



Social Dimensions of Certification Schemes for Capture Fisheries: How Can Coastal Communities Benefit?

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Structure of Presentation

- What are the different types of labelling and certification?
- Why ecolabelling has only limited chances of success in Asia?
- What are the possible options in the realms of labelling and certification to benefit coastal fishing communities of Asia?



Different Types of Labelling and Certification

- **Certifying a fishery, or fishing method, as sustainable**
- **Certifying fish as originating from a recognized fishing vessel registry or non-IUU fishing vessels as sustainable**
- **Certifying fish as caught from cleaner waters (shellfish)**
- **Certifying turtle-, dolphin- and protected species-safe fish**
- **Certifying selective fishing method targeting non-endangered species without any negative impact on the environment (fair fish)**
- **Certifying seafood as healthy (permissible level of heavy metals such as mercury and cadmium)**
- **Certifying chain of custody**
- **Certifying environmental monitoring systems in a fishery or aquaculture operation**
- **Certifying food safety standards of fish processing facilities**
- **Certifying marketing infrastructure as environment-friendly**
- **Certifying cultural attributes of fishing communities**
- **Certifying Geographic indications (GIs) (e.g., *nuoc mam* anchovy fish sauce from Phu Quoc, Viet Nam, produced by women fish processors)**
- **Certifying fair labour conditions in fisheries and aquaculture**



Factors that Prevent Benefiting from Third Party Ecolabelling schemes

- Existence of weak fisheries management regimes (inadequate stock assessment, inaccurate catch documentation, poor MCS capacity, use of destructive fishing gear and practices) and degraded coastal and marine ecosystems
- Problems in implementing chain of custody
- Higher costs of certification and chain of custody
- Shortage of trained manpower



Certifying Sustainable Fishing

- Catch certification based on sustainability criteria and a management plan as a precursor to ecolabels
 - **Need for a Technical Committee on Fishing under ISO 14000**
 - **Consider inclusive programmes by training fishers to be auditors**
- Certifying a fishing method as sustainable (e.g. Carrefour's *Peche Responsable* Scheme in Europe)
 - **Could benefit fishers using selective, and responsible fishing methods (Carrefour's scheme is currently benefiting artisanal fishers from Greenland and Iceland in the European market)**
 - **Preferred by artisanal fishers since it favours selective fishing, discriminates against destructive and non-selective fishing gear and techniques**



Social Labelling of Fish and Fish Products

- Valorize family-based practices or traditional ecological knowledge systems in fisheries and aquaculture following the example of Breton fishers, France
- Valorize seafood products originating from traditional fish processing techniques, especially produced by rural women (smoked crab from India, boiled anchovies from Thailand, etc)
- Recognize fisheries that ensure better working and living conditions of fishers (ILO Work in Fishing Convention, 2007) and fish farmers (e.g. Naturland, Germany has expressed its intention to get into social labelling of ecolabelled fish)



What are the Possible Options for APFIC Developing Member Countries?

- Developing ecolabels for fisheries in the region may not be easy in the short run due to deficiencies in fisheries management regimes
- In the short run, catch certification or certifying sustainable fishing methods, can be resorted to, which may contribute to the increased well-being of coastal fishing communities (if fisheries are judiciously chosen)
- Consider developing certification of geographic indications and of certifying fishing that have significant content of traditional knowledge
- Develop market for certified fish and fish products in developing countries; labels and certification schemes should be considered not only to promote South-North trade but also to support South-South trade



In Conclusion

- Ecolabels essentially operate in a niche market and it is no substitute for painstakingly building up an effective fisheries management regime for all fisheries in the Asian region;
- Develop innovative and flexible labelling and certification schemes— social, environmental, ecological, or cultural—that are built upon the comparative advantage of Asian fisheries such as the rich culture of Asian fishing communities, their traditional knowledge, sustainable fishing methods and unique fishery products
- These initiatives should be undertaken in partnership with fishing communities and fishworker organizations



- Thank You