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Data Exchange Arrangements with Other RFMOs

WCPFC-TCC22-2026-15

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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 transshipment-related data and information. It should be read alongside WCPFC-TCC21-2025-15 "Available Data for Verifying Compliance", which identifies data gaps and where independent verification can be strengthened.

Introduction

2. WCPFC20 request that the Secretariat establish 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 \(NPFC\)*](#) for the exchange of information on transshipment activities, observer reports and carrier vessels.
3. Separate collaborative work is also underway with IATTC through joint working groups on the management of South Pacific albacore and Pacific bluefin tuna. These processes are addressed through specific papers submitted to the Commission and its subsidiary bodies.
4. Building on discussions initiated in 2024, the Secretariat continued to explore reciprocal data-exchange arrangements with selected RFMOs, including the scope of transshipment-related information to be exchanged, data standardization, and the management of exchanged information. Initial technical discussions focused on IATTC and CCSBT because their existing reporting processes and systems appeared well placed to support automated exchanges.

Other scientific and management data exchanges

5. Cooperation with IATTC is enshrined in the WCPF Convention [*Article 22 \(4\)*](#). This duty to cooperate has been implemented through an MOU between the two organizations that supports joint work on stock assessment for shared stocks, efforts to jointly manage the WCPFC-IATTC Overlap Area, and compliance matters such as transshipment verification reports. Current data-sharing, notification, and

compliance issues relating to the Overlap Area are considered separately in [WCPFC-TCC22-2026-05](#), “WCPFC and IATTC and the Overlap Area: Issues” and in [WCPFC-TCC22-2026-RP06_suppl01](#) “WCPFC, Analysis of Trends in Fisheries in the IATTC Overlap Area”. Further consideration of relevant data exchanges should be informed by the issues identified through those processes.

Exchange of transshipment data with other RFMOs

6. As outlined in [WCPFC-TCC20-2024-23_rev1](#), initial technical discussions on exchanges of transshipment report data has been focused on IATTC and CCSBT, including comparison of the reporting processes, data fields, and data standards used by each RFMO. TCC21 acknowledged the Secretariat’s ongoing work to resolve challenges in verifying high seas transshipment data, including in the overlap area.¹
7. The Secretariat is aware that the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) has recently introduced a transshipment reporting system that now provides a potential basis for progressing discussions in 2027 on the automated exchange of transshipment data. In recent discussions, the NPFC Secretariat has confirmed that an automated exchange would be technically possible and that they would need a formal request to bring this matter to the attention of their members (via their Technical Compliance Committee’s Small Working Group for Planning and Development). The Memorandum of Understanding between NPFC and WCPFC enables this exchange of data as one of the areas of cooperation:

“at the specific request of one of the Organisations, transshipment activities of those vessels authorised to conduct transshipment in accordance with conservation and management measures adopted under the NPFC and WCPFC Conventions, on a necessity basis;”²

CCSBT

8. No transshipment of southern bluefin tuna in the WCPO has been reported to WCPFC during the past decade. However, there is practical overlap between the two Commissions’ authorized vessel lists. Recent IMCS Network information³ indicates that 135 CCSBT-authorized vessels were also on the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels. Recent CCSBT assessments indicate that the stock continues to rebuild and remains on track under the CCSBT management framework.⁴ There has been some interest from Pacific Island States in engagement with CCSBT. The Secretariat notes that Fiji has indicated its intent to participate as an observer in CCSBT.⁵

¹ [TCC21 Summary Report](#), paragraph 349

² [Memorandum of Understanding between the North Pacific Fisheries Commission and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission](#), 2 ii b)

³ Through the IMCS Network Combined Regional Authorised Vessels Tool (CRVT) automatically combines public vessel data from RFMOs and RFBs including WCPFC and FFA) allowing identification of vessels authorized to fish across multiple RFMO’s and RFB’s.

⁴ Takahashi, N. and Itoh, T. 2025. *A Check of Operating Model Predictions from the Viewpoint of Implementation of the Management Procedure in 2025*. CCSBT-ESC/2508/28.

⁵ [Post from the Fijian Government](#)

9. Both Commissions require reporting and observer monitoring of relevant at-sea transshipments. The proposed reciprocal exchange would principally cover WCPFC transshipment notifications and the equivalent CCSBT pre-transshipment information from observer deployment requests, and WCPFC transshipment declarations and associated observer reports and CCSBT declaration information. Although some differences exist between the two reporting frameworks, including reporting timeframes and CCSBT's requirement for an observer deployment request, these differences do not prevent the exchange of core information on the transshipment activity. WCPFC information would be specific to any southern bluefin tuna reported. Information on other species/products would not be included.
10. The CCSBT Resolution already recognizes WCPFC observers that are onboard CCSBT authorized carrier vessels, provided that these observers meet the standards specified in the CCSBT Resolution⁶, and WCPFC transshipment declarations. CCSBT also has arrangements with IOTC and ICCAT under which it receives copies of original transshipment reports or reports adapted to include the information required for southern bluefin tuna.
11. A reciprocal WCPFC–CCSBT arrangement would require each Commission to agree that relevant reports transmitted through the other Commission may be accepted for its purposes and incorporated into its datasets. This would be subject to any necessary Member approval and agreement on processes to ensure that the reports contain all information required by the receiving Commission.
12. Information transmitted from WCPFC to CCSBT would include the vessel identifiers, date, time, and location recorded in the relevant transshipment notification and declaration, together with the product and weight rows relating to southern bluefin tuna. Data rows relating to other species would not be transmitted to CCSBT. Any declaration submitted following a transshipment arising from force majeure would also be included where southern bluefin tuna was reported. Annex 1 provides an example of the proposed data extract.
13. Information transmitted from CCSBT to WCPFC would include the observer deployment notification or equivalent pre-transshipment information, including the vessel identifiers and the anticipated date, time, and location of the transshipment. The corresponding declaration information would include the vessel identifiers, actual date, time, and location, and the relevant southern bluefin tuna product and weight data. As CCSBT records only the southern bluefin tuna component of reports received from other RFMOs, the product information available for reciprocal exchange is expected to be limited to southern bluefin tuna.
14. WCPFC systems would need to include a source identifier to distinguish information received from CCSBT from information reported directly to WCPFC.
15. The information would be exchanged through reciprocal APIs, with each RFMO potentially notified when information was available for retrieval. Given that southern bluefin tuna transshipments are not

⁶ In practice this would be principally around training with key elements being species identification and satisfactory knowledge of the CCSBT conservation and management measures.

commonly reported in the WCPFC Convention Area, the exchange is expected to involve relatively few records. The same agreed dataset could also be made available to the CCSBT Secretariat through the Transshipment E-reporting System using a specific view established for this purpose.

16. CCSBT has advised that southern bluefin tuna transshipments are entered into its eSBT system. Subject to cost and technical considerations, relevant information could be shared electronically either through an API or through access to eSBT. CCSBT has also advised that any information on other species received through transshipment reporting, but not entered into eSBT, could be shared by email if required depending on the decision of CCSBT members on this arrangement.
17. Once the respective Commissions have agreed to the scope of the exchange, the data to be shared, the purposes for which the exchanged reports may be used, and the applicable data-management arrangements, the two Secretariats could commence technical implementation of the reciprocal exchange. This would include finalizing the data-field mapping, establishing source identifiers, agreeing the technical specifications for the API exchange, applying relevant access and confidentiality controls, and testing the exchange before it becomes operational.
18. Any subsequent expansion of the exchange beyond the information and purposes agreed by the two Commissions would be subject to further consideration and agreement, as appropriate.

IATTC

19. Discussions with IATTC are continuing. The Secretariat expects that any future exchange would be developed on a similar basis to the approach being explored with CCSBT, including agreement on the scope of data to be exchanged, applicable data-management arrangements, and technical mechanisms for secure transfer. Further updates will be provided once those discussions have progressed.

Recommendations

TCC22 is invited to:

- a. **note** the Secretariat's progress towards establishing data exchange arrangements with selected RFMOs for transshipment-related data and information, including work progressed with CCSBT, continuing discussions with IATTC, and initial discussions with NPFC;
- b. **note** that the proposed reciprocal WCPFC–CCSBT exchange would focus on transshipment-related information concerning southern bluefin tuna, including relevant transshipment notification data, declarations and observer-report information, subject to agreement on the scope of information to be exchanged, data-management arrangements, confidentiality and access controls, and technical transfer mechanisms;
- c. **recommend** that the Commission at WCPFC23 agree that:
 - i. the Secretariat may finalize the technical and data-management arrangements for the reciprocal exchange of agreed WCPFC and CCSBT transshipment-related information concerning southern bluefin tuna;

- ii. the Secretariat may transmit WCPFC transshipment notification, declaration and observer-report information relating to southern bluefin tuna to CCSBT, noting that product and species information transmitted to CCSBT would be limited to southern bluefin tuna and applicable data confidentiality arrangements in the MOU between WCPFC and CCSBT;
 - iii. relevant transshipment-related information transmitted by CCSBT may be accepted for WCPFC transshipment reporting and monitoring purposes and incorporated into WCPFC datasets, provided that the information contains the required WCPFC data fields and is transmitted in accordance with agreed data-management arrangements;
 - iv. the Secretariat may commence implementation of the reciprocal exchange once CCSBT has provided corresponding agreement on the acceptance of WCPFC transshipment related information;
 - v. any subsequent expansion of the exchange beyond the information and purposes agreed by the two Commissions would be subject to further consideration and agreement, as appropriate;
 - vi. the Secretariat formally request that NPFC consider establishing a reciprocal exchange of relevant transshipment information with WCPFC, consistent with the Memorandum of Understanding between the two Commissions, and work with the NPFC Secretariat to develop the proposed scope, data-management arrangements and technical mechanisms for the exchange;
 - vii. the Secretariat should continue discussions with IATTC and NPFC on possible transshipment-related data exchange arrangements and provide further updates to TCC and the Commission as those discussions progress; and
- d. **encourage** the Secretariat to continue discussions with IATTC on a possible transshipment-related data exchange arrangement and to report on progress with both IATTC and NPFC to TCC23 and WCPFC24.