



Workshop on Ecolabels and Certification Schemes

TERMS OF REFERENCE

May 2019

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Overview

The Market Advisory Council, upon request from the European Commission's DG MARE, held several discussions and debates on how ecolabels, certification schemes or voluntary information for fishery and aquaculture products interact with the EU seafood market (e.g. access to and functioning of the market). These exchanges demonstrated that this rather specific issue could profit from a better common understanding through further exploration, mindful that there are related aspects which merit investigation from various perspectives. It was thus decided that a Workshop will help to delve deeper into the aforementioned issue and as such it would allow for discussion on wider concerns related to it.

Purpose of the workshop

To bring together members of the MAC, institutions and external experts in an open and constructive dialogue about how voluntary sustainability claims and information on seafood products, including ecolabels and certification schemes, interact with the EU seafood market or certain parts thereof. The workshop outcomes will hopefully aid the European Commission in assessing the situation and to help provide guidance to inform any further steps, in the event it decided to amend the regulatory framework with regard to voluntary sustainability information on seafood products.

Proposed Outcomes

- To have, within the MAC and amongst its members, a better and more informed level of understanding on the presence and functioning of voluntary sustainability information on seafood products in the EU market, including in the form of ecolabels and certification schemes
- To draft a document (the nature of which is to be decided, possibly in the form of a report of the workshop) with the purpose to reflect such shared understanding
- Suggested Workshop issues to be discussed:
 - Present and future state of voluntary sustainability information in the EU seafood market, including ecolabels and certification schemes
 - How different ways of gathering, validating and communicating such sustainability information deliver different outcomes to consumers and business
 - An historic account of the policy initiatives for an EU seafood ecolabel
 - International best-practice cases and standardisation in ecolabelling
 - International benchmarking efforts of seafood ecolabels
 - Interaction between public resource management and ecolabelling
 - Adding social sustainability (e.g. decent work) into environmental sustainability information

- *From EU Commission response letter (“for consideration”)*
 - The limited number of alternatives (question re. market access)
 - Lack of clarity on the definition of sustainability
 - The repartition of costs along the supply chain
- Suggested speakers to approach:
 - Academia
 - FAO
 - ISEAL
 - GSSI

Target Audience

- Members of the MAC
- European Commission and any other relevant/ interested (EU) institution
- Experts, stakeholders and possibly informed consumer groups

Schedule, Output and Deadlines

- ❑ Terms of Reference to be adopted in May 2019 by Working Group 3
- ❑ Draft agenda and proposals for speakers to be developed by the chair of WG 3 with the help of the Executive Secretary, on the basis of the agreed Terms of Reference by the end of August 2019
 - ❑ As the Workshop will take place in the first quarter 2020, on the basis of the draft agenda, a Working Paper will be produced by the WG 3 chair and the Executive Secretary which will go to approval to WG 3 at the September 2019 meeting
- ❑ Tentative date for the Workshop: first quarter of 2020 – to be decided by May 2019 during Working Group 3
- ❑ Meeting Venue: Brussels. To check with Commission on the possibility of holding the workshop in a room at Borschette/Charlemagne
- ❑ Initial contact with speakers before the summer break
- ❑ Report of the workshop to be published in its final version by the end of the year 2019 or early 2020 depending on final workshop date

Resources, inputs and external sources

Foreseen budget: 30,000 EUR (incl. all costs for travel and speakers; to reduce costs: hold at MAC session)

Possible in kind collaboration with Commission (venue? interpretation?), other Advisory Councils and Member States