



NINTH E-REPORTING AND E-MONITORING WORKING GROUP MEETING (ERandEMWG9)

Virtual Meeting

16 June 2026

10.00am to 2.00pm Pohnpei time

CHAIR'S SUMMARY REPORT

AGENDA ITEM 1 WELCOME AND OPENING

1. The 9th Session of the WCPFC Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring Working Group (ERandEM IWG) held its ninth meeting by video conference. The Chair, Lesley Hawn, called the meeting to order, welcomed participants and expressed appreciation to CCMs, observers and the Secretariat for their continued engagement in the Working Group's intersessional work.
2. The WG adopted the agenda without amendment (**Attachment 1**). At the opening of the meeting, the Chair recalled that the Working Group had been tasked under the adopted workplan to continue progressing key issues associated with the audit and assurance process. It was explained that the principal purpose of the meeting was to discuss feedback on the draft options for independent EM data review on the high seas and to undertake a detailed redline review of the draft audit questionnaire, with the objective of improving shared understanding and progressing toward a more final draft.
3. The following members, cooperating non-members and participating territories (CCMs) attended ERandEMWG8: Australia, China, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, Palau, Republic of Korea, Chinese Taipei, United States of America, French Polynesia.
4. Representatives from the following regional organizations attended ERandEMWG8: the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).
5. Observers representing Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT), International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF), The Global Tuna Alliance (GTA), Marine Stewardship Council Charitable Trusts (Pew), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and Sharks Pacific attended ERandEMWG8.
6. A full list of participants is provided in **Attachment 2**.

**AGENDA ITEM 2(a): DISCUSS FEEDBACK ON THE INDEPENDENT EM DATA REVIEW ON THE
HIGH SEAS OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION DRAFT**

7. In introducing this item, the Chair recalled that the objective was to improve common understanding of the options for primary EM review on the high seas and to begin exploring how the Secretariat might undertake an assurance role in a manner that supports independence, impartiality and data quality. To frame the discussion, the Chair outlined a number of working definitions, including audit, accreditation, independence, impartiality and independent data quality review, and explained that the latest revision of the options paper had been amended to distinguish more clearly between independence and impartiality and to remove the term “hybrid” from the title. The Chair also presented a continuum of options for high-seas EM review, ranging from review conducted within the flag CCM to more centralized or independently reviewed models.
8. The discussion showed general support for clarifying the distinction between primary review, secondary review and any Secretariat-led independent review. It was generally agreed that the initial review and analysis of EM records should occur within the flag CCM’s program, either directly or through a contracted service provider or equivalent institution operating under the flag CCM’s authority. Several CCMs emphasized that the key issue is not whether analysis is undertaken by a government body or a contracted entity, but whether the relevant program has effective mechanisms in place to ensure impartiality, freedom from conflicts of interest, and consistency of data review. In that regard, support was shown for an audit framework focused on whether such mechanisms exist and are functioning effectively within each CCM program.
9. A number of CCMs highlighted the importance of distinguishing between two different forms of additional review. One was described as a secondary review process within a CCM program, analogous to debriefing or quality control arrangements used in observer programs, intended to test the accuracy and consistency of the primary analysis. The other was described as an independent review conducted by or under the authority of the Secretariat for assurance purposes. It was generally recognized that these two functions should not be conflated and that clearer terminology would assist future drafting. It was also noted that the former is not yet expressly reflected in the interim standards and may therefore need to be addressed when those standards are next reviewed.
10. Different views were expressed on the degree of independence that should be required in the EM review process. One view was that independence can be achieved through a flag CCM-managed program, including where analysis is undertaken by government-employed analysts or by independent domestic institutions, provided that those analysts are not subject to the influence of vessel operators or fishing companies and that adequate safeguards are in place. Another view was that genuine independence requires stronger institutional separation from the entities with a direct interest in fishing outcomes, and that the Working Group should continue to look to the principles and structure of the Regional Observer Programme as a relevant point of reference. Support was also shown for retaining flexibility so that CCMs may either conduct analysis within their own systems or contract analysis to third parties, provided the agreed standards are met.
11. There was broad recognition that any assurance role for the Secretariat would need to be practical, proportionate and sensitive to confidentiality constraints. Several CCMs expressed concern that legal and policy restrictions in some jurisdictions would prevent routine transmission of raw EM records to external entities, particularly where footage may contain personal information or other confidential material. For that reason, support was shown for approaches under which any Secretariat-led

independent review would be carried out in connection with the audit process and, where necessary, on site within the CCM's data review environment rather than through continuous transfer of footage to the Secretariat. A related view was that simultaneous provision of raw EM data to both the flag CCM and the Secretariat would not be feasible for some CCMs and should not be treated as a baseline assumption.

12. Several CCMs nevertheless supported including a limited data quality review function within the Secretariat's audit role. Support was shown for a model under which the Secretariat, during periodic program audits, could review a sample of EM records or associated outputs to assess matters such as camera placement, video quality, system functionality and the accuracy of annotated EM data. It was suggested that such an approach could strengthen confidence in the quality and impartiality of EM data while avoiding the cost and confidentiality implications of a standing separate review process. It was also noted that the scale and frequency of any such review could be adjusted over time and revisited once there is more experience with implementation.
13. The Working Group further considered the relationship between EM and the existing ROP framework. The Chair presented a process illustration based on the current observer framework and proposed that, for high-seas operations, primary EM review should align broadly with the way ROP data are managed under flag CCM authority, while recognizing that an additional assurance layer may be required for EM. Support was shown for using the ROP as the principal model for the management of primary review on the high seas. In the absence of objection, the Chair indicated that this would be reflected as a recommendation to the Scientific Committee and the Technical and Compliance Committee, while discussion on the exact nature of any Secretariat assurance role would continue intersessionally.
14. The outcome of this agenda item was that the Working Group moved closer to a common understanding that primary EM review on the high seas should sit with the flag CCM, either directly or through arrangements authorized by that CCM, and that further work is needed to develop options for Secretariat-led assurance and independent review. It was also noted that additional information on the costs and modalities of potential assurance models would be sought intersessionally before further decisions are taken.
 - ✓ *Action Item: Submit the proposed EM primary review process using the ROP as the principal model for the management of primary review on the high seas to the SC and TCC for feedback, recommendations, and consideration.*
 - ✓ *Action Item: The Chair will work with the Secretariat to obtain indicative information on the resource and cost implications of various audit and assurance modalities, including potential in-person audit models, and provide this information to CCMs to support informed consideration of the available options.*

AGENDA ITEM 2(B). DISCUSS FEEDBACK ON THE AUDIT AND ASSURANCE DRAFT QUESTIONNAIRE REVIEW TO PROGRESS TOWARD CONSENSUS

15. Under this item, the Working Group undertook a detailed review of the draft audit and assurance questionnaire with the assistance of the Secretariat through real-time redline editing. The discussion was guided by the objective of aligning the questionnaire more closely with the interim standards,

improving clarity on what auditors would ask and assess, and refining the documentary evidence that CCMs would be expected to provide during an audit process.

16. At the outset, it was generally agreed that the questionnaire should continue to be framed as a program-level audit tool rather than as a vessel-by-vessel inspection mechanism. Several CCMs emphasized that the questionnaire should not create new substantive obligations beyond those already contained in the agreed interim standards. It was therefore considered important that items not presently grounded in the interim standards either be deleted, bracketed as placeholders for later consideration, or left for discussion during the forthcoming review of those standards. This principle informed much of the detailed review that followed.
17. A significant part of the discussion focused on the documentary deliverables that should accompany an audit. There was general agreement that vessel monitoring plans remain an important deliverable, but that the questionnaire should not require the submission of an individual plan for every vessel. Instead, support was shown for allowing CCMs to provide one vessel monitoring plan for similar vessel types that share the same EM system configuration. This formulation was considered sufficiently flexible to accommodate variation not only by vessel size class but also by fishing type, storage configuration and other operational characteristics where these result in different EM system setups. It was also noted that where vessel monitoring plans are not in English, provision of a translated copy or sample would be appropriate for audit purposes.
18. The Working Group also considered whether and how a high-level description of the EM program should be requested. One view was that a broad descriptive section remains useful to provide context for the more detailed audit questions that follow, particularly in helping the auditor understand the scope, operating model and structure of the CCM's EM program. Another view was that the requirement should not be overly prescriptive and that CCMs should be able to provide such contextual information as appropriate. Support was shown for relocating this material to the opening section of the questionnaire and presenting it as contextual information rather than as a strictly framed mandatory deliverable.
19. A recurring theme throughout the redline review was the need to ensure that questions are framed in a way that elicits evidence of systems and processes rather than simple one-off confirmations. In line with that approach, the Working Group reviewed revised drafting that asks CCMs to describe what procedures and controls are in place to ensure compliance with the interim technical standards and to provide supporting documentation demonstrating how compliance is tracked, monitored and maintained. It was generally agreed that this more process-oriented drafting better reflects the purpose of a program audit and supports an auditor's ability to assess conformance on the basis of verifiable evidence rather than subjective impressions.
20. The Working Group further discussed the structure of the questionnaire itself, including who would complete the different fields. Clarification was sought on whether the questions are intended to be answered directly by the CCM program, by the auditor following interviews, or through a combination of both approaches. Drawing on comparisons with the ROP audit process, it was observed that the questionnaire is normally circulated to the program in advance so that relevant materials can be assembled, and then worked through in discussion during the audit, with the auditor recording findings and comments. Support was shown for adjusting the format of the questionnaire so that it distinguishes more clearly between the CCM response and the auditor's comments.

21. Detailed consideration was also given to whether certain questions were duplicative or too narrowly framed. In particular, it was suggested that a separate question on geolocation devices was unnecessary because it is already captured within the broader question on compliance with the Commission's minimum technical standards. Support was shown for removing that stand-alone question and consolidating the subject within the broader systems question. Similarly, there was support for combining questions concerning software, hardware and cloud-based platforms used in EM analysis so as to avoid overlap and simplify the structure of the questionnaire.
22. On training and qualifications, the Working Group reviewed questions concerning the processes and controls used to ensure that EM analysts complete appropriate training in areas such as species identification, fishing practices and EM review procedures. Several CCMs emphasized that questions in this area must remain closely aligned with the interim standards and should not assume the existence of additional manuals or standardized annotation guides unless and until such requirements are formally adopted. It was therefore generally agreed that references to review manuals, annotation guides and similar materials should remain as placeholders for possible inclusion during the next review of the interim standards rather than being treated as currently mandatory deliverables.
23. The issue of independence and conflicts of interest for EM analysts also received careful attention during the questionnaire review. It was noted that the current interim standards already require that analysts not be employees of a fishing company involved in the monitored fishery and that they not have direct conflicts of interest, but that the broader concept of "independence" remains under active discussion within the Working Group. Support was shown for revising the draft question so that it tracks the wording already agreed in the interim standards and, where appropriate, for placing broader formulations in brackets pending further discussion of any amendments to the standards themselves.
24. The Working Group also discussed how the questionnaire should address confidentiality. Several CCMs emphasized that materials submitted in the context of an audit, including screenshots, vessel monitoring plans and other evidence derived from EM systems, should be treated as confidential. It was noted that under the ROP audit process, the questionnaire responses and supporting materials are handled on a confidential basis within the Secretariat, and this was seen as a useful precedent. Support was shown for ensuring that the EM audit process follows a similarly strict approach to confidentiality and, where necessary, that the Commission's confidentiality procedures be reviewed to ensure EM materials are clearly captured.
25. Further discussion addressed several issues that the Working Group agreed are better dealt with through future review of the interim standards or through the future EM CMM rather than through the audit questionnaire itself. These included retention periods for raw EM records, the structure of any secondary review requirement, the use of artificial intelligence in data review, EM coverage rates, and the submission of certain categories of EM data to the Secretariat or the scientific services provider. It was generally agreed that the questionnaire should reflect the current standards rather than prejudge outcomes on these unresolved matters, while still allowing placeholders to be retained where this would facilitate future revision.
26. The Working Group also considered the modality and timing of audits. There was general support for retaining flexibility for audits to be conducted either virtually or in person, depending on the circumstances of the CCM program and the needs of the Secretariat. Drawing again on experience

from the ROP audit process, it was noted that the decision on modality can appropriately be made through consultation between the Secretariat and the CCM concerned. A similar flexible approach was favored for corrective action periods following an audit. While the ROP's 90-day framework was acknowledged as a useful reference point, support was shown for language that allows additional time were warranted by the nature of the issue and by agreement between the Secretariat and the CCM.

27. The outcome of this agenda item was that the Working Group completed a substantial redline review of the draft questionnaire and identified a number of specific revisions to improve clarity, flexibility and alignment with the interim standards.

✓ *Action Item: Refine the revised questionnaire intersessionally, in coordination with ongoing work on the interim standards, and bring both back to the group for further review and consideration prior to submitting to the SC and TCC for feedback, recommendations, and consideration.*

AGENDA ITEM 3: PLANNING AHEAD

28. In light of the discussion under agenda item 2, the Chair indicated that the next phase of work should focus more directly on revisiting the interim technical standards. It was generally agreed that a number of issues raised during the meeting, including secondary review, manuals or analysis guides, data retention, data confidentiality references, artificial intelligence, and certain independence-related provisions, cannot be resolved solely through the audit questionnaire and instead require direct consideration in the standards themselves. Support was shown for the Chair to prepare further material on the interim standards for the next round of intersessional work.

29. The Working Group also noted that some aspects of the audit framework remain dependent on broader decisions about EM program design and about the role of the Secretariat in assurance and independent review. It was therefore understood that work on the standards and work on the audit questionnaire would need to continue in parallel, with careful attention to consistency between the two.

30. The Chair noted that the Working Group had made useful progress during the meeting but that a significant amount of work remains to be completed in 2026. This includes further refinement of the audit questionnaire, additional work on the interim technical standards, continued discussion of options for Secretariat-led assurance and independent review, and consideration of cost implications associated with different audit modalities. It was indicated that the Chair would work with the Secretariat to obtain indicative information on the resource implications of possible in-person audit and assurance models so that CCMs can consider these issues on a more informed basis.

31. The Working Group recognized that the remaining work would need to be managed within the wider WCPFC meeting calendar leading into SC22, TCC22 and the annual Commission meeting. It was also noted that, given the pace of related developments, the timing and format of future ERandEM-IWG work would need to remain practical and responsive to the broader schedule.

32. The Chair advised that, following a short period of leave, consideration would be given to the timing of the next Working Group meeting. It was observed that the period leading into the SC and TCC meeting would be busy, and views were invited on whether a further meeting should be held virtually

or whether an in-person meeting in the margins of TCC might be helpful. While no final decision was taken on the schedule at this meeting, it was generally understood that another meeting would be needed to continue work on the interim standards, the audit questionnaire and the outstanding issues related to Secretariat review and assurance.

33. In closing the meeting, the Chair thanked CCMs, observers and the Secretariat for their constructive participation and engagement in what was acknowledged to be a detailed and technical discussion. The Chair noted that, while a number of issues remain unresolved, the meeting had clarified several important areas, including the broad direction of primary high-seas EM review, the distinction between program-level secondary review and Secretariat-led assurance, and the revisions needed to improve the draft audit questionnaire.

34. The meeting closed at 1:58pm.



9th E-Reporting and E-Monitoring Intersessional Working Group Meeting

16 June

2026

Online

10:00am - 2:00pm (Pohnpei time)

Draft ERandEM IWG Annotated Agenda

ERandEMIWG9-2026-01

1 May 2026

1. Opening of the Meeting

- a. Welcome address by Chair
- b. Introduction
- c. Adoption of agenda

2. Objectives of the EM&ER-IWG Virtual Meeting

- a. Discuss feedback on the Independent EM Data Review on the High Seas:
Options for Consideration draft.
- b. Discuss feedback on the Audit and Assurance Draft Questionnaire Review to progress toward consensus
 - The Secretariat will assist in real time redline review

3. Planning Ahead

- a. Revisit the interim technical standards, including additional data standards
- b. Consider the remaining work for 2026 and the work plan for 2027
- c. Schedule our next meeting



9TH E-REPORTING AND E-MONITORING INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP

List of Participants

CHAIR**Lesley Hawn**

NOAA Fisheries
Fish and Wildlife Administrator (Observer Program)
Lesley.Hawn@noaa.gov

AUSTRALIA**Emily Lawson**

Australian Fisheries Management Authority
Senior Fisheries Officer
emily.lawson@afma.gov.au

Lara Ainley

AFMA
Tropical Tuna Manager
lara.ainley@afma.gov.au

Madeleine Miller

AFMA
Senior Policy Officer
madeleine.miller@afma.gov.au

Marguerite Tarzia

Australian Fisheries Management Authority
Manager, Foreign Compliance
marguerite.tarzia@afma.gov.au

CANADA**Felicia Cull**

Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Senior Policy Advisor
felicia.cull@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

CHINA**Feng Wu**

Shanghai Ocean University
Lecturer
fwu@shou.edu.cn

Hailang Yang

Shanghai Ocean University
Assistant Engineer
16692827118@163.com

Jiaqi Wang

Shanghai Ocean University
Ecology Scientist
jiaqiwang1108@gmail.com

Li Yan

China Overseas Fisheries Association
Deputy Director of Highseas Fisheries
liyan@cofa.net.cn

Liangyu Du

Shanghai Ocean University
China- Shanghai
lydu@shou.edu.cn

Liu Xiaobing

Shanghai Ocean University
Visiting Professor
xiaobing.liu@hotmail.com

Yanxuedan Zhang

Shanghai Ocean University
Associate Professor
zyxd1985@hotmail.com

COOK ISLANDS**Lualua Tua-Trood**

Ministry of Marine Resources, Government of
the Cook Islands
Director, Offshore Fisheries Division
l.tua@mmr.gov.ck

FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA**Barbara Hanchard**

c/o FSM National Oceanic Resource
Management Authority
Consultant
barbara@hanchard.net

JAPAN**Takahiro Fukushima**

Fisheries Agency of Japan
Section Chief
takahiro_fukushim820@maff.go.jp

Takeshi Miwa

Fisheries Agency of Japan
Counsellor
takeshi_miwa090@maff.go.jp

Yuto Furuzono

Fisheries Agency of Japan
International Affairs Division
yuto_furuzono650@maff.go.jp

NEW ZEALAND**Daniel Kerrigan**

Ministry for Primary Industries
Principal Adviser, International Fisheries
daniel.kerrigan@mpi.govt.nz

REPUBLIC OF KOREA**Jae-geol Yang**

Korea Overseas Fisheries Cooperation Center
Policy Analyst
jg718@kofci.org

Seonhye Kim

Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries
Assistant Director

CHINESE TAIPEI**Alexa Chang**

Fisheries Agency, Ministry of Agriculture,
TAIWAN
Project Assistant
chechun1119@ms1.fg.gov.tw

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**Christa Marie Svensson**

PFMC
Alternate-Commissioner
csvensson@trimarinegroup.com

Dawn Golden

NOAA Fisheries Pacific Islands Regional Office
Protected Resources Division Chief
dawn.golden@noaa.gov

Emily Crigler

NOAA Fisheries
Deputy Director, Fisheries Research and
Monitoring Division, Pacific Islands Fisheries
Science Center
emily.crigler@noaa.gov

Emily Reynolds

NOAA Fisheries, Pacific Islands Regional Office
Fishery Policy Analyst
emily.reynolds@noaa.gov

Oran Jacob Isaac-Lowry

FlyWire
CEO

Rachel Ryan

U.S. Department of State
Foreign Affairs Officer
RyanRL@state.gov

Raymond Clarke

Bumblebee SeaFoods
VP
ray.clarke@bumblebee.com

Valerie Post

NOAA Fisheries
Fishery Policy Analyst
valerie.post@noaa.gov

**COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF
SOUTHERN BLUEFIN TUNA (CCSBT)****Damian Johnson**

Commission for the Conservation of Southern
Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT)
Compliance Manager
djohnson@ccsbt.org

**INTERNATIONAL SEAFOOD SUSTAINABILITY
FOUNDATION (ISSF)****Kerrie Robertson**

Adira Consulting
Consultant
kr Robertson@iss-foundation.org

MARINE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL**Sayuri Ichikawa**

Marine Stewardship Council
WCPO Tuna Project Manager
sayuri.ichikawa@msc.org

PACIFIC COMMUNITY (SPC)**Eparama Loganimoce**

Secretariat of the Pacific Community
ER/EM Technical Coordinator
eparamal@spc.int

Leontine Baje

Secretariat of the Pacific Community
Fisheries Advisor
leontineb@spc.int

Malo Hosken

Oceanic Fisheries Programme - Pacific
Community
Regional ER and EM Coordinator
maloh@spc.int

Timothy Park

Secretariat of the Pacific Community
Senior Fisheries Advisor (Fisheries Monitoring)
timothyp@spc.int

**PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM FISHERIES AGENCY
(FFA)****Ana Taholo**

Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency
Compliance Policy Advisor
ana.taholo@ffa.int

PARTIES TO THE NAURU AGREEMENT (PNA)**Lara Manarangi-Trott**

PNA Office
Consultant
lara@pnatuna.com

PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS**Dave Gershman**

The Pew Charitable Trusts
Senior Officer, International Fisheries
Conservation
dgershman@pewtrusts.org

SHARKS PACIFIC

Bubba Cook

Sharks Pacific
Policy Director
bubba@sharkspacific.org

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY (TNC)

Claire van der Geest

TNC
Advisor
claire.vandergeest@gmail.com

Robynn Laplante

The Nature Conservancy
International Fisheries Policy Advisor
robynn.laplante@tnc.org

WCPFC SECRETARIAT

Deatra Iehsi-Solomon

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries
Commission (WCPFC)
HR Officer
deatra.iehisi-solomon@wcpfc.int

Elaine G. Garvilles

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries
Commission (WCPFC)
Assistant Science Manager
Elaine.Garvilles@wcpfc.int

Hilary Ayrton

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries
Commission (WCPFC)
Fisheries Management and Compliance Adviser
hilary.ayrton@wcpfc.int

Jeannie M. Nanpei

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries
Commission (WCPFC)
CCM Support Officer
jeannie.nanpei@wcpfc.int

Joseph Jack

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries
Commission (WCPFC)
Reporting Analyst Officer
Joseph.Jack@wcpfc.int

Karl Staisch

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries
Commission (WCPFC)
ROP Training and Audit Consultant
karl.staisch@wcpfc.int

Matthew McGregor

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries
Commission (WCPFC)
Compliance Manager
matthew.mcgregor@wcpfc.int

Mavrick Does

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries
Commission (WCPFC)
Data and Support Technician
mavrick.dores@wcpfc.int

Natsuko Akinaga

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries
Commission (WCPFC)
Administrative Officer
natsuko.akinaga@wcpfc.int

Simson Nanpei

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries
Commission (WCPFC)
IT Officer
simson.nanpei@wcpfc.int

SureAnn Poll

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries
Commission (WCPFC)
Vessel Management Officer
sureann.poll@wcpfc.int

Tim Jones

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries
Commission (WCPFC)
Data Architecture and Integration Consultant
tim.jones@wcpfc.int

Van David

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries

Commission (WCPFC)

Vessel Management Officer

van.david@wcpfc.int