



WCPFC's progress on the development of e-monitoring standards

Background

At CCSBT24 Australia undertook to report back to CCSBT25 on the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission's (WCPFC) progress in developing electronic monitoring (E-monitoring) standards.

The WCPFC E-Reporting and E-Monitoring Working Group (ERandEMWG) was established in 2014 in recognition of the fact some WCPFC members had commenced or were considering the implementation of electronic technologies to better support their fisheries monitoring, management, compliance and enforcement activities. The objective of the group is 'to consider how E-monitoring and E-reporting technologies could benefit the work of (WCPFC) members and the Commission in supporting the objectives and implementation of the Commission'.

Progress

The third meeting of the ERandEMWG was held in Busan, Republic of Korea, 6-7 August 2018. The meeting considered electronic reporting initiatives relating to transshipment reporting and uptake by members of electronic reporting standards as well as reports from members in relation to trials of these technologies. The main substance of the meeting was consideration of a concept paper (available at <https://www.wcpfc.int/node/30888>) prepared by the Chair of the ERandEMWG.

The without prejudice concept paper explored what a WCPFC E-monitoring programme would look like and what may be needed to ensure that data collected under an E-monitoring programme could be used by the Commission. The paper was informed by key decisions of the Commission and drew on previous related Conservation and Management Measures (CMM) or directions that the Commission has made. The paper recognised that vessel monitoring systems are a form of electronic monitoring and the Commission has an established data collection/verification programme through the regional observer programme.

As outlined in the Concept Paper, the working group considered four main areas: *programme standards* – that is the minimum standards relating to management of a national or sub-regional EM programme; *technical standards* – minimum standards relating to the E-Monitoring system (including cameras, sensors, any storage devices and software); *logistical standards* – minimum standards relating to the transfer of data from a fishing vessel to a reviewing centre and *data analysis standards* – minimum standards relating to converting an e-monitoring record into data to be submitted to the WCPFC.

The Concept Paper included a draft proposal for a CMM for a Regional E-monitoring Programme (REMP) which would, inter alia, establish a 'Commission Regional E-Monitoring Programme' that is defined as national or subregional data collection programme using electronic monitoring systems that are authorised/accredited as meeting the standards and procedures as adopted by the Commission.

The proposed CMM also describes the role of WCPFC members, the role of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, the role of the WCPFC Secretariat and the role of coastal and flag states. With respect to data and information, the draft CMM proposes that the Commission REMP shall ensure the security and confidentiality of non-aggregated data and other information which the Commission deems to be of a confidential nature; the release of data and other information collected by the Commission REMP shall be in accordance with guidelines set out in the Commission's Rules and Procedures for Access to, and Dissemination of, Data Compiled by the Commission.

The ERandEMWG Chair reiterated that the concept paper was intended to start discussion on an E-monitoring programme. The views of participants were sought on the proposal and key points raised were:

- a) further discussions were needed to explore the objectives and scope of E-monitoring technologies in the context of the suite of WCPFC's data collection and verification methods;
- b) support for the concept paper forming the basis for a general framework for a regional E-monitoring programme with details for implementation and application of E-monitoring to be included in the parent CMM e.g. a description of the longline E-monitoring should be written in CMM 2007-01 and carrier transshipment E-monitoring should be contained in CMM 2009-06.
- c) confirming that the concept paper is a work in progress and additional meetings on a WCPFC E-monitoring programme are needed;
- d) confirming that resource implications on the Commission and the Secretariat needs to be considered. and
- e) that E-monitoring should be prioritised in areas where data collection and verification is currently low.

Way forward

A future meeting of the ERandEMWG was not recommended but WCPFC members were asked to consider the issue at the WCPFC Scientific Committee and the Technical and Compliance Committee.

The summary report of the meeting is at <https://www.wcpfc.int/node/31582>.

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