



**COMMISSION**  
**EIGHTH REGULAR SESSION**  
Koror, PALAU  
5-9 December 2011

---

**SMALL WORKING GROUP – VMS REVIEW**

---

**WCPFC8- 2011/36**  
**23 October 2011**

**Paper prepared by the TCC7 Small Working Group – VMS Review**



**TECHNICAL AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE**

**Seventh Regular Session**

28 September - 4 October 2011

Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

---

**Working paper from TCC7 Small Working Group - commentary on recommendations made in Joint  
WCPFC/FFA VMS Report**

---

**WCPFC TCC7 /2011/33**

**4 October 2011**

**Prepared by the Secretariat**

At TCC7 a small working group met to discuss the Joint WCPFC/FFA VMS Report (WCPFC-TCC7-2011/10) and its recommendations. The small working group has developed commentary on the recommendations of the review. The outcomes of the working group are attached for the consideration of TCC7.

The small working group recommends that TCC7 forward the attached table to WCPFC8 to be considered alongside the Joint WCPFC/FFA VMS Report.

**Table of commentary from TCC7 on the recommendations of the Joint WCPFC/FFA VMS Report (WCPFC-TCC7-2011/10)**

Ref	Recommendations		
	<b>Moving the Pacific VMS forward</b>	<b>Commentary</b>	<b>Priority</b>
111	Given that the information needs and the fishing fleets are so similar, the Review recommends that the FFA and WCPFC continue to work cooperatively and collaboratively and continue to improve this relationship to sustainably manage the highly migratory fishery resources in the western and central Pacific	The TCC supports this recommendation and encourages the WCPFC and the FFA to continue to cooperate in good faith	Already happening
112	WCPFC and FFA must identify what they want their systems to do from a usability perspective, defining what they want their systems to do and linking it to management measures themselves e.g. 2008 01 etc. They could potentially prioritise the use of the system around priority measures – which also may have the benefit of reducing costs. Review team suggested objective: to support fisheries management, including combatting IUU activity.	TCC agrees with this recommendation as a critical first step for further development of the Commission VMS. Currently there are no clear objectives for the WCPFC VMS. This should be given priority ahead of anything else.	High priority
113	The current vessel monitoring systems be expanded into a fisheries information management systems similar to what PNG has developed for their VMS/vessel day scheme	TCC notes the importance of the previous recommendation as a critical first step. Once the Commission has identified what it wants its systems to do from a usability perspective an assessment can be made as to the benefits of expanding the VMS into a broader fisheries information system. TCC notes the potential benefits of continuing to leveraging off and learn from existing “state of the art” systems.	Medium priority
114	A clear statement of work needs to be developed and approved by FFA and WCPFC for the implementation and maintenance of the centralized data base or “Cloud computing “ system, and a public tender process be conducted based on the statement of	With respect to recommendations 114 – 117 the TCC identifies the following high level issues that the Commission should address in sequence before moving forward on consideration of these recommendations: 1. Confirm whether or not the Commission is committed	Addressing these issues will be the next priority for the Commission following

	work	<p>to continuing with a joint system (ie. one that integrates the FFA and WCPFC VMS)</p> <p>2. Consider whether the system should be based on use of a centralised data base including on the use of “cloud computing”</p> <p>TCC recommends that the answers to these questions be based on an assessment that includes consideration of costs, access, security, utility and consistency with the Convention, as well as a desire to build on the developments already made to date by the WCPFC VMS.</p> <p>TCC also notes that many roadblocks to improvement of WCPFC VMS may be addressed through the review of the WCPFC VMS SSPs and the ongoing review of the SLA between the WCPFC and the FFA.</p>	identification of system use requirements. (as per rec 112)
115	<p>FFA and WCPFC should develop one central data base or “Cloud computing “ system to store all original VMS data received with a goal of eliminating redundant, separate satellite transmissions (and associated costs) to multiple entities. This centralized data base system would then provide a true copy of the data which would be directly accessible automatically, securely and near-real-time by both agencies, and as appropriate, discrete portions of the data would be directly accessible automatically, securely and near-real-time by member countries and authorized vessel owners.</p>	(See above)	

116	In order to protect the integrity of the data, ideally this centralized data base or system would receive the data directly from the Land Earth Stations/Gateways receiving the data from the satellites. However, in some cases, it may be more practical for the data to be retrieved from the Land Earth Station/Gateway by the member countries' VMS with the data replicated securely, near-real-time, automatically, "machine-to-machine" (with no human intervention) to the WCPFC/FFA database	(See above)	
117	If the centralized data base system or ("Cloud computing") is implemented, then the current SLA should be replaced with joint legal agreement (contract) that is signed by all parties accessing the data, this legal agreement would clearly identify each parties respective roles, responsibilities, the information they will receive and a means of holding each signatory responsible.	(See above)	
118	Aspirationally (i.e., longer term), WCPFC & FFA may want to seek opportunities to move more ongoing/routine responsibility for VMS management from the commercially-contracted service provider to competent, trained WCPFC technical staff, and seek to move from essentially a "rented" software platform to an "owned" software platform, using examples and lessons learned from mature systems like Chinese Taipei's VMS and newer innovations like PNG's VMS.	There were a range of views expressed on whether or not out sourcing or in house provision of services was the most appropriate. Again, the answer to this question will depend on how the system develops. It was agreed that mature systems will provide useful example and lessons for the Commission to consider.	Lower
	<b>Data Sharing</b>		
119	Amend the current data sharing rules to permit VMS Managers, VMS operators and technicians of FFA, WCPFC and Members with EEZs in the Convention Area to have full access to all the data under very	TCC notes that any access and treatment of VMS data must be in accordance with the Commission's existing rules and procedures for access to non-public domain data and information (ref) and the Commission's information security	Addressing VMS data management issues for WCPFC Secretariat staff is

	strict confidentiality guidelines. Violations of the strict confidentiality guidelines should be dealt with harshly and swiftly.	policy (ref).  The TCC also notes that aspects of this issue (ie. the ability of the WCPFC Secretariat to manage WCPFC VMS data for specific purposes) is already under consideration by TCC and the Commission.	a high priority for improving quality of service to members and for reducing costs.
	<b>ALC/MTU</b>		
121	It is recommend that the non-polling ALCs/MTUs be deliberately phased out perhaps in conjunction with the adoption of the FFA ALC/MTU approval process and the FFA list of approved ALCs/MTUs.	While no agreement was reached on the proposal for a “deliberate” phase out of the non-polling ALCs/MTUs, largely due to the cost implications for vessel operators and the Commission, it was noted that this is likely to occur in any case through a combination of attrition of older units, the fact that most suppliers are phasing out non-polling units, and the FFA has moved to do this for the FFA VMS system.  TCC recommends that the Commission consider an ALC/MTU type approval process based on the most up to date technology.	Medium priority
	<b>Cost Reduction</b>		
122	To reduce costs - the amount of information transmitted should be reduced to one packet size	TCC supports this recommendation but notes that it will require technicians to make changes to ALC units which will have implications in respect of both cost to vessel operators and timing. These factors will need to be taken into account in progressing this recommendation.	Medium priority
123	- polling rates should be monitored, to ensure vessels are polling at the correct rate	TCC agrees that polling rates should be monitored and notes that this is already occurring to a large extent.	High priority
124	Reducing the polling rate to a less frequent polling interval when a vessel is more than 200NM out the Convention Area.	TCC agrees with this recommendation and notes the discussion is already occurring within TCC to provide the WCPFC Secretariat with the ability to manage this directly.	High priority
125	Review and eliminate situations where the same data is being sent to Land Earth Stations/Gateways more than once (see Recommendation at para. 119-121& Appendix I).	TCC supports this recommendation in principle but notes that there are links to the Convention requirements for the WCPFC VMS and other broader issues that would need to be resolved in order to progress.	High Priority as this will result in major cost savings

	<b>Service Level Agreement</b>		
126	If the SLA is to be continued, the SLA should be reviewed for deliverables, responsibilities and cost on an annual basis by representatives of WCPFC and FFA.	TCC supports this recommendation and notes that annual discussions between WCPFC and FFA are a requirement of the SLA.	High priority, this review will take place in Dec 2011
127	The current SLA should be amended to permit WCPFC to liaise directly with the FFA contracted service provider taking into account the potential impact for an increase in cost and the overlap between the infrastructure supporting both the FFA and WCPFC VMS systems.	TCC supports this recommendation and encourages the WCPFC and FFA secretariats to cooperate to facilitate access by the WCPFC to the service provider.	High priority