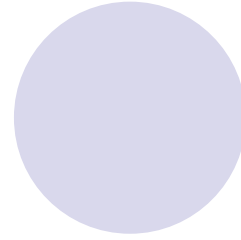
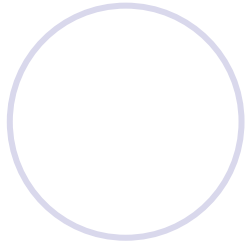


- Independence and impartiality [108-109]
- Non-discrimination [112]
- Human and financial resources [113-116]
- Accountability and reporting [117-124]
- Certification Fees [125]
- Confidentiality [126-127]
- Maintenance of Certification [128-129]
- Renewal of Certification [132]
- Suspension and Withdrawal of Certification [133-134]
- Maintaining the Chain of Custody [135-140]
- Use and Control of a **Certification** Claim, Symbol or a Logo [141-146]



Resolution of complaints and appeals [147-151]

- The accreditation body or owner of the ecolabelling scheme should have a **written policy and procedures, applicable to accredited certification bodies**, for dealing with any **complaints and appeals from involved parties** in relation to any aspect of certification or de-certification. **Costs of appeals should be borne by the appellant.** [147]
- The procedures should include an independent and impartial committee to respond to any complaint. If possible, the committee should attempt to resolve any complaint through discussion or conciliation. [148]
- The above does not exclude recourse to other forms of legal and administrative processes as provided for in national legislation or international law. [149]



- There are many things relevant to aquaculture certification are found in the fisheries ecolabelling guidelines!

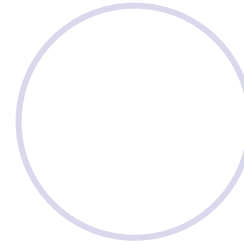
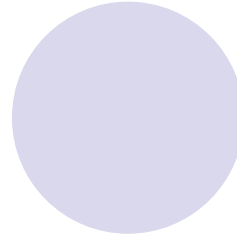
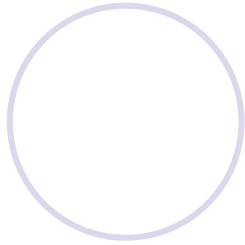


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Thank you



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