



TECHNICAL AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

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PROPOSED PROCESS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPING THE COMMISSION VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEM BUILDING ON WORK COMPLETED TO DATE

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Paper prepared by the Secretariat

Purpose

1. In addition to providing background information about the work completed to date on the Commission VMS, this paper outlines the need for further work in developing standards, specifications and procedures to support the operation of the Commission VMS. It is suggested that a small VMS technical working group may be able to significantly progress the development of the Commission VMS during TCC3. A set of draft terms of reference for the work of this group is appended at **Attachment A**.

Members' obligations

2. Article 24 of the WCPF Convention identifies seven requirements in respect of the Commission's VMS:
- a. to use near-real time position fixing transmitters;
 - b. to monitor vessels fishing on the high seas and within a Member's national jurisdiction if that Member requests this;
 - c. to take characteristics of traditional fishing vessels from developing States into account;
 - d. to provide VMS data directly to the Commission or *'through such other organization designated by the Commission'*;
 - e. to adopt procedures to protect the confidentiality of data;
 - f. for Members to ensure that when their vessels are operating within another Member's national jurisdiction, they operate near real-time satellite position fixing transmitters in accordance with the coastal States standards, specifications and procedures; and
 - g. for compatibility between national and high seas VMS.

3. The Commission has responsibility, under Article 24 (8), to establish standards, specifications and procedures for the use of the VMS on the high seas in the Convention Area.

Work completed to date on the Commission VMS

4. At its Second Session, the PrepCon adopted terms of reference for Working Group III that included a directive to develop standards, specifications and procedures, consistent with the Convention, including Article 24, for the operation of a vessel monitoring system (VMS).

5. No progress on the issue of VMS was made at the 3rd and 4th Sessions of the PrepCon, although an information paper on VMS was requested at the 4th session. A discussion paper (WCPFC/PrepCon/WP.23)¹ was prepared by the Interim Secretariat for the 6th session. During the 7th session of the Preparatory Conference a work plan for the Technical and Compliance Committee of the Commission was developed of which item 1 was to “Establish standards, specifications and procedures for the operation of a vessel monitoring system”.

6. WCPFC/PrepCon/WP.23 described in detail the legal basis for VMS within the WCPFC, along with the institutional structures and arrangements with regard to international cooperation. WP.23 also identified options for VMS cooperation arrangements and issues that must be addressed in defining the VMS and a “roadmap” for development of VMS cooperation.

7. In addition to discussing ALC standards, polling options and draft rules and procedures for the release of VMS data, the First Regular Session of the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC1), recommended that the Commission VMS be used to:

- Track the position and speed of all fishing vessels that fish for highly migratory fish stocks covered by the Convention on the high seas in the Convention Area and any waters under national jurisdiction requested by a Member as per Article 24(8);
- support of the MCS functions of the Commission (e.g. transshipment monitoring, observers); and
- facilitation of the monitoring and enforcement of conservation and management measures.

8. The Commission, at its Second Regular Session, adopted TCC1’s recommendation and in addition decided that the approval of automatic location communicators (ALC) standards that do not include a polling capability be contingent on the following:

- the reporting rate of ALCs be set at a frequency sufficient to ensure that the effectiveness of the programme as a monitoring and enforcement tool is not compromised; and
- that vessels equipped with such units have on board an alternative method of 2-way communication between the vessel and the VMS system operators that remains operational at all times.

9. TCC1 had also recommended a study of the options available to support the implementation of the Commission VMS. On the basis of the Second Regular Session of the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC2) provided advice and recommendations to the Commission that:

¹ Discussion Paper on the Institutional Options for VMS Cooperation Among the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. Prepared by Kieran Kelleher for the Interim Secretariat (WCPFC/PrepCon/WP.23)

- the Commission should develop a stand alone VMS with the added capability of accepting VMS data forwarded from the FFA VMS. Vessels operating on the high seas in the Convention Area that are required to report VMS data to the Commission will have the option to report those data via the FFA VMS; and
- the Commission should adopt the draft minimum ALC standards drafted by TCC2.

10. These discussions led to the Third Regular Session of the Commission to adopt Conservation and Management Measure-2006-06 (CMM-2006-06). This included a process for implementation of the Commission VMS and minimum standards for ALCs.

11. The development of rules and procedures for the operation of the Commission VMS still remains to be done. As identified at paragraph 6(b) of CMM-2006-06, the rules and procedures are to include, *inter alia*, data reporting requirements, rules on polling, ALC failure alternatives, cost recovery procedures, cost sharing arrangements, measures to prevent tampering and obligations and roles for fishing vessels, CCMs, the FFA and WCPFC Secretariats.

Recommendation

12. TCC3 is invited to:

- i. note the work completed to date adopted by the Commission; and
- ii. establish a small VMS technical working group to meet during TCC3 to further elaborate Standards, Specifications and Procedures for the Operation of the WCPFC VMS and develop a schedule of time-frames and milestones.

Attachment A

Draft Terms of Reference for a TCC Technical Working Group to develop Standards, Specifications and Procedures for the WCPFC Vessel Monitoring System

Develop the following, including a schedule for time-frames and milestones, for implementation of the WCPFC VMS.

1. Auditing of ALC standards to ensure compliance by CCMs and their vessels.
2. ALC malfunction procedure.
3. ALC failure alternatives.
4. ALC inspection protocol.
5. ALC registration and de-registration.
6. Polling.
7. Cost recovery.
8. Vessel reporting.
9. Data to be transmitted.
10. Data standards and formats.
11. Data security.
12. Measures to prevent tampering.
13. Roles and responsibilities: fishing vessels, CCMs, and the FFA and WCPFC Secretariats.