



**TECHNICAL AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE**

**Nineteenth Regular Session**

20 – 26 September 2023

Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

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**US Recommendation on Additional VRST Option**

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**WCPFC-TCC19-2023-DP03**

**22 September 2023**

United States of America



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**{US Recommendation on Additional VRST Option}**

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**WCPFC-TCC19-2023-DPxx  
22 September 2023**

{Submitted by the United States}

**Draft Recommendation:**

"TCC19 recommends that WCPFC20 include and prioritize their 2024 Work Plan and budget to add the option for flag CCMs to select the status of, "ALC reporting OK to flag VMS" in the WCPFC VRST "Non-reporting vessels" interactive interface. TCC19 believes that this addition would further streamline and assist in focusing on VMS-related communication, would improve the ongoing accuracy of VMS-status monitoring by flag CCMs and the Secretariat, and significantly reduce the number of dCMR VMS data gap issues. Operationally, this status should focus flag CCM and Secretariat troubleshooting efforts on the relevant administrative issues (database inconsistencies), rather than other issues, such as vessel-resident hardware or flag CCM VMS issues. This new status update option, like the existing status options, may be periodically reviewed by the Secretariat in cooperation with the flag CCMs."

**Background:**

The VMS-related issues within Agenda item 3 (IUU List) and Agenda item 5 (dCMR) highlighted a long-standing, frustrating issue (for flag CCMs, coastal CCMs, and the Secretariat that it is "normal" (common) for ALCs on vessels to technically be functioning properly reporting to the flag CCM VMS, but not reporting at all to the Secretariat VMS. It is also common, as we saw in these agenda items, for flag CCMs and the Secretariat to have challenges monitoring VMS reporting status. This is in spite of the existing VRST functionality, which may benefit from a minor update.

The VRST currently has an interactive drop-down feature that allows flag CCMs to update the current status of their vessels that automatically appear as "non-reporting" in the VRST when the ALCs stop reporting to the WCPFC VMS. However, the options available to flag CCMs in the drop-down do not include one of the most common circumstances ("ALC reporting OK to flag VMS"). So the only option available currently, for that, is "pending" (*indefinitely*). Often, this "pending" status remains "unexplained" (VMS data gaps) until just before (or during) the TCC meeting.

We suggest that the Commission Work Plan could be amended to add the work to update the VRST interactive drop-down menu to include this "ALC reporting OK to flag VMS" option. Doing so would clearly indicate to the Secretariat (and TCC during dCMR) that the flag State recognized, and responded to the issue. On a more practical level, this status would focus flag CCM and Secretariat troubleshooting efforts on the relevant administrative issues (database inconsistencies), rather than other possible technical or operational issues, e.g., troubleshooting vessel-resident hardware or flag CCM VMS.