Position Paper

June 2021

On the STECF report on Sustainability Criteria for Seafood under the CMO Marketing Standards

Background

Regulatory marketing standards for fishery products are established under the common market organisation (CMO) Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013[1]. In 2019, an evaluation of the implementation of these marketing standards was carried out to assess whether they were still fit for purpose[2]. The evaluation identified shortcomings regarding the effectiveness of the current marketing standards framework in achieving the objectives set out in the CMO Regulation of 2013. In particular, the existing marketing standards do not sufficiently contribute to a level playing field on environmental and social aspects and have not been equipped to deliver on the objective of enabling the EU market to be provided with sustainable products.

The revision of the marketing standards is included as an initiative under the Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system[3].

The Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) of the European Commission published in April 2021 a report on Criteria and indicators to incorporate sustainability aspects for seafood products in the marketing standards under the Common Market Organisation (STECF-20-05)[4].

The report

The STECF (EWG 20-05) had been requested to identify critical aspects of sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture products that could be incorporated into a system to inform consumers and actors along the supply chain. The objective being to compare the performance of seafood products, according to a set of criteria considered in a scoring system, with the long term goal to incentivise improvement in both sourcing and production practices. This work aimed to identify suitable criteria and indicators and to assess their potential to be incorporated in regulatory marketing standards for both fishery and aquaculture products on the EU market, independently of their origin (domestic and imports).

The overall approach of the STECF intends to initiate and/or encourage a virtuous cycle of improvement and a continuous dynamic of progress towards less ecological and environmental impacts and higher social standards in seafood production and trade.

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[1] Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R1379&qid=1576

[2] Study, evaluation of the marketing standards Framework for fishery and aquaculture products
https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/publication-detail/-/publication/5f8b57c1-c1e-100c-11ea-8c1d-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-124357122

[3] Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system
https://ec.europa.eu/food/farm2fork_en

[4] Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) – Criteria and indicators to incorporate sustainability aspects for seafood products in the marketing standards under the Common Market Organisation (STECF-20-05)
https://stecf.ec.europa.eu/reports/marketing/2020/20-05.pdf

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