TECHNICAL AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE
Twenty-First Regular Session
24 September to 30 September 2025
Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia (Hybrid)

REVIEW OF DATA EXCHANGE ARRANGEMENTS

WCPFC-TCC21-2025-18
8 September 2025

Submitted by the Secretariat

Purpose

1. This paper provides an update on the Secretariat's work towards establishing data exchange arrangements with selected RFMOs for transhipment-related data and information. It should be read alongside WCPFC-TCC21-2025-15 *Available data for verifying compliance,* which identifies data gaps and where verification can be strengthened.

Introduction

2. At WCPFC20, the Commission requested the Secretariat:

> "*1) establish transhipment activity, observer reports, and carrier vessel data exchange arrangements with the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT), South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO) and the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC); and*
>
> *2) provide an update to TCC20 seeking recommendations for WCPFC21.*"

3. In July 2024, an online meeting between the WCPFC and IATTC Secretariat's considered several areas and next steps for collaborative work including on transhipment monitoring and sharing information in support of the Transhipment Intersessional Working Group (TS-IWG). An initial technical meeting was held in November 2024, to discuss collaborative work and, in relation to sharing of transhipment information, identified the next steps would be to identify the type and level of data to be exchanged, how standardised data would be exchanged, and the management of that data in RFMO databases.

4. In September 2024, the Secretariat attended an online meeting of the Pan Pacific Fisheries Compliance Network of RFMOs. This meeting provided an opportunity for exploratory discussions with Compliance Managers from IATTC, SPRFMO, NPFC and CCSBT, about their current interest in data exchanges. To support the consideration by these RFMOs Secretariat colleagues, the WCPFC Secretariat provided an initial high-level assessment of the overlap of vessels across RFMO vessel records/registers, which noted that there were 1,332 vessels (mainly longline, purse seine, and carrier vessels with some troll, pole and line, bunker, support, and research vessels) common to one or more

RFMO. At the time, each RFMO Compliance Manager indicated interest, and requested additional time to consult internally.

5. At WCPFC21 in 2024, the Commission adopted TCC20's recommendation tasking the Secretariat to progress reciprocal data exchange arrangements with RFMOs (IATTC, IOTC, CCSBT, SPRFMO and NPFC, "participating RFMOs") during 2025. The Commission noted the importance of reciprocity in exchanges and requested an update on progress to TCC21 and WCPFC22. (TCC20 Summary Report, paragraph 445)

Data access rules and procedures and existing data sharing arrangements with other RFMOs

6. The Commission's Data Rules and Procedures[1] (Data RandP) and the associated Monitoring and Control or Surveillance (MCS) Data Rules and Procedures (MCS Data Rules) set requirements that allow access to transhipment declarations by RFMOs.[2]

7. In addition, the Commission has Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with all participating RFMOs. In addition, for CCSBT and IATTC, Memoranda of Cooperation (MOC) add more detailed descriptions of data exchanges. Collectively, all provide for reciprocal data exchanges of operational transhipment reporting and transhipment observer reporting as summarised in Annex 1.

Update on progress to identify key factors required to establish data exchanges

8. In 2024, discussions with participating RFMO's identified the minimum data most suitable for exchange would be derived from the "transhipment declaration". This data is what is to be *reported* to all participating RFMO's. This data declares the details associated with the transhipment event once it has occurred. Other reporting such as data notifying of a transhipment may be *required*, however, not all participating RFMO's are to *report* this to their Commission. Where both sets of data are required, it may be possible to share both in the future, however, the initial focus would remain on the declaration data.

9. In June 2025, the WCPFC Secretariat participated in an in-person joint Tuna Compliance Network and Pan Pacific Fisheries Compliance Network meeting with all participating RFMO's represented. This provided the opportunity for more detailed discussions that:

    a. compared transhipment reporting requirements and the effect of those on the data and data standards (which relates to understanding how to interpret data);

    b. the frequency of required reporting to participating RFMO's;

    c. processes for managing the data reported including data quality reviews and supporting systems; and

    d. options for automated exchange of pre-designed data extracts (rather than raw data) and the timeframe within which participating RFMOs could support data exchanges.

10. The outcomes of these discussions were:

    a. Recognizing there is broad similarity across participating RFMOs in operational transhipment requirements and data fields for flag CCM transhipment reporting and observer reporting of monitored transhipments;

    b. Noting there are some differences in relation to:

[1] Paragraph 29

[2] Paragraphs 26-27 and the Addendum

i. how transhipments are authorised and monitored;

ii. the frequency of reporting;

iii. managing the quality and completeness of flag CCM reported data; and

iv. the extent to which the participating RFMOs have systems for managing transhipment related data and whether they can or could in the future, support automated exchanges of that data.

v. current capability to support automated data transfers through Application Programming Interfaces (API's) to minimise additional workloads to each RFMO Secretariat.

c. Confirming that the initial focus for data exchanges should be data related to transhipment declarations and transhipment observer reporting because it is the most feasible basis considering participating RFMO's current requirements and capabilities.

d. Confirming that participating RFMOs for initial involvement in data exchange with WCPFC would be CCSBT and IATTC who are well placed to support the remaining work and to enable reciprocal data exchanges with WCPFC.

e. Recognition amongst the participating RFMOs that the proposed data exchanges would strengthen monitoring of high seas transhipment activities, improve the quality of reporting, and provide more robust verification[3] for compliance assessments, expanding the range and quality of information available to inform each Commission's understanding of its fisheries, leading to better informed decision making.

f. Noting the specific arrangements that participating tuna RFMOs have with CCSBT for the sharing of data from transhipment reports and observer reporting relating to Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) catches.

11. The June 2025 joint RFMO meetings also confirmed for the purpose of this WCPFC task, that CCSBT and IATTC are in a similar position of readiness and can progress to develop the technical and database work to support the preparation, transfer, and receipt of data over the next 12 months.

12. Other participating RFMOs who were less prepared for data exchange requested that WCPFC consider the development of pre-designed data presentations to reduce the work required to use the data.

In-house preparations for data exchanges of reported WCPFC transhipment data, including data quality reviews

13. The Secretariat has increased its focus on strengthening data quality for supporting Commission processes and preparing for future data exchanges with other RFMOs. Some highlights of these efforts include:

a. Starting in September 2024, the Secretariat introduced quarterly reconciliations of transhipment event reports in the Transhipment System for Electronic Reporting (TSER) against expected event reporting to replace annual reconciliations. Initial reviews focused on ensuring all reports were received for each notified transhipment event. This increased

[3] WCPFC-TCC21-2025-15 Available data for verifying compliance, Part 3: Improving the monitoring and verification of fishing activities, particularly in the high seas

frequency has resulted in most CCMs being able to quickly address any discrepancies in their data, e.g. missing reports.

b. Starting in November 2025, issues of possible transhipment events and incorrect transhipment positions will be provided to CCMs for their review, to improve confidence in reported transhipment locations.

14. The Secretariat's focus on data quality is to ensure that the Commission's data holdings related to transhipment reporting are as complete and accurate as possible. Furthermore, the establishment of routine data quality review mechanisms will also strengthen data exchanges with other RFMOs, enabling them to receive more complete and accurate datasets.[4]

15. Further technical and database work will be needed to support the receipt of data exchanges from other RFMOs APIs, and to facilitate the delivery of WCPFC transhipment data via APIs as part of the reciprocal arrangements. The necessary work can be scheduled soon following an individual participating RFMO confirming their readiness to commence testing APIs for data exchanges.

Next steps

16. In the last quarter of 2025, the WCPFC Secretariat will actively engage with CCSBT and IATTC Secretariats to develop joint workplans that would detail and progress the technical and database work needed to prepare data and establish the preparation, transfer, and receipt of data over the next 12 months.

17. To support continued discussions with the remaining participating RFMOs, the Secretariat will maintain communications with these RFMO's through the Tuna Compliance Network and Pan Pacific Fisheries Compliance Networks through existing online and in-person meetings to ensure broad awareness of the process being established.

18. A further update on progress will be provided to TCC22 (2026).

[4] WCPFC-TCC21-2025-RP03 Annual Report on Transhipment Reporting

Table 1: Scope of MOU between WCPFC and RFMO relative to specific data exchange tasking

RFMO	Data exchange in scope of the MOU?		Comment
	Transhipment activity / carrier vessel data	Observer reports	
CCSBT	Yes Non-specific	Yes Specific	**Transhipment activity:** (d) of overarching MOU:"*Agree to exchange data and scientific information on annual basis*" **Observer reports:** MOC on the exchange and release of data applies where a transhipment involving Southern Bluefin Tuna occurs in the high seas of the WCPFC Convention Area ROP observers trained as CCBT endorsed observers for observing transhipments involving Southern Bluefin Tuna **Exchange of data:** Annual exchange of data including 5x5 scientific data Area of interest is the WCPFC Convention Area, south of 20ºS
IATTC	Yes	Yes	**Transhipment activity and observer reports:** "*1. Areas of Cooperation* *i. exchange of data and information….*" MOC: *"2. Operational Level Data* *Operational-level tuna fisheries data includes catch and effort (including by-catch of mammals, turtles, sharks and billfish), observer, unloading, transhipment and port inspection data"*
IOTC	Yes Non-specific	Yes Non-specific	**Transhipment activity and observer reports:** 1. Areas of Cooperation "*Agree to establish and maintain consultation, co-operation and collaboration in respect to matters of common interest including but not limited to* *i. exchange of data and information* *iii. CMMs for stocks and species of mutual interest*"
NPFC	Yes Non-specific	Yes Non-specific	**Transhipment activities and Observer Reports** "*2. Areas of Cooperation* *II. b) exchange data and scientific information at the specific request of one of the Organisations, transhipment activities of those vessels authorised to conduct transhipment on a necessity basis; and* *V. cooperate where appropriate, on the implementation of CMMs adopted under the NPFC and WCPFC Conventions*"
SPRFMO	Yes	Yes	**Transhipment activities and Observer Reports** "*2.Areas of Cooperation* *ii. exchange data and scientific information in support of the work and objectives of both Organisations,..:* *b. at the specific request of one of the Organisations, transhipment activities of those vessels authorised to conduct transhipment in accordance with CMMs adopted under the SPRFMO and WCPFC Conventions, on a necessity basis*"