



**MEETING OF THE INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP TO REVIEW THE  
TRANSHIPMENT MEASURE (CMM 2009-06) (TS-IWG)**

**ELECTRONIC MEETING**

11am –5pm Pohnpei time, Wednesday, 17 May 2023

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**CO-CHAIRS REPORT**

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**Issued: 2 July 2023**

1. The Meeting of the Intersessional Working Group to Review the Transshipment Measure (CMM 2009-06) (TS-IWG) was held electronically on Wednesday 17 May 2023.
2. The following Members and Participating Territories attended TS-IWG: Australia, Canada, China, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Japan, Kiribati, Republic of Korea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Chinese Taipei, Tokelau, and the United States of America.
3. Observers from the following intergovernmental organisations attended TS-IWG: Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA), and Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).
4. Observers from the following non-governmental organisation attended TS-IWG: Global Law Alliance, International MCS Network, International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF), Pew Charitable Trust, and The Ocean Foundation.
5. A list of participants is attached as **Attachment A**.

**AGENDA ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING**

**1.1. Welcome Remarks (co-Chairs)**

6. Dr Alex Kahl (United States), one of the two TS-IWG Co-Chairs called the meeting to order and welcomed participants to the TS-IWG. Co-Chair Kahl explained that Co-Chair Felix Ngwango (Vanuatu) had passed on his apologies due to a pressing Vanuatu national government commitment. Co-Chair Kahl explained that the recording from this meeting would be used to assist the Co-Chair in correctly reflecting the discussions and to ensure Co-Chair Ngwango is fully apprised of the discussions at this meeting.

7. Co-Chair Kahl introduced the Provisional Agenda (**WCPFC-TS-IWG01-2023-01**) and explained that the main purpose of the meeting was to review and discuss the two Transshipment Information Analysis documents prepared by SPC. Co-Chair Kahl expressed his appreciation to Peter Williams (SPC) for the hard work and efforts that went into completing the analyses. Appreciation was also expressed to the Secretariat for its support of the transshipment information analysis and the meeting arrangements. There were no changes to the agenda (**Attachment B**).

## **1.2. Review 2023 TS-IWG Workplan (co-Chairs)**

8. Co-Chair Kahl referred the meeting to the WCPFC19 endorsed TS-IWG Workplan (WCPFC19 Summary Report Attachment Y). He explained that the two Transshipment Information Analysis documents (**WCPFC-TS-IWG01-2023-TIA\_LL** and **WCPFC-TS-IWG01-2023-TIA\_PS**) were distributed for members review in early April and the online discussion forum was also enabled to support discussions. The Information Analysis documents were accessible by registered and approved participants in this TS-IWG meeting noting that each report contains considerable detail, and were limited in distribution to the TS-IWG in case there were non-public domain data concerns. A paper providing some preliminary key points relating to Phase 3 questions from the TS-IWG Scope of Work (**WCPFC-TS-IWG01-2023-TIA\_update**) was also posted as a late paper.
9. Co-Chair Kahl indicated that the next steps during June-August would be guided by the discussions during this meeting with the ultimate aim being to recommend proposed revisions to CMM 2009-06 to the Commission at WCPFC20. He asked that participants also consider scheduling a half-day meeting immediately before the Technical and Compliance Committee meeting in late September. There were no questions or comments from meeting participants on the TS-IWG workplan.

## **AGENDA ITEM 2. INFORMATION ANALYSIS**

### **2.1. Longline Presentation (SPC)**

10. Peter Williams (SPC) presented some preliminary observations and key points from **WCPFC-TS-IWG01-2023-TIA\_LL** *Data Summaries related to the tropical longline transshipment activity in the WCPFC Area*. He explained that the paper presents data summaries related to the period 2010 – 2019 which aim to provide a broad range of reference material (tables, graphs, maps), as outlined in the scope of work document, for the TS-IWG’s consideration. That consideration would assist with Phase 3 of the study which was intended to comprise the “report”.
11. The presentation highlighted that the data summaries based on available data for 2010-2019 show:
  - annual trends in longline transshipment activity: including changes in carrier flag activity and frequency of activity over the years, a steady increase in frequency of reported transshipments by fishing fleet and trends in average transhipped volume which differ by fishing fleet over time.
  - Spatial patterns in longline transshipment activity:
    - i. 31% of reported transshipments occurred in the WCPFC-IATTC overlap area
    - ii. 7% of reported transshipments occurred in the EEZs (outside ports)

- iii. 3% of reported transshipments occurred in port (this is under-reported as in-port transshipment is not covered by CMM 2009-06 and the measure does not require reporting on this activity)
- iv. 4% of reported transshipments occurred in the EPO
- v. At sea transshipments tend to occur in the vicinity of the main fishing grounds in the eastern WCPFC Area
- vi. Transshipment in the western WCPFC Areas tend to occur in ports
- vii. Areas of ALB vs BET/YFT transshipments vary and did not exhibit a clear relationship to each other.
- Seasonal trends and ENSO trends in longline transshipment activity:
  - i. Transshipments generally occur in the vicinity of the fishing grounds, some which do have seasonal trends eg north and south Pacific albacore seasons
  - ii. Transshipments tend to occur in the vicinity of the main fishing grounds, which may be influenced on ENSO conditions
- That the data are incomplete for the purposes of catch verification:
  - i. Improvements to both transshipment carrier declarations and logbook data are required to enable any viable catch verification (e.g. can't link trip-level logbook data to transshipment)
  - ii. It appears that some Carrier declarations are simply based on logbook reports, so not an independent estimate
  - iii. Visual weight estimates currently used for logbook reporting are prone to biases
  - iv. Investigate the feasibility of transshipment observers recording species catch in number (as per IATTC observers) to validate against the logbook reports, noting that catch in number is a more precise measurement and is the unit of catch used in the WCPFC stock assessment for the longline gear.
- The data summaries provides several examples of other potential uses of transshipment data, including:
  - i. Tracks of carrier trips (port-to-port) with at sea transshipments events.
  - ii. Tracks of carrier trips with potential missing transshipment or erroneous events.
  - iii. Tracks of carrier vessel and longline vessel engagement at sea, which are non-reported at-sea transshipment events.

12. In response to a question, SPC confirmed no transshipment observer data was available at the time the study and so the information on transshipment events and quantities transshipped was solely based on carrier and fishing vessel transshipment declaration data.

## **2.2. Longline Discussion (co-Chairs)**

13. General points included:

- i. Appreciation to the Co-Chairs, the WCPFC Secretariat and the Scientific Services Provider for the development of the summary information and to SPC for the presentation;
- ii. Acknowledging that the study provides a good snapshot of the development of transshipment activities over time and confirms data gaps are a constraint to monitoring and verifying transshipment activities;

- iii. Noting some CCMs expressing strong support for the observations made in the data summaries and in the resulting recommendations being considered in this review;
- iv. Noting that although there has been a long-standing requirement in CMM 2009-06 for a 100% coverage rate of observers to monitor at-sea transshipments, the study highlights the lack of longline transshipment observer information for this work;
- v. Acknowledging that observer data collected on transshipment activities has value and should be taken advantage of in the future to improve available data for verification, noting that standard ROP protocols would ensure consistent data collection;
- vi. Noting concerns with the relatively low degree of correlation between logsheet data and transshipment data in the study, particularly because most longline fishery species are managed by catch limits;
- vii. Recognising that the CMM was adopted in 2009, the work of the IWG is timely and important to review and where needed update the CMM in 2023.

14. *Points raised in the discussion in response to the recommendations in the study:*

15. Introduction of a Carrier Daily Activity Log

- Some CCMs expressed their support for this recommendation to address a clear gap in the monitoring of transshipment activities, allowing linking of the logsheet data with transshipment declarations and final landings data. These CCMs indicated an expectation that a log (integrated with the current carrier declaration form) would contain details including departure, destination and weight by species of landings or unloadings to cannery, cold storage, or another vessel. A carrier daily activity log could cover reporting of data and information that the observer may not have information on, or in cases when the observer is not on the carrier for the duration of the entire (port-to-port) trip, and that should come from the carrier. Other CCMs suggested that it would be preferable to have observers collect these data, recognising in other cases, additional fields could be added to the carrier declaration form.
- Some CCMs also noted the carrier declaration could have benefits for more than transshipment monitoring, noting that recent media publications have raised the issue of the use of bunkers and carriers as supporting fishing operations, such as the deployment and retrieval of FADs.
- Some CCMs noted that the details around the implementation of this reporting requirement would be important to work through. They suggested the experience and reporting requirements of other RFMOs (eg NPFC and CCAMLR) related to bunkering and other activities that may be identified would be helpful to also consider. Other CCMs were hesitant about adopting the practices of other RFMOs and noted the need to also include consideration of specific circumstances for WCPFC.
- Other CCMs indicated that they saw it was important for transshipment reporting to support catch verification on the high seas, and there was some support for information on bunkering as necessary to allow confirmation of transshipments as distinct from other support activities.
- Some CCMs noted the need for discussions to progress proposals to include consideration of the supporting process necessary for implementation including to ensure data gets into Commission processes and indicated their support for greater reporting and analysis of carrier activity.

16. Including the longline vessel logsheet trip dates in the carrier data collection

- Catch verification was noted as the objective for providing data fields that allow linking of the transshipment event to the vessel logsheet. Trip date is important as some vessels are at sea for 1-year to 18 months and, for these vessels, a trip is defined as the time between successive transshipments and not port to port. The problem is currently the logsheet data provided to the WCPFC do not include data fields related to the transshipment event (e.g. noting the dates of transshipments) and so it is not possible to define the ‘trips’ in this way for all fleets.

17. Including the accurate and independent estimation of the transhipped catch by species

- In response to the point made in the study that the weight of transhipped fish appeared to be based on visual estimates only, two CCMs clarified that their longline fishing vessels use on-board scales to weigh each fish and the weights of individual fish are recorded on the logbook. The storage of the fish in the hold is also differentiated based on species, catch location etc, so their fishing vessels do know the actual weight and species of the individual fish that are transhipped. It was noted that it would be useful to understand the practices of other fleets in this respect.
- It was recognised that there are additional data and information such as weights of individual fish, that are recorded on logbooks of longline vessels which are not required data fields under the Scientific Data to be Provided decision, and as such this data were not available for this study and are currently not available to the Commission.
- Noting SPCs clarification that the stocks assessments use catch in numbers not weight, some CCMs indicated that they needed more time to further consider the recommendation of needing catch in numbers. SPC noted that IATTC transshipment observers have been collecting catch in numbers by species for a number of years.

18. To ensure integration of transshipment carrier data with other types/sources of data (eg logsheet)

- Some CCMs noted that it was unclear if all the vessels on the RFV are reporting by VMS and suggested that additional longline MCS measures should be considered, for example high seas entry/exit reporting, e-reporting, catch documentation to first point of sale, e-monitoring and improved transshipment monitoring to provide the necessary overlapping information to assist with any data issues or gaps. There was broad support from a number of CCMs for the collection of data on other activities. Some other RFMOs have such measures in place that could be useful to consider as the basis for addressing WCPFC data where this fitted in the WCPFC context (noting a ‘cut and paste’ may not be workable).
- Some CCMs suggested that the use of proximity alerts for the purpose of monitoring potential transshipment events should be considered. Other CCMs again suggested that the experience and reporting requirements of other RFMOs (eg ICCAT) for bunkering, in-port transshipment declarations and other activities would be helpful to consider, noting the need to also consider which are useful in the WCPFC context.
- Some CCMs expressed it was possible to use VMS to monitor transshipments, but they had a concern with using AIS, noting the possibility that AIS identifiers might be used by IUU vessels.
- Electronic monitoring and used of crane scales are important tools that can improve weight estimates of transhipped fish and the review should consider the types of technology available to support transshipment monitoring.

19. For consistency with IATTC data collection

- Some CCMs expressed general support for having some consistency of reporting requirements with other RFMOs to support data collection and analysis for verification purposes noting overlaps with several RFMOs and the fact that other RFMOs such as NPFC actively reference WCPFC and the potential need for harmonisation given a shared role across the Pacific. Other CCMs indicated cross-verification and improvements in data exchange arrangements with IATTC as important to consider in the review of the CMM.
- One CCM noted their experience as a flag State from having a contracted observer provider used to facilitate the monitoring of at-sea transshipment activities in IOTC, IATTC and ICCAT, and indicated a preference for this as an option to be considered for the future. Other CCMs noted their preference for the status quo that uses existing national and subregional observer programmes.
- Noting that the study indicates that more than a third of longline at-sea reported transshipments occur in the WCPFC-IATTC overlap area or in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, some CCMs recommended the consideration of a joint WCPFC-IATTC carrier activity log to cover the overlap area that contains a section for unloadings, to capture a snapshot of catch from the WCPO that ends up outside the region. They also suggested that arrangements for the final verified weight to be provided through a reciprocal data sharing arrangement between the WCPFC and IATTC Secretariats for transshipment information.

**2.3. Purse Seine Presentation (SPC)**

20. Peter Williams (SPC) presented some preliminary observations and key points from **WCPFC-TS-IWG01-2023-TIA\_PS Data Summaries related to the purse seine transshipment activity in the WCPFC Area**. No recommendations were made because current arrangements include requirements for in-port transshipments/unloadings (covered by port state) and there are only certain rare exemptions of at sea transshipments (e.g. Philippines in HSP #1). The paper presents data summaries related to the period 2010 – 2019 which aim to provide a broad range of reference material (tables, graphs, maps), as outlined in the scope of work document, for the TS-IWG’s consideration. Phase 3 of the study was intended to comprise the “report”. The paper includes some notes on the data available for the study and clarifies that although there was a low coverage of available transshipments, the study had a high coverage data set because SPC was able to make use of the high coverage of logsheet trip catch by return of port, where transshipment data unavailable.

21. The presentation highlighted that the data summaries based on available data for 2010-2019 show:

- Annual trends in purse seine transshipment activity:
  - i. Main transshipment ports are Majuro, Pohnpei, Tarawa and Rabaul, with some effects of ENSO on fishing and transshipment activity;
- Spatial patterns in purse seine transshipment activity:
  - i. Transshipments tend to occur in recognised transshipment ports close to main fishing grounds (efficiency) and onshore offloading occurs in (PIC) ports with processing plants.
  - ii. Changes in area fished may relate to: Access to EEZs; Limits for EEZs/high seas activities; Season and ENSO effects on fishing activity.
- Seasonal trends and ENSO trends in purse seine transshipment activity:
  - i. No noticeable seasonal trends at the ‘macro’ scale

- ii. Peaks in Majuro and Pohnpei in May-June, followed by declines in the next 3 months, generally consistent with vessel activities and restrictions both before and during the tropical WCPO purse seine FAD closure periods;
  - iii. Higher unloadings activities in Honiara at the start and end of the year which is understood to be consistent with increased purse seine activity in adjacent areas during those periods;
  - iv. Transshipments tend to occur in the vicinity of the main fishing grounds, which may be influenced on ENSO conditions, and spatial variation greater for some fleets in the past.
- There is a need for some potential data improvements, to include:
    - i. Improving coverage of transshipment and onshore offloading data
    - ii. Enhancing transshipment and onshore offloading data collection
    - iii. Improving Carrier Destination information because VMS data provide some insights where available T/S data are currently lacking
 But also acknowledging that in-port transshipment data collection is covered by the Port State, and summary information submitted to the WCPFC (AR Part 1)
  - The data summaries provides several examples of other potential uses of transshipment data, including
    - i. Tracks of carrier movements, transshipment locations and destination
    - ii. General patterns of carrier tracks and destination based on the transshipment location.

#### 2.4. Purse Seine Discussion (co-Chairs)

##### 22. Points raised in the discussion included:

- Acknowledging there is no obligation to provide information on transshipment activities in port to the WCPFC and that many CCMs do provide summary transshipment in port information through the annual part 1 reports submitted to the WCPFC.
- Some CCMs expressed that while there may be potential uses from an awareness of carrier tracks and patterns in association with information on transshipment locations and destinations for PS carrier activity, they expect marginal gains in using proximity alerts for monitoring the purse-seine fishery because except for the high seas pocket 1 special arrangement, the purse seine fishery is required to tranship in port.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 3. OPEN DISCUSSION ON REVISING THE CMM (CO-CHAIRS)**

23. The Compliance Manager referred to **WCPFC-TS-IWG01-2023-TIA\_update** *Information Paper providing initial points for Phase 3 of the Transshipment Information Analysis* and explained that the paper provides some preliminary key points on the Phase 3 questions, considering the Phase 2 Transshipment Information Analyses. Noting that the circulation of this paper was late, it was suggested that the information therein might be useful for TS-IWG participants to consider intersessionally, and further refinements and detail on one or more of these points could be considered but guidance from the TS-IWG participants was needed. Co-Chair Kahl noted that the paper helpfully provides some background notes and hyperlinks related to aspects such as transshipment-related data fields and annual reporting and encouraged IWG participants to consider the paper intersessionally.

24. Co-Chair Kahl asked whether WCPFC or SPC saw any constraints from increased data collection in support of transshipment monitoring. The Secretariat noted that in respect of proximity alerts, it already has a basic system for reviewing WCPFC VMS data to identify potential transshipment events, and that this has been referred to in the annual transshipment reports that have been tabled at TCC. To date our resources have been stretched so our use of this tool has been limited to date, however with efficiency gains through the E-reporting of high seas transshipment data, upgraded CCFS and Record of Fishing Vessels, and some additional short-term resourcing approved by the Commission, the Secretariat expects there is scope to improve our use of the approach.
25. The Secretariat also noted that the approval at WCPFC19 of ROP observer data fields was an important decision which had originated from TS-IWG recommendations. These decisions ensure that observer data related to transshipment activities will start to become available for use in monitoring and verification of transshipment events and of data reported on transshipment declarations. The Secretariat looks forward to working with SPC and providing an update to TCC on the progress of implementation related to the data flows. SPC supplemented by confirming that SPCs work to support the implementation of this decision on the WCPFC/SPC database side was expected to be straightforward. Until Electronic reporting is established and fully implemented, there will be some challenges in being able to use the observer data because of the limitations in data fields, length of some trips, and delays from when observer data is received and transshipment events occur.
26. In response to a question from the Co-Chair about increasing the data fields reported on transshipment declarations, the Secretariat confirmed that the current TSER, E-reporting system was expected to have the capacity to be able to accommodate additional and expanded data fields. The Secretariat would need time after the new data fields have been adopted and specified, to assess and implement the changes to the TSER application and to the TSER data receipt system, and also for any CCMs to be given time to familiarize themselves with the new system and adjust their reporting.
27. The Secretariat noted that there are early decisions of the Commission which limit access by WCPFC to receive some VMS data, including from vessels on the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessel which are transshipping WCPFC caught fish outside the Convention Area. The Secretariat recalled that these decisions were based on the costs of VMS position reporting at the time and that this decision legitimately saved on excessive VMS costs, but there have been some cost-efficiency gains over time in WCPFC VMS services that might warrant revisiting these rules. The Secretariat offered to provide some information to the TS-IWG to assist their further consideration of this matter.

### **3.1. Modernizing transshipment data collection and flows in the WCPFC?**

- a. ER – CCMs identified the need for the TS-IWG to consider whether any consequential amendments to other CMMs or processes as proposals to amend 2009-06 and/or supporting processes take shape, for example to the ER reporting standards.
- b. EM – One CCM indicated the need to consider how EM and the observer coverage were to apply to support transshipment monitoring and verification. Some CCMs supported the need to consider a range of potential technologies that are available and not just EM for their potential to contribute to an enhanced transshipment measure for example, sensors that identify hatches opening and power draw for freezer units as well as technology that could support estimates of products and species in the swing using AI.



- 3.2. Minimum Data Standards – CCMs identified the need for the IWG-ROP and the TS-IWG to work together on the data fields and minimum data standards as tasked by the Commission.
- 3.3. Harmonization with other RFMOs – no additional matters were raised under this item.
- 3.4. Observer Provider – no additional matters were raised under this item.
- 3.5. Other Issues - – no additional matters were raised under this item.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 4. END OF MEETING**

28. Co-Chair Kahl summarized that he planned to meet with Co-Chair Ngwango at the earliest opportunity for a de-brief to consider the discussions during this meeting. An in-person meeting of the TS-IWG is planned for immediately prior to TCC19 in late September, and IWG participants can expect during the months of July and August to receive communications from the co-chairs and to be working over email, online discussion forum and possibly have an online meeting to progress the work. Co-Chair Kahl indicated that issuing an updated TS-IWG workplan for 2023 would confirm the modified timelines for the IWGs work during 2023.
29. Considering the discussions at this meeting, the Co-Chairs intend to develop a list of items arising from the discussions during this meeting and which of these are to be proposed for further work through the IWG. In preparing this list, the Co-chairs will look to include guidance on whether the issues are for consideration as part of the review of CMM 2009-06, related to the work of other IWGs and/or could more suitably be addressed as recommendations from the TS-IWG for consideration by the Commission. The Co-Chairs will provide updates to IWG participants via Circular.
30. Co-Chair Kahl Chair expressed his thanks to the Secretariat and Peter Williams (SPC) for their support and guidance and to CCMs for their input, guidance, and work throughout this meeting.
31. The meeting closed at 2.50pm Pohnpei time.

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#### **LIST OF ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: List of Registered Participants

Attachment B: Provisional Agenda

**MEETING OF THE INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP TO REVIEW THE  
TRANSHIPMENT MEASURE (CMM 2009-06) (TS-IWG)  
ONLINE  
17 May 2023**

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**MEETING OF THE INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP TO REVIEW THE  
TRANSHIPMENT MEASURE (CMM 2009-06) (TS-IWG)**

**ELECTRONIC MEETING**

11am –5pm Pohnpei time, Wednesday, 17 May 2023

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**AGENDA**

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**AGENDA ITEM 1. Opening of the Meeting\***

1. Welcome Remarks (co-Chairs)
2. Review 2023 TS-IWG Workplan (co-Chairs)

**AGENDA ITEM 2. Information Analysis\***

1. Longline Presentation (SPC)
2. Longline Discussion (co-Chairs)
3. Purse Seine Presentation (SPC)
4. Purse Seine Discussion (co-Chairs)

**AGENDA ITEM 3. Open Discussion on Revising the CMM (co-Chairs)\***

1. Modernizing transshipment data collection and flows in the WCPFC?
  - a. ER
  - b. EM
2. Minimum Data Standards?
3. Harmonization with other RFMOs?
4. Observer Provider?
5. Other Issues

**AGENDA ITEM 4. End of Meeting**