



EU Fish Processors and Traders Association
Association des Industries du Poisson de l'UE

EU Federation of National Organisations of Importers and Exporters of Fish
Comité des Organisations nationales des importateurs et exportateurs de poisson de l'UE

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AIPCE-CEP Expectations from Seafood Environmental Standards

Scope

These expectations apply to certification standards that make environmental claims such as 'Sustainable Fishery' or 'Responsibly Farmed Fish'. They apply equally to fisheries and aquaculture standards that follow a process of standard setting and independent assessment.

Introduction

AIPCE-CEP support fisheries and aquaculture management policies that promote long term abundance. To meet the demand for healthy seafood requires a combination of well managed fisheries and responsible aquaculture.

All sectors of the seafood industry must act responsibly to provide the end consumer with seafood they can trust. Our role as processors and traders is to be able to demonstrate responsible sourcing, providing a market incentive for producers, combined with adding our voices to calls for improved fishery management.

The AIPCE-CEP Principles for Environmentally Responsible Fish Sourcing is our adopted model for the assessment of supply chains and subsequent engagement in fishery and aquaculture improvement.

Ultimately the responsibility for managing abundant fisheries, and for the provision of a sustainable framework for growth in aquaculture, rests with governments. Voluntary certification schemes are no substitute for good public management. Governments must continue to actively embed the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries into their national management strategies in order to ensure that fish stocks are available for future generations

AIPCE-CEP Policy on Eco-labels

Robust and credible standards offer us one route to assess our supply chains, incentivize and reward improvement, and reassure our customers.

AIPCE-CEP Policy on standards and certification.

As a starting point it seems apparent that if the rules and implementation of the public fisheries and aquaculture policies were to be fully endorsed and trusted by all stakeholders, there would be less need for ecolabelling. The first goal should therefore be to work towards improvements in this direction.

If there is to be a role for public bodies in ecolabelling, AIPCE-CEP calls for the establishment at the European level of a public framework of minimum criteria for ecolabelling. As processors and traders we will continue to support the development and widespread adoption of certification standards for responsible fisheries and aquaculture as well as a process for certifying producers who adopt the standards within this framework.

The quality of a standard depends on its rigor, transparency, reliability, consistency, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and appropriateness of claim.

The AIPCE-CEP expectations for standards are as follows:

1. The standard and certification processes needs to have a transparent methodology, including defined environmental scope, accreditation and certification mechanisms.
2. The standards must comply with the relevant FAO guidelines.
3. The standard will need criteria that have measurable indicators enabling effective and consistent auditing.
4. The definition of a standard and certification processes and their subsequent revisions must be participatory, open to formal input and review, and provide opportunity for stakeholder comment / objection. This is to protect the standard from any bias and to ensure that the standard does not change without due consultation with all relevant stakeholders including the certified supply chains.
5. The revision of the standard should be through a multi-stakeholder process guided by clear governance rules that prevent minority opinions from dominating.
6. The standards need to use up to date and credible science, which means it will evolve in response to emerging data and stakeholder input. The rate of evolution should not be so fast that it creates major problems for users.
7. Certification bodies must be accredited to the appropriate standard by recognized international accreditation bodies. Certification audits must be performed by auditors independent of the Standard setter and who work for certification bodies that meet, at a minimum, ISO65..
8. Standard setters must have a strong monitoring and evaluation system that contributes data to measure impacts and that feeds learning and continuous improvement.
9. The standard setter must have clear policies on claims and labelling that ensure the accuracy of claims being made.
10. The standard should not create barriers to trade.