

The Integration of the National Ecolabel in Southeast Asia to Support Asean Tuna Ecolabelling (ATEL)

Andre Notohamijoyo¹, Martani Huseini², Raldi H. Koestoer³ and Syafril Fauzi⁴

¹*School of Environmental Science, University of Indonesia, FKG Building 5th and 6th Floor,
Jalan Salemba Raya, No. 4, Jakarta 10430, Indonesia*

²*Faculty of Administrative Science, University of Indonesia, Kampus Baru UI Depok, Indonesia*

³*Coordinating Ministry of Economic Affairs, Republic of Indonesia*

⁴*Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Jalan Medan Merdeka Timur No. 16, Jakarta 10110, Indonesia*

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Abstract: The development of information technology has led to the growth of people's consumption patterns towards fish not only in terms of health but also in sustainability. The lifestyle creates business opportunities in fisheries ecolabel schemes. The trend was well utilized by various multinational companies which collaborated with international NGO to form the scheme. Its face immense challenges in developing countries because of some issues such as high costs and high requirement. Notohamijoyo (2018) shows that the scheme could not be implemented in Indonesia from the stakeholder's perspective. The ecolabel scheme needs a special approach for tuna species (*Thunnus sp*), the highest economic value of fish in the world and highly migratory species across the sea region. The effective management requires cross-country cooperation. The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has begun consolidation to start the regional system of ecolabel which named ASEAN Tuna Ecolabelling (ATEL). This is the first regional seafood ecolabel scheme in the world. The main difficulty in implementing the scheme is the integration of national ecolabel schemes of ASEAN countries. The integration must be resolved by all ASEAN countries. If success, ATEL not only develop as an effective scheme but also as a new regional brand of tuna.

1 INTRODUCTION

Tuna (*Thunnus sp*) as the highest economic value of fish in the world and highly migratory species across the sea region, faces the threat of the sustainability of its resources. The poaching in various countries has caused the threat to increase. World Bank and FAO (2009) state that since 2006, 75 percent of global fisheries resources face the threat of depletion or reduced stock due to excessive fishing practices and damage to the environment. These conditions encourage a number of parties to encourage mechanisms for controlling production and sustainable consumption through environmental labeling or ecolabelling.

The definition of ecolabel (Potts and Haward, 2007) is: *Eco-labels are derived from certification processes and are a market based approach that attempts to influence consumer behaviour toward fisheries products that are generated through sustainable practices.* Based on this definition, ecolabel is a label that is stated on a product whose entire production process is produced from activities

that meet environmental friendly parameters as information to consumers or prospective consumers when making a purchase.

The first fisheries ecolabel scheme that was formed and the fastest growing was the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) in 1996 initiated by WWF and Unilever. MSC follows the previous scheme for forestry products under the name of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). After MSC there are several fisheries ecolabels after being formed such as Japan Marine Ecolabel (MEL), Icelandic Responsible Fisheries (IRF), Alaska RFM, Friends of the Sea (FOS), Dolphin Safe, Marine Aquarium Council (MAC) and others (Notohamijoyo, 2016).

Based on the literature studies conducted on: Ramirez et al. (2012, a), Ramirez et al. (2012, b), Bratt et al. (2011), Amstel et al. (2008) found that the common constraints encountered in implementing ecolabel certificates in developing countries are: the credibility of ecolabel institutions, over-accessibility especially for small fishermen, high certification costs, lack of incentives for fishermen, different fisheries structures and stakeholder support interests

in each country.

Southeast Asia is the region which has the highest tuna production in the world with 1.7 million tons (FAO, 2014). Tuna is a highly migratory species and swims across various countries. Effective tuna management requires cross-country cooperation. Association of South East Asia Nations (ASEAN) start the cooperation in tuna fisheries management. ASEAN formed ASEAN Tuna Working Group (ATWG) as an institution of tuna fisheries management cooperation in ASEAN (ATWG, 2011). Indonesia was appointed as a lead of ATWG. This organization aims to encourage cooperation among ASEAN countries in the form of sustainable management of tuna fisheries. The cooperation expected to strengthen intra ASEAN regional and international issues.

Indonesia initiates ASEAN Tuna Ecolabelling (ATEL) in 2012 (ATWG, 2012). The initiative is expected to be a tuna fisheries management solution in the Southeast Asian sea area. Various cases of illegal tuna fishing including slavery in the region need to be resolved through cooperation between ASEAN countries. The scheme was agreed on 11-12 October 2018 in Hanoi, Vietnam. ASEAN still have homework in ATEL implementation. The challenge is that some ASEAN countries have been implemented ecolabel in their countries. The integration will be the most important thing of ATEL success.

2 PROBLEM FORMULATION

To implement ATEL as a regional fisheries ecolabel scheme requires intensive coordination and communication between ASEAN countries. Several ASEAN countries have implemented ecolabel schemes in their countries. The steps are needed to unite ecolabel schemes between ASEAN countries to realize ATEL. The integration is the key to the success of its implementation.

3 RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses literature studies on the implementation of ecolabel schemes in the Southeast Asia region. The study was conducted in 5 ASEAN countries, namely Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. This research also reviews the ecolabel fisheries scheme in various countries beside ASEAN. It is hoped that this study can further explore the application of fisheries

ecolabel schemes in the world.

4 RESULT

The survey results show that in 5 ASEAN countries there are ecolabel schemes that have been implemented in the region. Ecolabel developed in these five countries has different characters. Indonesia and Malaysia have an ecolabel scheme which is a government initiative, namely Eco-friendly Ecolabel (Indonesia) and SIRIM Ecolabel (Malaysia). While in the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, the ecolabel scheme comes from the initiative of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This condition affects the integration of ecolabel schemes from each of these countries.

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Table 4.1. show that there are 5 ASEAN countries which already have national ecolabel scheme. Therefore, the next steps is to integrate with ATEL schemes in each of the ASEAN countries (Soeminto, 2011).

The process of integration between the five ecolabel schemes will take time. The discussion of each of the ecolabel initiators is the most difficult step. Nevertheless, the official concept of the ATEL scheme is a very good guide in the process. Mechanism of work of ATEL can be developed areas follows:

1. Establishment of the ASEAN Focal Point on ASEAN Tuna Ecolabelling (AFP-ATEL);
2. Assignment of Focal Point of ATEL in each country
3. Formulation of standards
4. Products that have passed and received a national ecolabel certificate in each country may apply to the AFP-ATEL to get ecolabel certificate.
5. ATEL AFP Annual Meeting will discuss the submission of application from each country and considering the results of the verification from Focal Point.

Table 4.1: Various Ecolabel Scheme in ASEAN Countries.

| | Indonesia | Malaysia | Phillippines | Singapore | Thailand |
|------------------|---|---|--|--|---|
| Name of Ecolabel | Ekolabel Ramah Lingkungan | SIRIM Ecolabel | Green Choice | Green Label | Green Label |
| Type of Ecolabel | Type I | Type I | Type I | Type I | Type I |
| Issuing Body | Government (Ministry of Environment and Forestry) | Government (Ministry of International Trade and Industry) | NGO (The Phillippines Center for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development) | NGO (Singapore Environment Council) | Thailand Business Council for Sustainable Development (TBCSD) |
| Products Covered | All Products | All Products | All Products | All Products | All Products not including foods and pharmaceutical |
| Recent Product | Paper, woods, palm oil | Industrial product | Agriculture, apparel, civil engineering, etc | Building Material, Cleaning product, electrical, etc | All Products |

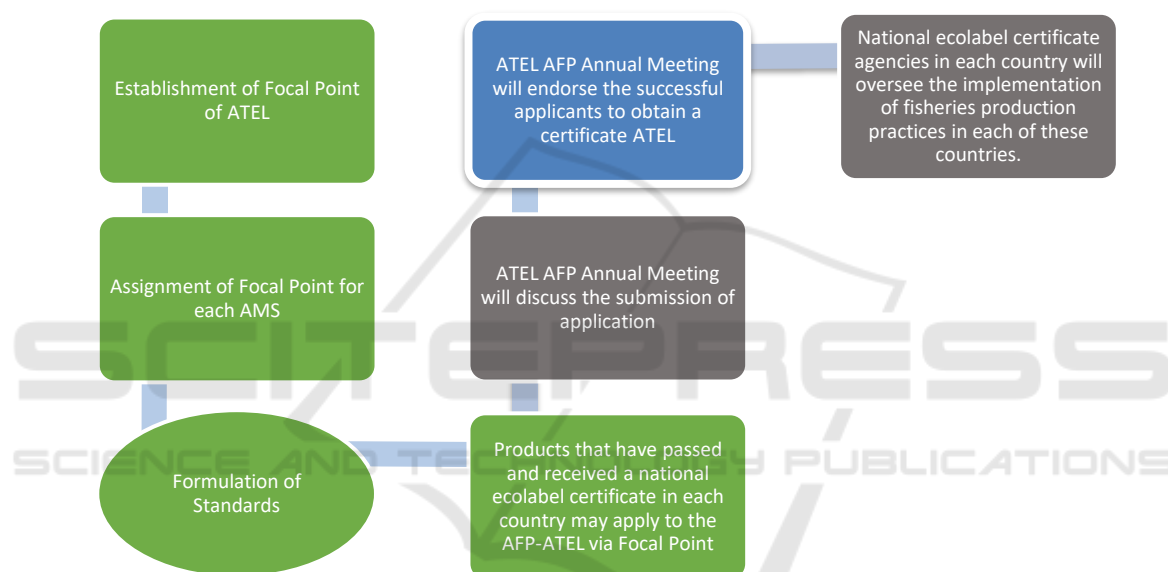


Figure 4.1. Mechanism of

6. ATEL AFP Annual Meeting will endorse the successful applicants to obtain a certificate ATEL
7. National ecolabel certificate agencies in each country will oversee the implementation of fisheries production practices in each of these countries.

The mechanism of work of ATEL is described in figure 4.1.

ATEL is expected to be a solution to the problem of tuna fisheries in ASEAN. There are three differences between ATEL and existing ecolabels are as follows:

1. Existing ecolabel is market driven or controlled by the retail market. ATEL certificate is producer driven or controlled by the government (ASEAN Focal Point-AFP)
2. Existing ecolabel based on market measurement while ATEL more oriented to the integration of

sustainable fisheries management in Southeast Asia.

3. Existing ecolabel create company branding while ATEL not only the company but also regional branding.

The differences are shown in table 4.2. below:

Table 4.2: The Differences between ATEL and existing ecolabel.

| | Existing Ecolabels | ASEAN Tuna Ecolabelling |
|------------------|---|---|
| Drivers | Market | Producer |
| Orientation | Market Measurement based Certificate Business | Integration of Sustainable Fisheries Management in ASEAN region |
| Type of Branding | Company Branding | Regional Branding |

5 DISCUSSION

The compilation of the ATEL ecolabel scheme is an embodiment of overall sustainable development. Social, economic and ecological principles are used as the basis for its preparation. This reinforces the principles and standards of the scheme.

In order to a fishery can be certified, its practice must be assessed using the following ATEL standards (ATWG, 2014) as can be seen in Table 5.1.

In addition to the sustainable use of tuna fishery, the fishing practices should be supported by responsible social practices using following criteria as presented in Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.1. Domain Standard, Principle and Criteria based on Sustainable Use Principle.

| Standard | Principle | Criteria |
|---|--|--|
| 1.1. The tuna fishery stock must be kept in a sustainable level | 1.1.1. Sustainability of the target fish stock | Tuna fishing practices in the last three years showing that the fishery has been sustainably managed. In minimum, the harvest control rule advises that the catch follow the criteria such as $SB_{current} > SB_{MSY}$ or $F_{current} < F_{MSY}$ |
| | 1.1.2. Fishery Management Plan | Tuna fishery management plan is available and implemented. The document should regulates and comply the fishing activities as advised by RFMOs and sustainable fishery with precautionary approach principles developed using robust scientific analysis |
| 1.2. Healthy ecosystem | 1.2.1. Responsible fishing gears | Fishing gears are regulated as advised by RFMOs and sustainable fishery with precautionary approach principles developed using robust scientific analysis |
| | 1.2.2. Restriction on retaining the endangered, threatened and protected species | Regulations are available and implemented, as advised by RFMOs and sustainable fishery with precautionary approach principles developed using robust scientific analysis |
| | 1.2.3. Maintaining the sustainability of non-targeted species | Regulations are available and implemented, as advised by RFMOs and sustainable fishery with precautionary approach principles developed using robust scientific analysis |
| 1.3. Tuna fishing activity must avoid the practice of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishery (IUU) | 1.3.1. Tuna fishing have all required license to operate | The company under assessment have all required license to catch including the auxiliary gears (i.e. FAD, lamp), transport and process the tuna |
| | 1.3.2. Tuna fishery practices the free IUU catching and processing documentation | Tuna catching implements recording scheme (e.g. Catch Documentation Scheme, Catch Certificate as authorized by local agency) and improved the traceability scheme |
| 1.4. Tuna fishery is managed effectively | 1.4.1. Tuna management council is available and operational | Tuna management council in each ASEAN member country is optimally working to establish the management, monitoring, surveillance and compliance |
| | 1.4.2. The fishery management is conducted collaboratively | Fishery management is implemented collaboratively, and adaptively adopt inputs from the stakeholders |

Table 5.2: Domain Standard, Principle and Criteria based on Social Practices Principle.

| Standard | Principle | Criteria |
|---|---|---|
| a. Workers who work on the production process during Tuna fishing and handling are free from worker abuse | 2.1.1. Workers who work on the production process are not victim of human trading | Domestic and foreign workers, must have a working contract which binding the regulation between related countries |
| | 2.1.2. Workers who work on the production process are not children | Workers must reached its minimum age to work, as managed by respective country and international regulations |
| b. Tuna fishery should promote fair trade | 2.2.1. Adopts a transparent and accountable trading practices | Companies related to the production process must implement a transparent and accountable contract, as well as implement trading and a good customer service |
| c. | | |

The standards, principles and criteria of ATEL have been prepared based on the principles of overall sustainable development in terms of economic, ecological and social aspects. This is a breakthrough in a standard, principles and criteria for an ecolabel. This is proof that ASEAN member countries are aware of sustainable development to be applied specifically in the management of tuna fisheries. Until now there are no fisheries ecolabel schemes which include social practices such as protection of workers and fishermen.

The difficulty of ATEL is the integration of ecolabel schemes in various ASEAN countries. Such integration needs to be explored further regarding its implementation in other countries. As the first regional fisheries ecolabel scheme in the world, ATEL does not have an example of another ecolabel scheme. This is where integration between ecolabel schemes in various ASEAN countries needs to be done. ASEAN countries that do not yet have a scheme can play a role in strengthening the standards, principles and criteria of ATEL.

The support of government is a key of success for the ecolabel scheme. The study of consumers (Sonderskov and Daubjerg, 2010) in the US, UK, Denmark and Sweden proved that ecolabelling can be successful with substantial support or full government support in all stages. The level of consumer confidence in ecolabel products is increasing with increasingly intense government involvement.

Kvalvik et al. (2014) and Ramirez et al. (2012, a) show that government commitment and stakeholder support plays an important role in the successful implementation of ecolabel certificates. The study in Iceland also found the support from government to national ecolabel scheme. The presence of international ecolabel is considered to be an added burden for the government and stakeholders in fisheries in Iceland. The government is aware of this and invites stakeholders together to formulate the best steps to encourage the strengthening of Iceland's fisheries brand on the international market. Both parties realize that Iceland has a strong position in the international market and needs to strengthen through the re-branding of their fishery products.

Iceland succeeded in creating its own fisheries ecolabel certification program called Icelandic Responsible Fisheries (IRF). The emergence of the IRF received a positive response from the market so that products from Iceland experienced a strengthening position in the international market due to the re-branding.

The research from Notohamijoyo (2016) reinforce the research that stakeholder and government support are the main key to using the ecolabel scheme. Based on the results, it was also found that the choice of stakeholders in Indonesia was in the national ecolabel scheme initiated by the government.

Research from Christian et al. (2013) show that ecolabel scheme such as Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) credibility is often questioned because MSC does not strongly apply its principles so that there are rejections from a number of countries. There is dualism when MSC applies its principles. Provision of labels that continue to run while there is a decline in species in the certified area makes stakeholder confusion in its implementation. Research by Kirby et al. (2014) strengthen Christian's research results that only ecolabel certification is strong and consistent in applying the principles of sustainable fisheries management that can be accepted by stakeholders. Hadjimichael and Hegland (2016) mention that the development of certain fisheries ecolabel certification that can rapidly lead to a monopoly on sustainable fisheries management.

Various studies have shown that government and stakeholder support is the main key to the successful implementation of an ecolabel scheme. Here is the key to implementing ATEL. Government and stakeholder support is expected to encourage the integration of ecolabel schemes in all ASEAN countries. The integration success will create the management of tuna fisheries in the region.

6 CONCLUSION

Government and stakeholder support is a key word in the success of ATEL implementation. The support of the governments of each ASEAN country will facilitate the process of integrating the tuna fisheries ecolabel scheme. In addition cooperation between ASEAN countries in pushing for the scheme will encourage the birth of new brands for tuna fish originating from the Southeast Asian sea area. The implementation of ATEL is a manifestation of sustainable tuna management and the promotion of good ASEAN tuna brands.

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