

IUU – Guide for Third Country Exporters: Weights & Product Codes to be Included on Catch Certificates

1.0 Purpose of this Guidance Document

- The European Union (EU) Illegal Unreported and Unregulated regulation 1005/2008 has been in place since 1 January 2010. However there have been some issues on how the Catch Certificate scheme is being implemented. In particular, some third countries certificates are being validated by the competent authority for the total quantity of fish landed rather than the quantity exported to the European Union. There are also issues in matching up the catch certificate(s) with the product that is being imported as the description and product code that is being used in the catch certificate is not specific enough for verification.
- The European Commission has recently contacted all third countries that have notified their competent authorities under the IUU Regulation, informing them of the correct process in respect of the weights and product codes that are required to be included on a catch certificate.
- This note provides further direction on what information the Irish Authorities will require to see on catch certificates in respect of weights and product codes. It also provides additional guidance on the submission of original or copy documents.

1.1 Problem with Weights on Some Catch Certificates

- In many instances only part of a catch (or catches) is included in a consignment that is to be imported to the EU. However, in some cases the catch certificate is being completed in respect of an entire catch as it is landed rather than the part of the catch (or catches) that is being exported.
- For verification it is therefore difficult to make a link between the consignment of fish and the fish listed on the catch certificate(s), which means there is potentially a greater risk of illegally caught products entering the EU market.
- The Commission has established that the catch certificate must only be completed in regard to the part of the catch that is to be exported. This is set out in the Addendum to the Commission's Guidance Handbook which can be found at:
[Weight to be Included on Catch Certificates](#)

This states that:

"In general, the weight to be entered should cover the consignment to be exported. Only one of the fields "Estimated live weight" or "Estimated weight to be landed" (plus verified weight landed where this information is available) should be completed. If the amount exported from one exporter in a third country constitutes a part of a landing from one vessel, the weight should only be the amount exported indicated in "Estimated live weight" and not the entire amount landed. If the entire catch is exported upon landing by the master or its representative, the weight should be the entire catch, i.e. "Estimated weight to be landed (plus verified weight landed where appropriate)". In any case, information about the weight of the consignment to be exported should always be indicated in the certificate."

- The commission has notified third countries and informed the competent authorities only to validate catch certificates that use the actual consignment weight of the fish – that is the weight of the fish to be imported into the European Union as opposed to the total catch landed by the fishing vessel.
- Where the exported product is processed the weight shown should be the weight of the fish in the processed product not the equivalent weight of whole/live fish that was processed.

1.2 There are Exceptions to this Rule

- There are two situations in which catch certificates do **NOT** need to reflect the consigned weight:
 - a) **Where the products are processed in a third country other than the flag state (e.g. one countries fish processed in another country).**

In this situation an Annex IV processing statement needs to be completed by the processing plant and validated by the competent authorities in the country of processing. The Annex IV statement will identify the part of the catch that has been processed to form the exported consignment and links this to the corresponding catch certificate. It is acceptable in this case for the accompanying catch certificate(s) to relate to the entire quantity of fish that entered the processing country, as the Annex IV statement provides the link between the exported consignment and the catch certificate(s). A template of the processing statement is at Annex IV of Council Regulation 1005/2008

Note: Where a consignment is made up from a mixture of fish from two countries, the consignment should be accompanied by a catch certificate and Annex IV statement covering the first countries catch and a catch certificate issued by the second Country relating to the fish that was exported as part of the consignment. The total weight of fish from the Annex IV and the second countries Catch Certificate should be the total weight of fish in the consignment.

b) **Where a bulk consignment of fish is stored in a customs warehouse in the European Union.**

In this circumstance when part of the bulk consignment leaves the customs warehouse it can be accompanied by a copy of the catch certificate for the entire quantity, plus supporting documentation (e.g. customs documents, invoices or transport documents) to provide the connection between the original quantity that entered the customs warehouse and the part to be imported into the EU.

In all other cases:

- Where the weight on the certification is incorrect, Border Inspection Post authorities in Ireland will decline free passage and impound the product. Irish IUU Authorities will then conduct additional verifications in order to be satisfied that the consignment to be imported corresponds to the catch certificate(s) supplied, prior to authorising the import.

1.3 Actions for Importers and Agents

- Importers or agents representing them will need to check that catch certificates include the correct weights prior to submitting the documents to the Irish IUU enforcement authorities. If the weights do not correspond to the consignment, further verification will be required by the Irish IUU Authorities which could delay clearance of the goods.
- Importers should inform their suppliers (exporters) in third countries of the requirements regarding weights in the catch certificate to avoid any potential delay.
- Importers and their agents are reminded of the prior notification deadlines for submitting the IUU documentation to IUU enforcement authorities in Ireland:

For direct landings of fresh fish by third country fishing vessels – 4 hours

For airfreight - 4 hours

For all other imports – 3 working days

1.4 What Weights should be Included?

- Typically the weight on the catch certificate should be included in the box “Estimated live weight” at section 3 of the catch certificate. It is always the weight of the fish in the consignment to be imported, that should be included in this box. E.g. for a processed product it is the weight of the processed fish that should be included, as this is the consignment weight.
- If an entire catch is being landed into another flag state or the European Union, the box “Estimated weight to be landed” would be used as all of the catch is being landed.
- If the latter is conducted and the landing is inspected/weighed on landing by either an authority in the third country of landing or EU Member State the weight verified by the competent authority in the country of landing should be included in the box “Verified weight landed”.

1.5 What if the Product Includes Fish from Multiple Catches and/or Vessels?

- It is acceptable for multiple catches to be included on a single certificate as long as the vessels are registered to the same flag state. In this case the exporter needs to provide the details of the parts of the catches that contribute to the finished product that is being exported to the EU. This is usually achieved by attaching an annex to the original certificate. The annex should include the details at sections 2-5 of the catch certificate for each vessel involved.

Any annex to the catch certificate must include the catch certificate number and also be stamped by the competent authority in the third country.

1.6 Product Codes

- It is a requirement that the catch certificate includes the correct description of the product, including internationally recognised product code. The European Commission has advised all third countries that product codes must contain a minimum of 6 digits. Any catch certificate containing only a 4 digit product code will be subject to additional verifications and checks by Irish IUU Authorities and this may delay clearance of goods.

1.7 For Further Information

Sea Fisheries Protection Authority
[IUU Fishing](#)

The European Commission at
[Illegal fishing \(IUU\) - Fisheries - European Commission](#)

For any information or verification of catch certificates and all IUU import documents, contact the Irish Authorities as listed below.

Sea Fisheries Protection Authority,
IUU Office,
Clogheen,
Clonakilty,
Co. Cork,
Ireland.

T: 023 88 59300
F: 023 88 59720 (Please mark for attention of IUU Office)
E: iuuoffice@sfpa.ie
W: www.sfpa.ie

Import Documentation sent to the IUU Office outside of office hours (M-F, 9-5pm) must be sent via e-mail only.

Any queries of a confidential nature can be forwarded to iuuprevention@sfpa.ie