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Team of Specialist on Sustainable Fisheries**Programme of Work of the Team of Specialist on Sustainable Fisheries 2020-2021***Summary*

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Team of Specialists (ToS) on Sustainable Fisheries promotes, facilitates and supports the development and implementation of fishery data standards throughout the supply chain, which contribute to the sustainable and ecosystem-based management of marine and aquatic resources on a global scale. Such standards include the Fisheries Language for Universal eXchange (UN/FLUX), developed by the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT). This document presents the Programme of Work (PoW) of the Team of Specialists for the period 2020-2021.

Document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/22 is submitted by the UN/CEFACT Bureau to the twenty-sixth session of the Plenary for endorsement.

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I. Background

1. World fish stocks are being depleted by overfishing, destructive fishing practices and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. These activities not only threaten fish stocks, but also the coastal communities which rely on fisheries resources for economic survival and as a reliable source of protein. The importance of protecting fishery resources is recognized by the international community through Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

2. An essential step to attain effective and sustainable management of fishery resources is timely acquisition and exchange of information on fishing location, gear used, species and quantity caught, etc. Until now, fishing vessels have mainly used paper-based logbooks to record and exchange such information. To improve information acquisition and management, the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) has developed an open and global standard which allows the electronic exchange of fishery data.

3. The Fisheries Language for Universal eXchange (UN/FLUX) provides a harmonized message standard which allows Fishery Management Organizations (FMOs) to automatically access electronic data from fishing vessels, such as vessel and trip identification, fishing operations (daily catch or haul-by-haul) and fishing data (catch area, species and quantity, date and time, and gear used). With this standard, FMOs around the world have, for the first time, a tool which automates the collection and dissemination of fishery operational data needed for sustainable fishery management and for detecting and combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. In addition, the development of a reliable and up-to-date database on fish catch will improve the knowledge base for science-based fisheries management.

4. The UN/ FLUX standard was presented at the twenty-seventh UN/CEFACT Forum in Geneva, where experts from government, regional and international organizations, regional FMOs, industry, research, and control and enforcement authorities agreed on its importance as a standardized tool to exchange fisheries information in an effective, transparent and efficient manner. At this forum, it was decided that a community should be established to promote and support the implementation of the UN/FLUX standard.

5. The Agricultural, Agri-Food and Fishery Programme Development Area of UN/CEFACT supported and approved this proposal and decided to create a Group of Experts from this community. The establishment of the Group of Experts, now referred to as the Team of Specialists (ToS) on Sustainable Fisheries, was approved by the Executive Committee (EXCOM) of UNECE in June 2017.

II. Introduction

6. The present document sets out the Programme of Work (PoW) of the UNECE ToS on Sustainable Fisheries for 2020-2021. UN/CEFACT is invited to adopt it at the twenty-sixth Plenary and thereafter submit it to the UNECE EXCOM for approval.

III. Scope, overall objective, activities, work areas

A. Scope

7. The activities of the PoW are open to the participation of all United Nations member States, fishery management organizations (FMOs) and other organizations involved in

fishing activities and sustainable fisheries management, provided they register as experts within UN/CEFACT.

8. The activities support efforts to combat IUU fishing and help to sustain the livelihoods of those who depend on fisheries activities and resources. They do so by promoting, facilitating and supporting the development and implementation of

- fishery data standards; and
- software and applications to register, monitor, report, inspect and maintain sustainable fishery and fisheries activities.

9. The PoW is linked to the revised mandate and terms of reference of the ToS on Sustainable Fisheries of UN/CEFACT (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFCAT/2017/16/Rev.2) as approved at the 105th meeting of the UNECE EXCOM (ECE/EX/2019/L.6).

B. Overall objective

10. The overall objective of the ToS is to contribute to integrated maritime governance by promoting, facilitating and supporting the implementation of fishery data standards on a global scale. The ToS is expected to achieve its overall objective and implement the necessary activities on the assumption that

- (a) there is active participation and contribution by experts from governments, academia, civil society and the private sector during meetings of the ToS, and through other relevant networks;
- (b) Governments are willing to engage in policy dialogue with key stakeholders for sustainable fishery management and take measures to implement policy recommendations and standards; and
- (c) extra-budgetary resources for capacity-building, advisory services and field projects are adequate.

C. Activities

11. To achieve this goal the ToS will do the following:

- (a) Actively promote fishery data standards on policy and technical levels
- (b) Share experiences on the implementation of fishery data standards
- (c) Develop and share best practices on fishery data standards
- (d) Advise and assist on implementation issues concerning fishery data standards and how they relate to broader sustainability standards and certification
- (e) Propose to the Agricultural, Agri-Food and Fishery Programme Development Area of UN/CEFACT updates to the standards

D. Work areas

12. The Programme of Work is structured around the following work areas (WA):

- WA1: Policy dialogue and advice
- WA2: Technical monitoring, assessment and guidance
- WA3: Communication and outreach

- WA4: Capacity building and partnerships
- WA5: Support software tools for sustainable fisheries management

WA1: Policy dialogue and guidance

13. This Work Area involves active promotion and support of the implementation of fishery data standards on a policy level. This Work Area encompasses active engagement with policymakers on a global scale by contributing to events on fisheries and by engaging authorities and Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs).

14. Activities of this Work Area are as follows:

- Participate in international conferences and fora (UN/CEFACT Forums, United Nations Ocean Conferences, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations Committee on Fishery sessions, Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI) Board and Research Data Alliance meetings, etc.)
- Have meetings with RFMOs
- Produce a paper on policy and legal issues related to regulations, coding and identifiers, data usage and data rights

WA2: Technical monitoring, assessment and advice

15. This Work Area facilitates and supports the development and implementation of fishery data standards on a technical level. This involves the development of handbooks and sharing information and best practices on technical implementation matters.

16. Activities of this Work Area are as follows:

- Identify the needs in the development and implementation of fishery data standards
- Produce a questionnaire and conduct a survey on the need for advice and support to enhance and disseminate knowledge
- Draft a handbook on policy issues and technical implementation for fishery data standards (including an implementation document template)
- Produce FAQs on lessons learned from the implementation of fishery data standards (e.g. by the European Union, Brazil, Thailand, etc.)
- Prepare a brochure on the interaction between UN/FLUX and the FOCUS open-source community¹, the implementation of vessels monitoring systems and other implemented sections of UN/FLUX
- Draft a briefing of general information on what it takes to move to UN/FLUX (regulatory, financial, IT requirements, etc.)
- Provide technical support on implementation requirements through an expert group
- Liaise with other relevant bodies (e.g. Research Data Alliance and the Working Party of Fishery Statistics)

WA3: Communication and outreach

17. Activities of this Work Area are as follows:

- Establish a communication group

¹ See: <https://www.focus.fish/>

- Prepare and disseminate handbooks and implementation guides for the fishery data standards
- Develop information on the work of the ToS and on fishery standards via policy briefs, press briefs, and flyers
- Develop the website of the ToS, contribute to content design and maintenance, and use social media and videos, as appropriate
- Coordinate through the UNECE Secretariat participation and contributions to relevant conferences, fora and events to disseminate information
- Coordinate through the UNECE Secretariat outreach activities beyond the promotion of fishery data standards to highlight the benefits of other standards/processes within sustainable fisheries, such as tracking and tracing, or statistics, and risk management;
- Produce a handbook on regulation; content structure such as code lists; and identifiers and data rights
- Cooperate with the track and trace initiatives in the supply chain
- Cooperate with standards and certification bodies on sustainable fishery management (e.g. FAIRTRADE² and the International Trade Centre Sustainability Network)
- Raise funds for the activities laid out in the PoW.

WA4: Capacity building and partnerships

18. Special attention will be given to small fishery communities which have neither the knowledge nor the financial means to adopt and implement fishery data standards.

19. By seeking partnerships, this Work Area will establish a solid foundation for the promotion and implementation of fishery data standards and work on sustainable fisheries and combatting IUU fishing. It will also support the implementation of relevant targets under SDG 14 on the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas, and marine resources, and SDG 17 on partnerships.

20. By sharing knowledge and expertise through collaborations and partnerships, this Work Area will connect with fishery management organizations and fishery communities to exploit the benefits of collaboration and minimize the chance of working separately on the same issues.

21. The UNECE Secretariat maintains relations with several international organizations. This collaboration needs to be further developed with the following organizations and their initiatives:

- The European Union represented by the Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE)
- The Fisheries Open Source Community Software (FOCUS)
- The World Animal Protection Global Ghost Gear Initiative
- The FAO Global Record on Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels
- The World Trade Organization work on fishery subsidies contributing to IUU fishing, overfishing, and overcapacity (SDG 14.6)

² See: <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/What-is-Fairtrade>

- The International Trade Centre work in support of sustainable fishery management (sustainability network)
- The World Customs Organization work on customs issues for fishery trade
- The FAO and the World Health Organization work on health-related issues and CODEX Alimentarius
- Branch organizations (e.g. the International Sustainable Seafood Foundation) in supply chains; and certification organizations (e.g. FAIRTRADE, Marine Stewardship Council)
- Relevant private sector companies

WA5: Support software tools for sustainable fisheries management

22. Special attention will be given to authorities in developing economies which have neither the knowledge nor the financial means to

- adopt and implement sustainable fisheries management;
- develop software tools and applications for the fisheries management system;
- register vessels, fishing trips, fishing activities, catchment, landing and sales;
- query fisheries management systems about fishery activities, equipment and catchments;
- do inspections in port and at sea;
- report to RFMOs about the fishery in their jurisdiction.

23. The ToS will support developing economies to access open-source software, free to implement and use by the authorities and fisheries communities (e.g. FOCUS).

IV. Guiding principles

24. The work of the ToS and the execution of this PoW is guided by the following principles:

- Expert advice
- Respect and mutual acceptance of any level of involvement or contribution
- Full alignment of the work of the ToS with the Terms of Reference and PoW

V. Governance

25. The Team is guided by its Chair, which is supported by one or two Vice-Chairs.

26. It is the responsibility of the Chair that the objectives of the ToS are met and follow the PoW.

27. Members of the ToS undertake the substantive work. They undertake the preparation of substantive documentation for the meetings and the reports to be submitted to the UN/CEFACT Bureau and the annual UN/CEFACT Plenary.

28. The UNECE Secretariat provides necessary support to the ToS within available resources.

29. Participation in the ToS is on a voluntary, self-funded basis. All members of the ToS must register as experts of UN/CEFACT, in accordance with relevant procedures.
