



**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
FIFTH REGULAR SESSION
Port Vila, Vanuatu
10-21 August 2009**

VMS Data for Scientific Purposes

**WCPFC-SC5-2009/ST-WP-10
28 July 2009**

Introduction

1. The Fourth Regular Session of the Scientific Committee (SC4) considered a request from the Ad-Hoc Task Group-Data (AHTG [Data]) to consult with the Convenor ST-SWG regarding the release of VMS data for scientific purposes. The Chair of the AHTG [Data] prepared a paper WCPFC-SC4-2008/ST-IP-6 (Scientific issues related to the work of the AHTG [Data]) which summarised the work of the AHTG [Data] associated with the drafting of separate rules and procedures for the protection, access to and the dissemination of VMS data for scientific purposes. The paper put three questions to the ST-SWG and SC:

- i. What specific kinds of VMS data are needed?
- ii. For what particular scientific purposes are these data needed?
- iii. At what time scale are data needed?

2. The Chair of the AHTG [Data] has received comments on a third draft of *Rules and Procedures for the Protection, Access to, and Dissemination of Non-Public Domain Data and Information Compiled by the Commission for the Purpose of Monitoring, Control or Surveillance (MCS) Activities in High Seas Areas and Scientific Purposes*. Taking into consideration the comments received, it is the Chair's intention to produce a new draft by the end of August 2009 for consideration at a meeting of the AHTG [Data], 28-29 September 2009 immediately prior to the Fifth Regular Session of the Technical and Compliance Committee.

SC4's advice to the AHTG [Data]

3. Noting that participants had not had sufficient time to prepare for this agenda item, offered the following provisional advice regarding i) what kinds of VMS data are needed, and ii) their purpose.

4. The following data were identified as needed: vessel identification, location, date and time.

5. The purposes of this data were considered to include:

- i. Estimating fine-scale distribution of fishing effort for use in oceanographic research;

- ii. Planning short term tagging operations;
- iii. Estimating or validating the recapture positions of tag returns;
- iv. Modelling the spatial dynamics of fishing effort for use in the operational models associated with any future MSE work;
- v. Estimating abundance indices using effective effort from fine-scale vessel specific data;
- vi. Validating logbook data.

6. With regard to the timescale at which data are needed, the SC considered that, as an interim arrangement, the standard (for time scale) used in ICCAT should be adopted by WCPFC. In 2008, ICCAT revised its 2006 multi-annual recovery plan for Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin (Rec. 08-05) to provide for “*The ICCAT Executive Secretariat shall make available as soon as possible the information (sic. VMS) received under this paragraph to CPCs with an active inspection presence in the Plan Area and to SCRS, at its request.*” This removed the 3-year delay that applied under the 2006 recommendation.

Advice and recommendations

7. The Fifth Regular Session of the Scientific Committee (SC5) is invited to provide any additional advice to the Chair of the AHTG [Data] in relation to:

- i. The kinds of VMS data needed for scientific purposes;
- ii. The purposes for VMS data for scientific purposes; and
- iii. Any additional considerations in relation to the timescale for which data is needed.