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## **Traceability of finfish products — Specification on the information to be recorded in captured finfish distribution chains**

*Traçabilité des produits de la pêche — Spécifications relatives aux  
informations à enregistrer dans les chaînes de distribution des poissons  
issus de la pêche*



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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO 12875 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 234, *Fisheries and aquaculture*.

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## Introduction

There are increasing demands for detailed information on the nature and origin of food products. Traceability is becoming a legal and commercial necessity.

The ISO definition of traceability concerns the ability to trace the history, application and location of that which is under consideration, and for products this can include the origin of materials and parts, the processing history and the distribution and location of the product after delivery. Traceability includes not only the principal requirement to be able to physically trace products through the distribution chain, from origin to destination and vice versa, but also to be able to provide information on what they are made of and what has happened to them. These further aspects of traceability are important in relation to food safety, quality and labelling.

The scheme specified in this International Standard does not demand perfect traceability, i.e. that a particular retail product should be traceable back to a single vessel or catch, or vice versa from origin to destination. Pragmatically, it is recognized that mixing of units is likely to occur at a number of stages in the distribution chains, for example, in grading at auction markets prior to sale and in the processing of raw materials into products. Where such mixing occurs, the food business is transforming the trade units. The requirement for traceability is that the business records the identifier of the received trade units that may be input to each created trade unit, and vice versa. The particular product is then traceable back to a finite number of vessels or catches, and vice versa.

Given the enormous variety of fish products and of their distribution chains that operate within and between different countries, and varying legal requirements, the information specifications cannot itemize all the information that may possibly be required in every situation. This International Standard provides a generic basis for traceability. Flexibility is allowed for businesses to record further information, in their own non-standardized files, but keyed to the same unit IDs.

The information remains in the ownership of the food business that generated it, but is available when required by law for the purposes of traceability (in the event of a food safety problem) or by commercial agreement between businesses. The structure, names and content of the information is standardized so that it can be readily communicated from business to business through the distribution chains, ensuring common understanding of terms and meanings.

Commercial arrangements for businesses to communicate information through the distribution chains are to be encouraged, particularly for the information desired by the trade to be visible at the various transaction points in the chains, but that is not the subject of this International Standard.

This International Standard is designed with electronic representation and communication of data in mind, but this is not a requirement when using this International Standard. The specifications can be met by paper systems, although the obvious benefits of business efficiency, including rapid communication, will be lost.