

# Deal with illegal, unreported, unregulated fishing: Minister

□ From Front Page

But the Minister warns, "The Pacific must work extra hard to tidy up its systems in order that we can fully benefit from the opportunities of eco-labelling in our

fishery and aquaculture sectors".

While the workshop on eco-labelling presents great opportunities for trade, the

Minister says without having to tackle such issues as IUU fishing on a regional basis comprehensively, "we may face

more obstacles in our efforts to tap into eco-labelling opportunities that may be available to us".

In addition, the Minister challenges member countries to take stock of what's already available within the region

in terms of knowledge and expertise especially on eco-labelling work, then source support from elsewhere to make advancements especially by capitalising on available trade and market access opportunities through eco-labelling.

PAC189. Vanuatu daily post - issue n° 4407 - Saturday, February 21, 2015 page 9  
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# Minister to open workshop on Eco-labelling schemes

By Len Garae

**MINISTER OF FISHERIES,** David Tosul, will officially open a Regional Workshop at the Holiday Inn on February 23, which aims to raise awareness amongst Government Ministries, Quality Improvement Institutions, Regional Organisations, private sector representatives and key stakeholders on the benefits of eco-labelling schemes in the fishery sectors in the Pacific Region.

This is part of Africa Caribbean Pacific-European Union Technical Barriers to Trade – a TBT Programme.

The workshop is the second of its kind to take place in the country for our days from February 23 -26. The first workshop was held in December of 2014, to access trade opportunities and enabling conditions for the development of eco-labelling schemes in the fishery sector in the Pacific Region.

Eco-labelling, traceability systems, and production certification in general are

voluntary, part of a private sector approach to address regulatory obligations imposed by importing countries, which increasingly address environmental and social sustainability issues, such as the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

In a press statement to the media, Director General of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Bio-Security, Howard Aru explains, "Eco-labelling, is implemented by a production unit (a fishing fleet, a group of processing plants, of fish farms) wishing to demonstrate the sustainable management of its operations, to its buyers and markets. By demonstrating good practice as per the specifications of an Eco label, especially one that is certified by an independent third party, producers are able to maintain or gain market access".

The DG says a total of about 50 stakeholders from Government (fisheries and trade) Departments, the Regional Organisations and the private sector are invited to attend. Morning and afternoon

sessions will present and discuss in detail the following:-

- Requirements and processes of eco-labelling schemes, from the point of view of the private sector, Government services and the Regional Organisations.

- Labels in use in the Western and Central Pacific Region will be reviewed and compared for the main fisheries, aquaculture and aquarium trade products;

- Common requirements of different existing systems will be analysed to identify good practice and needs for capacity building of national and regional public and private sector institutions for the five countries involved in the project;

- Through the Regional Organisations and the Final Report (published on the TVT Programme website), the results, findings and recommendation will be shared with the other countries of the Region for the dual purpose of spreading the knowledge and possible replication of this Programme in other countries.

The five countries involved in the project are Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu.

PAC189 - Vanuatu daily post - issue n° 4407 - 24/02/15 - page 8