



# **SEACASE** SUSTAINABLE EXTENSIVE AND SEMI-INTENSIVE COASTAL AQUACULTURE IN SOUTHERN EUROPE

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## **REVIEW OF CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES IN PORTUGAL**

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*The deliverable 12 consists in a review of the actual situation about Certification procedures and systems already in use in Portugal. The main objective is to make a picture of the moment, to be used as a basis for the project future steps within the WP5.*

# Title: Review of certification procedures in Portugal

## 1 Introduction

The protection of traditional and/or value-added names, labels and products is a global concern, nowadays strongly influenced by the globalization of all world markets. It is consensual that the knowledge based in years of experience and hard work must be respected and supported, or it will be lost as a result of the modern competition, where the new and bigger industries seem to be economically more comfortable and gradually occupy the space of the traditional and smaller ones.

## 2 Historical background

Portugal is a country with a strong presence of traditional products and processes. The first wine region of the world to be legally defined and protected as such was the Douro wine region and the corresponding Port wine, by Marquês do Pombal, in the XVIII century (1756). This means one of the oldest officially supported certification system of the world is now 250 years old and was created in Portugal, to recognize and protect producers and consumers of what was considered (and fortunately still is) one of the most fantastic wines of the whole world.

Simultaneously, Portugal is a country showing nowadays a relatively low concern with the rapid implementation of certification systems. It seems our country is in a position of “wait and see”, which means the certification systems already applied are in almost all cases a result of EC regulatory impositions.

That is the case, in the food products from agriculture origin, with the implementation of the labels PDO (Protected Designation of Origin), PGI (Protected Geographical Indication), TSG (Traditional Speciality Guaranteed), and in addition also OF (Organic Farming), first published in Portugal, in 1999, in a book entitled Official Guide of Quality Products (GPQ, 1999). This guide, that contains the first group of food items certified in Portugal, includes products like olive oil, meat from different animals (cow, goat, sheep and pork), fresh and other fruits, honey, sausages and other smoked meats and cheese. It is quite surprising that in a country with the second seafood consumption figures of the whole world (around 50 kg/year/inhabitant, only exceeded by Japan and in some years by Iceland), no seafood items appear in this list. This could, at least, be partially explained by the origin of the fish, in those years (1990-2000) still mainly based on catches in nature (around 90 % of the total in Portugal), rather than farming (the remaining 10 %).

But this guide ends with a section dedicated to the proposals still in evaluation, among which a single one was from the sea: canned tuna from Azores islands, for which a PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) was claimed, but as far as we could verify, it was never attributed.

The actual list of certified products under these systems, at the present time only published on-line ([http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/qual/pt/pt\\_pt.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/qual/pt/pt_pt.htm)) still does not include any food items of aquatic origin.

But today this is not the only system of food certification in Portugal. Due to the international visibility of literally every item, food or non-food, Portugal is following the general steps already done by others, namely other EC countries, and the certification is now something that consumers recognize and respect.

The most recognized systems are normally the ones created by private companies with international relevance, in order to add value to their products. This is the case of the *Quality Line* (*Filière Qualité* in France from 1990, *Fileira Qualidade* in Portugal between 1995 and today) of Carrefour, a group of foods that are chosen, prepared and certified by this company and presented to consumers as better in some aspects (mainly in terms of overall quality and environmental issues) when compared to common similar ones.

This *Quality Line* included in Portugal around 30 different types of foods, and in the list we found farmed sea bass and salmon, sea bream, salted/dried cod, canned tuna from Azores, which means the interest in certification is obviously extended to seafood. This hypermarket was recently ended his presence in Portugal, but the *Quality Line* will probably be continued by the buyers. We also emphasize that other companies have their own internal certification systems, and normally they include seafood, both from wild and farmed origins. A good example is the Clube de Produtores SONAE, which only includes Portuguese products, and fresh rainbow trout is until now the only representative of the aquatic foods. They claim for this label better producing systems, quality standards, quality control and final price.



In addition to these private initiatives, Portugal officially created a National Quality System (Sistema Nacional de Qualidade). The implementation of this system was the main objective of the organism IPQ (Instituto Português da Qualidade).



Later, in 2004, a separated Institute was created, the IPAC (Instituto Português de Acreditação) to assume the national and official responsibility for the Accreditation area of the quality in Portugal.



In the last decade many private certification companies appeared and are now working with success, proving the interest of this subject and probably that is also monetarily worthwhile. It is the case of CERTIF (certification mainly of products, including food).



APCER (Certification of quality systems, quality services and products, certification of persons and recently also certification restaurant services and of commercial web sites)



and several other private companies.

More specifically in the seafood area, other initiatives (mainly ecological-minded) include the Dolphin Safe label for canned tuna from Azores (respect for dolphin welfare during tuna fisheries) and the label Friends of the Sea (guaranteed sustainability of fisheries for some fish species).



Recently, one Portuguese deputy of the European Parliament, Duarte Freitas suggested the creation of an European system for certification and labelling of wild fish from fisheries.



These are just some examples of advances in this area, which is being object of a wide discussion within EU countries. In Portugal, no system is already in use or in implementation phase, to be applied to aquacultured products.

*Management options*

Presently, during the elaboration of certification systems, three possible solutions are observed to manage this problem:

CERTIFICATION MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS
1) No intervention of the European Commission in the processes of fish ecolabelling, leaving all to the free market development, with no intervention of the public

authorities.

2) Creation of a single Community Programme for the ecolabelling of all fish and fish products, both from nature and aquaculture.

3) Establishment of minimum requirements for facultative programs.

and considering all advantages and disadvantages of these 3 solutions, the 3) seems to be the more balanced and consensual. The majority thinks that EU structures should create a list of minimum requirements for these systems, and then leave the initiative to the privates.

### *EU Survey*

A recent survey within the aquaculture sector facing aquaculture certification systems was published on-line by the European Commission, and the general final conclusions also apply to the Portuguese situation:

#### EU survey on certification of aquaculture products

##### MAIN CONCLUSIONS

adapted from:

[http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/governance/consultations/consultation\\_240407\\_conclusions\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/governance/consultations/consultation_240407_conclusions_en.htm)






- Organic production, environmentally friendly production and schemes supporting sustainable development (i.e. including action at environmental, social and economic level) are regarded by the sector as the most attracting quality certification schemes.

- Control should preferably be done by third party bodies. Control by the sector is an alternative option.

- Quality marks and labels are considered as having a positive effect on the market. They attract the consumers. However, participants considered that consumers do not have access to the information required to understand the difference between labels! This at medium term could spoil any efforts made to develop quality certification system!

- Finally, an action at EU level is called for. This action should address control procedures, public promotion, financial support, encourage action at sector level and proposing guidelines.

### 3 Seafood certification: snapshot of the actual status in Portugal

COUNTRY/REGION OF ORIGIN	PRODUCTS	CERTIFICATION NAME, ENTITY AND DETAILS
Portugal	Fresh rainbow trout	<p>Labelling system, to promote commercial brand, under SONEAE Producers Club</p>  
Norway	Fresh salmon	<p>Carrefour Quality Line</p> 
Portugal/Azores	Canned Tuna	<p>Respect for dolphin welfare</p> 
Portugal/Azores	Tuna species	<p>Respect for fisheries sustainability</p> 

**Table 1** Wild and farmed aquatic food certified companies, processes and products in Portugal.

Assuming Portugal will logically (or necessarily) follow the EU directives and general procedures, it is expectable that some of the rules and requirements of the organic aquaculture certification could be adapted to semi-intensive and extensive aquaculture products and processes. These are described in several documents and is nowadays based on well known legislation for organic agriculture, but not yet to organic

aquaculture. The Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products assumes that:

*“A general Community framework of organic production rules should be established with regard to plant, livestock, and aquaculture production, including rules for the collection of wild plants and seaweeds, rules on conversion, as well as rules on the production of processed food [...]. The Commission should authorise the use of products and substances and decide on methods to be used in organic farming and in the processing of organic food.”*

It is also expected that EU bodies, at least, will dictate the minimal requirements for the certification process as a whole, leaving for the private initiative and natural offer/demand marketing the creation of volunteer certification systems. UE could also go further and create a common structure under the UE legislation umbrella, but it seems that this second hypothesis is less preferred by the Europeans.

#### **4 Perspectives for the future**

Seacase project aims to launch the basis for certification of non-intensive aquacultured foods. The project will make a suggestion for the general rules to be followed when implementing the system, and will contribute with its conclusions to the EU effort in the field work.

#### **5 Conclusions**

Portuguese fish farmers are until now more concerned with practical problems (recent ones are juvenile feeding, production efficiency and fish health related), but they will be receptive to any systems that could help to add value to their products, as being competitive in the European market is an issue of increased recognised importance. A certification system for products from semi-intensive and extensive farming will be a valuable new approach. SEACASE believes that many ideas from organic aquaculture systems can be used as well as for extensive farming of aquatic species. From the huge amount of information analysed until now, it is also expectable that a set of specific rules should be designed for each farmed species, as many of the rules deal with species-dependant aspects.

#### **6 Bibliography and other resources**

GPQ (1999) Guia dos Produtos de Qualidade. Direcção-Geral de Desenvolvimento Rural, Ed. Ligalu, Lisboa.

<http://www.horta.uac.pt/projectos/cepropesca/certif.htm>

Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2007:189:0001:0023:EN:PDF>

EC survey on certification of aquaculture products - Main conclusions

[http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/governance/consultations/consultation\\_240407\\_conclusions\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/governance/consultations/consultation_240407_conclusions_en.htm)

International organic aquaculture standards and documents

[http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/AFSIC\\_pubs/afnotes5.htm#chap4](http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/AFSIC_pubs/afnotes5.htm#chap4)

Fish farming and organics standards information sheet (UK)

[http://www.soilassociation.org/web/sa/saweb.nsf/librarytitles/19426.HTML/\\$file/fish%20farming%20and%20organic%20standards.pdf](http://www.soilassociation.org/web/sa/saweb.nsf/librarytitles/19426.HTML/$file/fish%20farming%20and%20organic%20standards.pdf)