

Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT IS NEW IN THE EU CATCH CERTIFICATION SCHEME AFTER THE AMENDMENT OF THE EU IUU REGULATION

(May 2024)

GENERAL QUESTIONS ON CATCH

1. What is CATCH?

CATCH is an EU-wide real-time IT system for the management of all procedures linked to the EU catch certification scheme. It allows the submission of all catch certificates and related documents accompanying the fishery products to be imported into the EU in accordance with the EU IUU Regulation (Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008) as amended by Regulation (EU) 2023/2842 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 November 2023¹.

The main objective of CATCH is to streamline the catch certification process and all linked procedures and to offer a fully digitised and paperless workflow. It facilitates the exchange of data, information and documents between all involved trading parties and control authorities and therefore simplifies and speeds up the administrative procedures.

CATCH is intended to improve the effectiveness of the EU IUU Regulation's catch certification scheme by ensuring a centralised digital management environment with the objective to identify and prohibit importation into the EU of fishery products obtained from IUU fishing.

CATCH offers the possibility to generate, validate and submit catch certificates and/or related documents by non-EU countries' operators and authorities.

2. Who are the users of CATCH?

According to the revised IUU Regulation, the EU importers and the competent authorities of the EU Member States will be subject to the mandatory use of CATCH in the context of the catch certification scheme.

For the importation of consignments of fishery products into the EU, importers shall submit to the competent authorities in the EU Member States the required documentation through CATCH, and Member States' authorities shall process such submission through CATCH.

However, CATCH also allows non-EU countries' operators and authorities to create, validate, and transfer catch certificates and related documents directly in CATCH. As such, the production flow of relevant data and documents can become digital from the origin of the product (exporting flag State) to the final destination (importing Member State).

3. Is the use of CATCH compulsory?

¹ [Regulation - EU - 2023/2842 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

The use of CATCH will be compulsory for EU importers for the submission of the catch certificates and related documents, referred to in Chapter III of Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008, to the EU Member States' authorities from 10 January 2026*.

Non-EU countries' exporters and authorities will be able to use the system on voluntary basis. It is not compulsory for them, but strongly recommended.

*Two years after the entry into force of Regulation (EU) 2023/2842 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 November 2023.

4. When will CATCH become compulsory?

From 10 January 2026 the importers of fishery products in the EU will have to submit the catch certificates and related documents to the authorities in the Member States through CATCH.

5. Can I start using CATCH before the new legal provisions start to apply?

Yes, the system is already up and running, which means that catch certificates, processing statements and importer declarations can be created via CATCH. However, its use is not mandatory. For the time being, CATCH is accessible only to EU Member States authorities and EU importers. Access to CATCH for training of non-EU countries' operators and authorities is expected in 2025.

6. How can I gain access to CATCH?

CATCH is a web-based digital environment which is part of TRACES NT. New users (for the time being only EU importers and Member States' competent authorities) can apply for access directly through the system.

The first step is to create your EU login account² if you do not already have one. This is a mandatory security layer. Once you have created your EU login, you must request a role to have access to TRACES NT, as **Operator** or **Authority**.

The Commission provides access only to the first user of the notified central competent authorities in Member States and non-EU countries. Subsequently the process follows a delegated access management model (central competent authorities granting access to operators and its first users). This is a more efficient and secure method of managing access rights than if a central Commission helpdesk manages everything.

This means that an operator user (importer) will have to be linked to an operator company and be validated by its responsible authority. It should select in the system the central competent authority with CATCH domain in its country. The central competent authority should validate the request in TRACES NT.

7. What languages will CATCH be available in?

CATCH will be available in all official EU languages.

8. Will CATCH ensure a paperless workflow in the EU catch certification scheme?

² [Help \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu)

To achieve a fully paperless workflow, non-EU countries' operators and authorities will have to use the system directly.

The obligation to submit the relevant documents via CATCH is for the EU importer; while the direct use of CATCH by non-EU countries' operators and authorities, although highly recommended, is voluntary.

Non-EU countries' operators and authorities can decide whether to continue using paper-based certificates or to use directly CATCH to generate and validate catch certificates and related documents.

Should the EU importer continue to receive the documents in paper format, he will be required to enter the data manually in CATCH.

To facilitate the direct use of CATCH by non-EU countries, the Commission will offer to certain non-EU countries that have IT systems capable of generating catch certificates for exports to the EU, the possibility of establishing interoperability between these IT systems and CATCH, on condition that the aforementioned systems comply with the data requirements as laid down in CATCH.

Currently, more than 113.000 users from about 90 countries worldwide are using TRACES directly, meaning that they complete certificates and documents online for trade of food, animals, organic products, and other requirements, and some of these countries have already shown interest in CATCH. The Commission will promote the direct use of CATCH by non-EU countries, highlighting the benefits for trade facilitation, like speeding up the administrative procedures at the border, increasing the reliability of data, the fact that the use of the tool is free of cost, the system is available in all EU official languages and some other languages, etc.

The Commission will also encourage the EU importers to promote the direct use of CATCH with their non-EU country suppliers.

9. What are the benefits of the use of CATCH for EU Member States' authorities?

CATCH enhances cooperation and coordination between the competent authorities of the EU Member States and between economic operators and their competent authorities. The main objectives of CATCH are:

- to allow for the detection of fraudulent catch certificates;
- to prevent overuse of catch certificates through quantity management when catch certificates are used several times in relation to different consignments destined to the EU market;
- to support risk management applied to official controls;
- to harmonise the documentary workflows.

10. What are the benefits of the use of CATCH for the operators?

CATCH harmonises the procedures foreseen under the EU catch certification scheme. In addition, it will speed up the administrative procedures, it will facilitate the submission of required data by providing a "copy as new" function that will allow the re-use of information previously introduced in the system and will provide a multilingual environment.

Once non-EU countries choose to use the system, it will also make the whole process easier as all the workflows will be electronic, and papers will be no longer required.

11. What training is needed to use CATCH? Will the Commission provide it?

The Commission is already providing trainings to the EU Member States' authorities on an ad hoc basis and will organise regular trainings for all Member States in the next two years. In addition, there is an extensive set of online help material and a CATCH documentation web page (as part of the TRACES NT documentation)³.

As regards non-EU countries, regional and bilateral information sessions will be provided in due time together with CATCH users' guidance.

Closer to the date of effective application of the compulsory use of CATCH, a functional mailbox will be made operational to address questions and dissipate doubts.

12. What if CATCH does not work?

CATCH will be ready and operational well in advance of its mandatory use in accordance with the legislation. In any event, contingency measures will be laid down in the implementing provisions to address any particular situation (i.e., if the system is not available to users).

13. What will the Commission do to encourage non-EU countries' operators and authorities to use CATCH directly?

The Commission is promoting the use of the CATCH by non-EU country operators and authorities through seminars, trainings and exploring interoperability solutions for those non-EU countries that already have IT systems for validating catch certificates.

CATCH is part of TRACES NT, an online platform, developed by the Commission in the early 2000's, for sanitary and phytosanitary certification required for the importation of animals, animal products, food and feed of non-animal origin and plants into the EU. TRACES NT is already used by 90 countries worldwide and some of them have already showed interest in using CATCH for the catch certificates and related documents.

The use of the system by non-EU countries will provide more certainty to the data and for them it will facilitate trade. The continued use of paper catch certificates will be a burden for EU importers, hence products accompanied by paper catch certificates would inevitably be subject to longer control procedures.

14. Will non-EU countries be able to connect their IT systems generating catch certificates to CATCH?

The Commission is open to engage in discussions with interested non-EU countries about interoperability between CATCH and their national IT systems developed and used for the generation and validation of catch certificates.

This interconnection could be ensured through web services. The pre-requisite for establishing interoperability with CATCH is the ability of the national systems to provide all data and information required in the catch certificate and related documents under Chapter III of Regulation (EC) No

³ [TRACES NT Documentation \(europa.eu\)](http://europa.eu)

1005/2008 as amended by Regulation (EU) 2023/2842 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 November 2023.

15. Who has access to the data validated by non-EU countries in CATCH?

Data from catch certificates and any other documents foreseen under the catch certification scheme need to be submitted to EU Member States' authorities who check, verify and take decisions on authorisation or refusal of importations. The use of personal data in this context is limited to the implementation of the objectives laid down in Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008. Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data and Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, apply to the information processed through CATCH as far as personal data is concerned.

16. Will non-EU countries' authorities be able to extract data they have validated in CATCH?

Yes, non-EU countries' authorities will be able to access and extract data that they have validated through CATCH. However, they will not have access to data validated by other non-EU countries.

They will be able to extract these data via the QlikSense of CATCH, a functionality that can provide statistical data based on information submitted through the system.

17. If a non-EU country already uses TRACES NT to validate other certificates, will it need to request a new access to use CATCH?

The authorities that have already an EU Login in TRACES NT can use it also in CATCH. However, they will need to request an extra role to access CATCH.

The authorities that will be provided a role in CATCH by the Commission will be those notified to the Commission under Article 20 of the IUU Regulation (flag State notification) and other authorities in charge of implementing other provisions laid down in the EU IUU catch certification scheme (for example the endorsement of documents referred to in Article 14(1) and 14(2)).

The Commission will reach out to non-EU countries to collect information about authorities that will be provided credentials to access CATCH different modules.

18. Is there an open-source version of CATCH that could be used by non-EU countries?

There is no open-source version of CATCH available. CATCH is a web-based system that can be used by non-EU countries after creating an EU login account and requesting a role to have access to TRACES NT, as "Operator" or "Authority". The purpose of giving access to CATCH to non-EU operators and authorities is to give them the possibility to create and validate catch certificates and related documents required for exporting fishery products covered by the Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 to the EU, directly in the IT system, instead of having to issue these documents on paper.

CATCH is not a database that can be used by non-EU countries for other purposes than the one described. It should be noted that the authorities of non-EU countries that are registered in CATCH will only be able to access data that they have validated through CATCH, and not to information from other countries.

19. Is CATCH based on UN FLUX?

Yes, CATCH is based on UN FLUX.

20. Will the European Commission adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 54b of the amended Council Regulation (EC) 1005/2008 to elaborate on the conditions under which, temporary exemptions from the use of CATCH can be established? If so, what is the timeline for this?

The Commission is not planning to adopt a delegated act establishing the conditions for temporary exceptions from the use of CATCH (provisions laid down in Article 12a(3) of the said Regulation) for the moment.

21. When will the European Commission adopt implementing regulations to lay down the rules for the functioning of CATCH?

The rules for the functioning of CATCH will be adopted before the date of application of the modified catch certification scheme provisions i.e. before 10 January 2026.

22. What is the procedure to be followed for using CATCH to validate catch certificates if the flag State has not previously used TRACES NT?

The first step is to create your EU login account if you do not already have one. This is a mandatory security layer. Once you have created your EU login, you must request a role to have access to TRACES NT, as Operator or Authority.

The Commission provides access only to the first user of the notified central competent authorities of non-EU countries (authorities in non-EU countries that are notified under Article 20 of the Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 to validate catch certificates). Subsequently the process follows a delegated access management model (central competent authorities granting access to operators and its first users).

More information can be found on the TRACES documentation website, under the CATCH module⁴.

23. Will a non-EU country that has not notified its authorities as flag State under Article 20(1) of Council Regulation (EC) 1005/2008 be able to validate catch certificates in CATCH?

According to Article 20 of the IUU Regulation, catch certificates validated by a flag State can be accepted by Member States only when that flag State has notified to the Commission the information required by paragraphs 1 and 2 of the said Article and Annex III of the IUU Regulation. If these authorities are not notified to the Commission, they will not be provided access to CATCH and therefore creation of a catch certificate for vessels flying the flag of that country will not be possible.

24. Is it possible to add attachments to the catch certificate?

Yes, this is possible. In cases where the catch certificate has been transmitted by the exporter to the importer in paper format, the original catch certificate must be scanned and uploaded in CATCH as accompanying document to the submission of the required information. It will be possible to scan and upload also other documents related to the catch certificate submission in CATCH.

⁴ [Catch Certificate \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu)

25. Will a manual for using CATCH be available in advance of its mandatory implementation?

A users' manual is available on the TRACES NT documentation website, under the CATCH module⁵. This manual is available even without login in into TRACES NT. As CATCH developments are still ongoing, the manual might not always reflect the latest changes made to the IT environment.

QUESTIONS on CATCH RELEVANT TO EU IMPORTERS

26. I am an EU importer: do I need to register to use CATCH? To whom should I direct my request for registration?

Yes, you must log in into TRACES NT first. To do this, you need an EU login account, which is the first step.

Once you have registered in EU login, you can log into TRACES NT and request a role that will allow you access to the application.

If you represent a company, you are an operator user and therefore, on the login screen you can select a role in TRACES NT as “operator”.

If your company does not exist yet in the system, you can create it by clicking “create a new operator”. After that, you will have to select the responsible authority by searching for the central competent authority with CATCH domain in your country. This authority will have to validate first your company in the system, and then you, as a user linked to that company.

27. I am an EU importer: how to use CATCH if I receive a paper catch certificate from the exporter?

Once you are registered in TRACES NT and your central competent authority has validated your role as operator, linked to a company with the activity “fishing importer” (or responsible for consignment), you can access CATCH and create a catch certificate, copying the paper version into CATCH.

On the TRACES NT home page, in the upper-left menu, click on “documents” and select “CATCH”. Click the green button located in the top-right window entitled “create new catch certificate”. If you have received a catch certificate according to the amended Annex II of the IUU Regulation, you need then to select the option “Create new catch certificate”. If you have received a catch certificate in the old template, the option to be selected is “Create new catch certificate validated before 10/01/2026”⁶.

You will have to introduce all the data of the paper catch certificate in CATCH following the different screens. All boxes marked with a red asterisk are mandatory.

The original catch certificate received on paper has to be scanned and attached as accompanying document, in section “Supporting documents”.

Once you have introduced all the compulsory information you can click the button “finish document” in the lower right corner. If everything is correctly filled in, your catch certificate has been validated in CATCH. It will have the status “valid”. If some of the boxes were not filled in correctly you will see an error message. When you click on each of the messages you will be redirected to the box and field which requires modification.

⁵ [Catch Certificate \(europa.eu\)](http://europa.eu)

⁶ Please note that the old template will be acceptable for a transitional period of two years after the application of the new template (until 10 January 2028)

The information “created by importer” next to the reference number will appear.

28. Once the catch certificate has been created in CATCH, what should I do to launch the importer declaration in the system?

After the validation of the of the data introduced in CATCH, based on the catch certificates and related documents in your possession, you will need to launch the importer declaration by clicking on the button displayed at the bottom right of the page, “new follow up” and then “launch importer declaration”.

The commodities related to the importer declaration will have to be selected using the CN code. You will need to indicate the weight of the fishery products presented for importation.

CATCH allows the use of several catch certificates in the same importer declaration.

29. I am an importer: what should I do when I receive a catch certificate through CATCH and a paper-based processing statement?

In this case, the importer will have to introduce the processing statement data received on paper in CATCH. To do that, you need to go to the homepage of CATCH and select the button displayed on the top-right of the page “Create new processing statement” followed by “From catch certificate”. After entering the requested details, the processing statement page is displayed, with the valid catch certificate (CATCH.CC) linked to it.

For the identification of the commodities in the processing statement, the CN code must be used.

A scanned copy of the processing statement will have to be uploaded as accompanying document. The health certificate, if available can also be uploaded.

Once all the information of the processing statement has been introduced in CATCH, you have to click the button “finish document”. The document should appear in CATCH as “valid”.

After this, you will have to launch the importer declaration.

In case that the processing statement refers to several catch certificates, it should be first ensured that all the catch certificates are already in CATCH before creating such processing statement. If they are all there, the system allows to link the processing statement with several catch certificates.

30. I am an EU importer: I will lose a lot of time copying all the data from the paper certificates and related documents into CATCH. There is a lot of information to provide.

For the first documents introduced in CATCH, the information will indeed have to be entered manually. However, once CATCH is used, the workload will be quickly reduced as CATCH includes the option “copy as new” which allows you to quickly create a new catch certificate, or processing statement based on a previous one. This action greatly speeds up the submission process. Many of the data can be re-used, like fishing vessels, exporter details, information on flag State authorities...

CATCH also includes the selection of favourites (operators, fishing vessels, catch areas and masters) when previously selected, which allows you to quickly fill in part of the certificate. This also speeds up the submission process.

Nevertheless, the best option would be to invite exporters to submit the catch certificates to their authorities directly in CATCH. This will ensure a paperless document workflow.

The Commission is also promoting the direct use of CATCH and will be assessing possible interoperability opportunities with some non-EU countries.

31. I am an EU importer: how will I receive authorisation for import from the competent authorities in my Member State in relation to a consignment and related documents submitted through CATCH?

Once the importer declaration has been completed, you must submit it for import control through CATCH. The catch certificate and all other documents, together with the importer declaration, are then received by the relevant Member State's competent authority. The status "Import control authority notified" will appear.

The import control authority will have to authorise or refuse the importation. You will receive through CATCH a notification when this is done.

32. Will importers still have to submit the original catch certificate in case that the non-EU country is not using CATCH?

Yes, in case that the importer receives the catch certificate on paper, he will also have to submit it, together with all relevant documents foreseen under the catch certification scheme, to the Member State competent authority. In addition, he will have to fill in the data required in CATCH and to attach a scanned copy of the original catch certificate and of the other relevant documents in CATCH.

33. Is it possible to correct a catch certificate/processing statement in CATCH and who can make the corrections? If not, how are typographical and keyboard errors managed in the system?

Two solutions were developed in CATCH to correct typo errors made by importers when copying the paper catch certificate into CATCH. Before the submission to the import control authority, the importer can use the REPLACE functionality. After the submission, the importer will be asked to use the AMENDMENT functionality.

The REPLACE functionality allows the importer to correct data copied from the catch certificate and pre-validated in CATCH, whilst cancelling the original one. The system generates a link between both certificates. To do that, the importer will need to open the catch certificate with the errors (and not linked to any importer declaration), click on the "More" button at the bottom of the page, and then on "Replace". Once corrected, the importer clicks on "Finish document" and the status is "valid".

The AMENDMENT functionality allows the importer to amend a catch certificate, already linked with other documents and submitted in an importer declaration to the Member State authority. To do that, the Member State authority (import control authority) will need to open the importer declaration, click on the "More" button on the bottom of the page, and then on "Send certificates for amendment". The authority will select the certificate in question and mark the box(es) to be amended. The importer will then receive a notification stating that the catch certificate (CATCH.CC) is ready to be amended. When the importer opens it, the status is "To be amended" and only the box(es) marked by the Member State authority is opened for edition, together with a comment from the authority. Once amended, the importer clicks on "Amend document" and the status of the certificate is "Amended". The Member State authority will then receive a notification and can proceed with the decision on importation.

34. How is the catch certificate transferred in CATCH from the exporter to the importer or to the processing plant?

Once the catch certificate is validated by the competent flag State authority, the exporter must complete the section “next operator”, present in the “Transport details” tab, and click on the button “Update next operators” to transmit the document to the receiving relevant operator. One or more operators can be added in that section.

35. Does the system send automatic notifications to operators (importers, customs, etc.) when a catch certificate has been validated?

After the non-EU flag State competent authority has validated one or more catch certificates related to a consignment, the exporter having submitted such certificate for validation will receive a notification in CATCH. The exporter will then be able to transfer such certificate(s) to the importer in the EU, by providing them access to the certificate in CATCH, through the “Next operators” section. The importer will receive a notification in CATCH and once the catch certificate has been submitted for import control, the Member State competent authority will receive a notification too.

36. Will CATCH be covered by the EU Single Window Environment for Customs? Will customs authorities be notified of the IUU import authorisation or refusal provided by IUU competent authorities through CATCH?

Yes, interoperability between CATCH and the EU Single Window Environment for Customs is foreseen in the revised legislation at the latest from January 2028. This environment provides for a framework to improve information sharing and digital cooperation between customs administrations and other government authorities in charge of enforcing non-customs formalities at the EU border in areas such as health and safety, environmental protection, IUU fishing, food and product safety, agriculture, etc. This will allow economic operators to clear certain customs formalities more easily.

The EU Single Window Environment for Customs will enable interoperability between the customs and non-customs domains to streamline the electronic exchange of documents and information required for the goods clearance process. The system is known as the EU Customs Single Window Certificates Exchange System (EU CSW-CERTEX).

Work to enable interoperability between the customs and CATCH domain has started.

Once CATCH is connected to the EU Customs Single Window Certificates Exchange System (EU CSW-CERTEX), customs authorities will receive the decision to authorise or refuse the consignment from the IUU authorities automatically.

QUESTIONS on CATCH RELEVANT TO EU IMPORTERS, EXPORTERS and RE-EXPORTERS

37. Does the introduction of CATCH and amendments to the documentary requirements apply to fishery products caught by EU Member States’ fishing vessels and export certification? Will the use of CATCH be mandatory in these cases?

The use of CATCH will be mandatory for fishery products caught by EU Member States' fishing vessels, processed in non-EU countries and then imported into the EU. Member States will have to validate catch certificates for these products in CATCH.

In addition, Member States' competent authorities will have to validate catch certificates in CATCH, when required by a non-EU country in accordance with Article 15 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008.

Concerning exports of fishery products caught by EU Member States' fishing vessels to non-EU countries having established national IUU import controls schemes, the conditions laid down in these schemes must continue to be respected. The use of CATCH in these cases will be possible after confirmation by these countries.

38. In case of re-exports from the EU of fishery products caught by non-EU countries' fishing vessels previously imported into the EU, will the re-export certificate have to be produced through CATCH?

Yes, when fishery products caught by non-EU countries' fishing vessels, imported into the EU and not processed therein are re-exported, the validation of the re-export section of the catch certificate will have to be made in CATCH.

39. What if the re-exporter is other than the importer in cases of re-exports from the EU of fishery products caught by non-EU countries' fishing vessels previously imported into the EU?

The re-exporter needs to have the reference to the catch certificate and importer declaration concerned (the serial number of the importer declaration generated by the system, as well as the document numbers of the catch certificates). With this information he will be able to access the relevant catch certificate in CATCH and select the procedure "re-exportation" in CATCH. After filling-in the re-export section of the catch certificate he will be able to submit it to the Member State's competent authority.

CHANGES TO THE CATCH CERTIFICATE, RELATED DOCUMENTS AND PROCEDURES INTRODUCED BY THE AMENDMENT OF THE IUU REGULATION

40. Will the content of the catch certificate change and when are these changes expected to take effect?

Yes, the amendment of the IUU Regulation introduces some changes to the template laid down in Annex II. The new template for catch certificate will provide more precise information to better identify fishing activities and products along the supply chain. As of 2 years after entry into force of the legal text, the new template must be used when issuing catch certificates.

The changes apply to:

- Fishing vessel identification (it requires to provide the IMO number and, if it is not applicable, other unique vessel identifier, if applicable). (Box 2, box 6 and box 7)
- Fishing gear has to be indicated. (Box 2)
- Fishing trips (the catching dates have to be indicated "from-to"). (Box 3)
- The weight boxes have also been amended for a clearer understanding of the quantities to be declared in each case. (Box 3)

- The name and signature of the master of the fishing vessel can be replaced by the name and signature of the fishing license holder. (Box 5)
- Box 7 differentiates and completes the information of the landing and transshipment operations within the port area.
- Importer declaration part has been modified to ensure coherence with customs import procedures. (Box 11)
- Transport details have also been modified to ensure traceability. (Box 10)
- A new box 13 with the legal basis for refusal of the catch certificate has been added.

41. When CATCH becomes compulsory for EU importers, they will continue receiving catch certificates and related documents which were validated days, weeks or even months before, using the old templates (that were in force before the changes started to apply). How will importers be able to use CATCH if they receive these documents on paper (using the old templates)?

For a period of 24 months after the use CATCH becomes obligatory, the system will allow to introduce and submit catch certificates and related documents using both the old templates and the new templates.

The documents validated or endorsed before the obligation to use the new template will continue being accepted but the submission by the importer to the authorities in the Member States shall be done through CATCH. Therefore, during these 24 months CATCH will offer the possibility to choose between the old templates and the new templates. Thus, the application of the new legislation will not impact trade flows of fishery products obtained from catches made before that application and accompanied by valid documents issued at that time.

42. Will the processing statement change and from when?

Yes, the amendment to the IUU Regulation introduces an important change concerning the use of the processing statement (Annex IV) that will apply 2 years after entry into force (from 10 January 2026).

To improve traceability, processing statements will be required for all processed fishery products imported in the EU, regardless of where the processing has taken place (in the flag State or in another non-EU country). This means that processing statements should be endorsed also in cases where the flag State of the fishing vessels that caught the fish and the country where the processing operation took place are the same.

In addition, the template laid down in Annex IV will include the obligation to apply a unique number, that will be provided by the authorities endorsing the statement (in case of direct use of CATCH, the system can generate such unique number directly).

43. Are there any other changes to the catch certification scheme?

Yes, to complement the amended IUU Regulation, the Commission will soon introduce a new template [called non-manipulation document] to ensure a consistent, uniform and non-discriminatory implementation of the provisions of Article 14(1). It will apply to consignments that transit through a non-EU country where the product is not manipulated.

CATCH will offer the possibility to complete and generate such document directly in the system with no additional paper generation, should the authorities of the transit country decide to use CATCH.

44. I am representing a non-EU country competent authority and I am in charge of the validation of EU catch certificates (flag State authority notified in accordance with Article 20(1) of EU IUU Regulation). What will be the impact of the amended IUU catch certification scheme on my authority and is there anything I should do?

The amendments to the IUU Regulation have been notified by the Commission, on behalf of the EU, to the World Trade Organisation on 10 January 2024.

In addition, the Commission has contacted all non-EU countries (flag States) who submitted notifications in accordance with Article 20(1) of the EU IUU Regulation and provided them with information regarding the changes introduced by this amendment to the IUU Regulation. These countries will be invited to provide an updated notification to the European Commission⁷. The updated notification should include additional information on national authorities responsible for validation or endorsement of other documents foreseen under the amended catch certification scheme (e.g., in relation to processing, transit, transshipment and landing operations).

In addition, the authorities of non-EU countries notified to the Commission will be invited to request a role in CATCH to be able to validate the catch certificates and endorse the processing statements directly in the system.

In case you are interested in using CATCH, the Commission will organise a training for you.

45. I am representing a non-EU country competent authority and I am in charge of endorsing EU processing statements. What will be the impact of the amended IUU catch certification scheme on my service and is there anything I should do?

From 10 January 2026, all processed fishery products will have to be exported to the EU with a processing statement (Annex IV) even when the flag of the fishing vessels that caught the fish is the same as the country of processing.

Non-EU countries where processing of fishery products that are exported to the EU takes place (including flag States), will be contacted by the Commission to give them the opportunity to use CATCH.

In case you are interested in using CATCH, the Commission will organise a training for you.

46. Can flag States replace a catch certificate that was already validated by them in CATCH?

No, they need to cancel the catch certificate and the exporter must start the procedure in CATCH again. To quickly create a new catch certificate, the exporter can use the functionality “copy as new” based on the cancelled one. This action greatly speeds up the submission process. The new catch certificate will be submitted to the flag State authority for validation and a new document number will be assigned.

47. What exactly should be provided as information in the boxes related to the fishery product in the catch certificate (box 3 and 4)?

⁷ This does also concern Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs)

Box 3 should include the information on each species constituting the consignment covered by the catch certificate, indicating the Latin name, the product code and the FAO 3-alpha species code (the latter one is recommended to facilitate product identification).

This box also requires information on the type of processing authorised on board, information on weight (for details please see Q48) and on the catch area and catch dates (for details please see Q49). In addition, information on the applicable conservation and management measures related to the products concerned needs also to be provided (box 4).

48. How to fill the new weight boxes related to the fishery products?

“Estimated weight to be landed in kg” - this box will be used in case of direct landings of fishery products in the EU. It will contain data based on the fishing logbook.

“Net catch weight in kg” - this box will be used in case of landings in third countries. It will contain data after completion of landing relevant for the products intended to be exported to the EU.

“Verified weight landed (net catch weight in kg)” - this box will be used in case of landings having taken place under the supervision of an authority.

49. Regarding the amendments to the catch certificate, do exporters need to provide new information about the fishing area? If yes, what specific new information is required?

Yes, more information related to catch area will be required, such as:

- FAO area(s); and
- Exclusive Economic Zone(s) and/or High Seas; and if applicable
- Relevant Regional Fisheries Management Convention Area(s)

This information is important for the identification of the applicable conservation and management measures which must be declared in the same catch certificate (box 4) and is part of the necessary traceability information to ensure legality of the fishing activities.

50. Do longitude and latitude (current system based on FAO Fishing Map) of the catch area need to be provided through CATCH following the amendments to the catch certificate?

No, for information required in terms of catch area, please refer to Q49. However, more detailed information can always be provided through CATCH.

51. Is a processing statement needed in cases where processing on board of vessels takes place?

Yes. The rationale for this change is to ensure better traceability of the fishery products exported to the EU.

When processing takes place on board of the fishing vessel (processing other than any operation intended to preserve the catch in good condition), the box *“type of processing authorised on board”* has to be filled. Relevant weight boxes (box 3) should refer to products before processing operation on board. For more information, please refer to Q42.

In addition, a processing statement (Annex IV) will have to be filled, endorsed and submitted to confirm the nature of the processing that has taken place on board of the vessel.

52. When is a processing statement needed? What is considered as processing?

Processing is any operation on fishery products not designed to only preserve them in good and genuine condition.

53. Article 16(1) states that “the catch certificate together with all the relevant accompanying documents shall be submitted at least three working days before the estimated time of arrival at the place of entry into the territory of the Union”. Will the derogation granted by Regulation (EC) No. 1010/2009 still apply to the submission of the documents in CATCH?

Yes, the current provisions set out in Article 8 and Annex VI to Regulation (EC) No. 1010/2009 will remain in force. However, that Regulation will be revised, therefore the Commission cannot prejudge the outcome of this revision process.

54. Will IMO/ UVI be made a mandatory field? What about vessels that do not carry the IMO or a UVI number? Can the RFMO- or the flag State-issued registration numbers be used to fulfill this requirement?

The IMO number will always be required if applicable according to International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) or RFMO or national requirements. If there are other UVI like RFMO ones, this will have to be provided. If neither of the previous two will be applicable, the flag State national registration number will suffice.