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ANNUAL REPORT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE E-REPORTING STANDARDS

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Paper by the Secretariat and SPC-OFP

Purpose

1. This paper reviews the background of the WCPFC E-reporting standards development and provides an update on the level of voluntary uptake by CCMs in their data submissions to WCPFC to date.

Background

2. This paper responds to the task to the Secretariat under paragraph 7(c) of the E-reporting SSPs to "report annually on the performance of the Electronic reporting standards and their application, and as necessary, make recommendation for improvements or modifications."

3. Over the past five years the Commission has been considering the application of E-reporting and E-monitoring for fisheries monitoring. In 2014, the WCPFC held an E-Monitoring and E-reporting workshop at FFA Headquarters (Honiara, Solomon Islands) in 31 March – 1 April 2014 to discuss the potential for electronic reporting and electronic monitoring in the WCPO and to consider next steps for progressing these initiatives. The workshop noted that a key risk for the Commission is the lack of documented policies and standards for these technologies. The benefits of standardised reporting formats for data exchange were articulated in the consultant's paper, **WCPFC10-2013-16_rev1**. Potential benefits identified at the time included but not limited to:
    a. timely and enhanced data management;
    b. facilitating data exchange between the Secretariat, CCMs, and regional bodies;
    c. efficiently managing the increasing amounts of data received by the Secretariat; and
    d. giving effect to t-RFMO recommendations on data harmonisation.

The potential risks of not having agreed WCPFC data standards included poor data coordination, increased data storage and transmission complexities, higher data security risk and increased long-term costs to the Commission and CCMs.

4. At WCPFC11 (December 2014) the Commission agreed that a priority task should be the development of draft standards, specifications and procedures for the use of electronic reporting and electronic monitoring technologies in WCPFC fisheries. To facilitate the development of these standards, specifications and procedures the Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring Working Group (ERandEMWG) was established.

5. The first two meetings of the ERandEMWG prioritised the development and consideration of draft E-reporting standards, particularly for operational level catch and effort data and for observer data. The culmination of the past two ERandEMWG meetings was the adoption in December 2016 of "*The Standards, Specifications and Procedures for Electronic Reporting"* (E-reporting SSPs), this was adopted by the Commission in the form of a general decision to which other forms of E-reporting standards, once agreed would be included over time. A third meeting was held in 2018 that focused more on E-monitoring.

6. In December 2016, the Commission adopted the standards, specifications and procedures for Electronic reporting which include *E-reporting standards for operational catch and effort data (*WCPFC13 Summary Report paragraph 584 and Attachment T). Additionally, in December 2017 the *E-reporting standards for observer data* (WCPFC14 Summary Report paragraph 401 and Attachment T) were agreed for inclusion in the E-reporting SSPs. The standards for *E-reporting of high seas transhipment declarations and transhipment notices* was adopted in December 2018 (WCPFC15 Summary Report Attachment S). A table that summarises the status of the WCPFC E-reporting standards is provided in **Table 1**. Copies of the E-Reporting SSPs can be found on the WCPFC website at this link:= https://www.wcpfc.int/electronic-reporting

Table 1. Notes on the decisions by the Commission on the standards, specifications and procedures for Electronic Reporting (E-reporting SSPs)

Version	WCPFC decision reference	Description of updates	Effective date *(Refer para 4)*
1.0	*WCPFC15 Summary Report, Attachment S*	*For adoption of ER for high seas transhipment notices and declarations*	*14 June 2019*
2.0	*WCPFC14 Summary Report, Attachment T*	*For adoption of ER for observer data*	*9 June 2018*
1.0	*WCPFC13 Summary Report, Attachment T*	*For adoption of ER SSPs, for operational level catch and effort data*	*9 June 2017*

7. In December 2018, the Commission also agreed that *"with respect to maintaining adopted standards, matters of substance (such as major changes or new proposals) shall be considered in a manner consistent with already established processes for new*

proposals. The Secretariat shall administer minor changes to the SSPs that reflect decisions of the Commission by circulating a draft to all CCMs advising that the change had been made and would come into effect on a date at least consistent with that in the SSPs. CCMs shall be provided the opportunity to raise concerns and if so, the change becomes a matter of substance and will be handled as such."

Comment on the voluntary uptake and/or performance of the E-reporting standards

8. At the time of preparing this paper, the WCPFC E-reporting SSPs related to the *E-reporting standards for operational catch and effort data* will have been in effect for a little more than three years. The WCPFC E-reporting SSPs as it relates to the *E-reporting standards for observer data* have been in effect for a little more than twenty-four months. The *E-reporting standards for high seas transhipment declarations and high seas transhipment notices* have been in effect for a little more than twelve months. (refer Table 1)

9. Irrespective of the effective date, it should be noted that the various E-reporting standards are voluntary until such time the Commission decides to make them mandatory (*refer* E-reporting SSPs paragraph 3).

E-reporting Standards for operational level catch and effort data and observer data

10. Uptake of electronic reporting tools is continuing and developments over the past four years, include:
    a) The Scientific Service Provider continues to receive E-Reported purse seine logsheet data from the PNA FIMS/iFIMS system that adhere directly to the WCPFC E-Reporting standards for operational catch/effort data; this system is mandatory for all purse seine fleets licensed to fish in the PNA waters. The PNA FIMS/iFIMS accesses a web-based API developed by the Scientific Service Provider to undertake comprehensive data quality control to ensure a regional standard in the quality of their E-Reporting data. The coverage of the validated PNA iFIMS e-log data in the WCPFC databases continues to increase as procedures for dealing with errors are better established.

    b) The submission of operational data for the Korean longline fleet for 2018 and 2019 continues to be sourced from their E-Reporting system, although it does not adhere to the WCPFC E-Reporting standards at this stage.

    c) There are several E-Reporting initiatives underway in the Pacific Islands countries that will result in an increase in coverage of LONGLINE operational data submissions adhering to the WCPFC E-Reporting standards in the future. For example, French Polynesia has successfully implemented the E-Reporting *Onboard* system on 27 vessels; this system is also being used by vessels in Cook Islands (8 vessels), Fiji (1 vessels), New Caledonia (3 vessels), Tonga (3 vessels) and Samoa (3 vessels). There has also been a significant increase in the submission of LONGLINE operational data (which adhere to the WCPFC E-Reporting standards) from E-

Reporting systems developed by respective fishing companies (for example, 20 vessels in the Cook Islands and 66 vessels from the Vanuatu fleet), and 70 longline vessels are now using the iFIMS E-Reporting system.

d) There are a number of E-Monitoring initiatives currently underway throughout the region, and the current system used in Pacific Island countries (provided by the Technical Service Provider SATLINK) exports data that adheres to the WCPFC E-Reporting Observer Standards. For recent years, **longline E-Monitoring data comprising 3,550 sets (for 2017), 2,110 sets (for 2018) and 690 sets (for 2019)** have been generated from this E-Monitoring system (adhering to the WCPFC E-Reporting observer standards) and loaded into the SPC regional E-Monitoring database. There was a significant development in early 2020, with the establishment of draft minimum Longline E-Monitoring standards[1] (independent of observer data standards) within the SPC/FFA/PNA membership. This initiative is consistent with the philosophy of the WCPFC Project 93 which recognises data generated from E-Monitoring to be independent source of data to observer data.

11. In terms of adherence to the adopted e-reporting standards, members are currently reporting as follows:

a) All Pacific Island member countries of the Pacific Community (SPC) require domestic and foreign fleets licensed to fish in their waters to submit logsheets, which are then entered or imported into the WCPFC operational catch/effort database (using the TUFMAN 2 system); this system stores data consistent with the WCPFC E-Reporting standards for operational data. The submissions of **2019 operational purse seine data** that are aligned to the WCPFC E-reporting standards **represents 98% coverage**, and for **2019 operational longline data**, **represent coverage of 42%** (of all 2019 longline data submitted).

b) All national observer programmes from Pacific Island member countries, the PNA-managed FSM Arrangement observer programme and the FFA-managed US Treaty Observer Programme have their observer data entered into the TUFMAN 2 system, which produces data for the WCPFC ROP database aligned to the WCPFC E-Reporting standards for observer data. The submissions of **2019 purse seine observer data** held in the WCPFC ROP database that are aligned to the WCPFC E-Reporting standards for observer data **represents 100% coverage**. As reported last year, several CCMs are now aligning their longline observer data submission to the WCPFC E-Reporting standards for observer data, including Chinese Taipei, Japan, Korea and USA. The submissions of **2019 longline observer data** held in the WCPFC ROP database that are aligned to the WCPFC E-Reporting standards for observer data **represents 86% coverage**, which is a considerable improvement on 2017 when this coverage level was only 29%.

[1] See https://www.wcpfc.int/node/46589

E-reporting Standards for high seas transhipment declarations and notices

12. The Secretariat has developed a system to support E-reporting.[2] Currently the WCPFC E-reporting system can receive E-reported data as per the WCPFC high seas transhipment declaration and notices E-reporting standards. An application developed by WCPFC to support CCMs implementation of the E-reporting Standards for high seas transhipment declarations and transhipment notices is now operational. It is available for Windows, Android and Apple iOS operating systems. The user manual can be accessed from the WCPFC website at this link:= https://www.wcpfc.int/e-reporting/tser

13. The Secretariat has been using the Windows version since November 2018 to enter high seas transhipment notifications and declarations submitted by email to WCPFC. Accordingly, **since November 2018 the data entry of high seas transhipment declarations and notices that align to the WCPFC E-reporting standards represent 100% coverage.**

14. In addition, the Republic of Korea and Chinese Taipei have been voluntarily using the WCPFC High Seas Transhipment E-reporting Application **(TSER)** since February 2020 and September 2019 respectively. In **2019, the proportion of high seas transhipment declarations and notices that were directly entered by CCMs** into the WCPFC E-reporting system was **12.6%** of all high seas transhipment declarations and notices received by WCPFC, with the remainder being submitted by email and entered by the Secretariat into the WCPFC E-reporting system. As at 31 August 2020, **the proportion of transhipment declarations and notices that were directly entered by CCMs** into the WCPFC E-reporting system was **in 2020 has increased to 55%** of all high seas transhipment declarations and notices received by WCPFC. A CCM wishing to use the e-reporting option must first contact the Secretariat for guidance on how to access the option.

15. To support the implementation of the WCPFC High Seas Transhipment E-Reporting System, since April 2020, the Secretariat has provided Authorised Flag CCM users online access to their high seas transhipment notifications and high seas transhipment declarations as received by WCPFC. Authorised flag CCM users only have access to the submissions made by or on behalf of their vessels, and not those submitted by another CCM. This is available at this link https://www.wcpfc.int/ccm-transhipment

16. In response to the task from WCPFC15, the Secretariat completed work involving CEFACT/FLUX in the last quarter of 2019. Based on the documentation provided by the European Union technicians, WCPFC developed a proof of concept enhancement to the WCPFC high seas transhipment e-reporting data receipt module. This proof of concept partially implemented allowing WCPFC high seas transhipment for notifications, declarations and cancellations to be submitted using the CEFACT/FLUX protocol.[3] As a

[2] The work to date was supported by supplemental funds from New Zealand and the United States of America. The design of the high seas transhipment E-reporting system provides the WCPFC with a base infrastructure that could be easily modified to collect other types of E-reported data in the future

[3] This will use a SOAP based XML data exchange format

proof of concept, the intention was for the consultants to implement the minimum components necessary for the WCPFC to receive the above message types. The findings were that:

a. the complexity of the CEFACT/FLUX standard would add a significant development and maintenance overhead to the WCPFC managed high seas transhipment E-reporting system. Initial development, excluding ongoing maintenance, was estimated to require 700 hours work;
b. The FLUX protocol's use of the SOAP requires additional technical development skills that would be difficult for WCPFC to support;
c. The requirement to host a FLUX transport layer end node server would also add ongoing maintenance overhead to the WCPFC IT department; and
d. Incorporation of FLUX into TSER would NOT alleviate the need for CCMs already using FLUX to undertake software development work to submit transhipment notifications and declarations to WCPFC; and
e. Additionally, for the WCPFC to implement CEFACT/FLUX into its high seas transhipment E-reporting a process would need to be established that allowed for the incorporation of WCPFC specific reference data (fishing method descriptions and codes etc) into the European Commission Master Data Register (MDR).

17. Based on the findings from investigations that reviewed the FLUX protocol, the FLUX transport layer, and developed a proof of concept, the Secretariat recommends WCPFC not to directly adopting FLUX support into the WCPFC managed high seas transhipment E-reporting system.

Recommendation

18. TCC16 is invited to note the report in this paper.
