

STATUS OF PROGRESS AND WORK PLAN

Date: 02 September 2021

Responsibilities of the VMSWG

Consider and provide advice on the following issues, such as:

1. Preferred model for a future IOTC Commission VMS, including hosting options
 2. Scope and application of the VMS (e.g. vessel types and size, geographic scope)
 3. Method for ensuring real time or near real time position reporting (e.g. direct, indirect or simultaneous polling)
 4. Develop possible funding models and options.
 5. Consider improvements that can be made to Resolution 15/03.
 6. Develop rules and procedures for the sharing, use and protection of VMS data.
 7. Develop mechanism for the smooth transition of the existing to the new system, if required.
-

Where are we?

1. **Preferred model for a future IOTC Commission VMS, including hosting options**
 - i. VMSWG01 **NOTED** that while several parties prefer Option 3 Partially Centralised, some parties have a strong preference for Option 2 Shared Decentralised. A solution would be to allow parties to choose which system to apply, as long as reporting resulted in being near real time and tamper-proof.
 - ii. VMSWG01 **CONCLUDED** that this flexibility comprises a hybrid option and **RECOMMENDED** this option be considered by the Compliance Committee.
 - iii. **CoC18.01 (Para 135)** The CoC **RECOMMENDED** that the VMSWG continue with its work.
 - iv. Para 57. The Commission **ENDORSED** the recommendations arising from the Report of the 18th Session of the Compliance Committee, except for the recommendation to renew the CNCP status of Liberia.

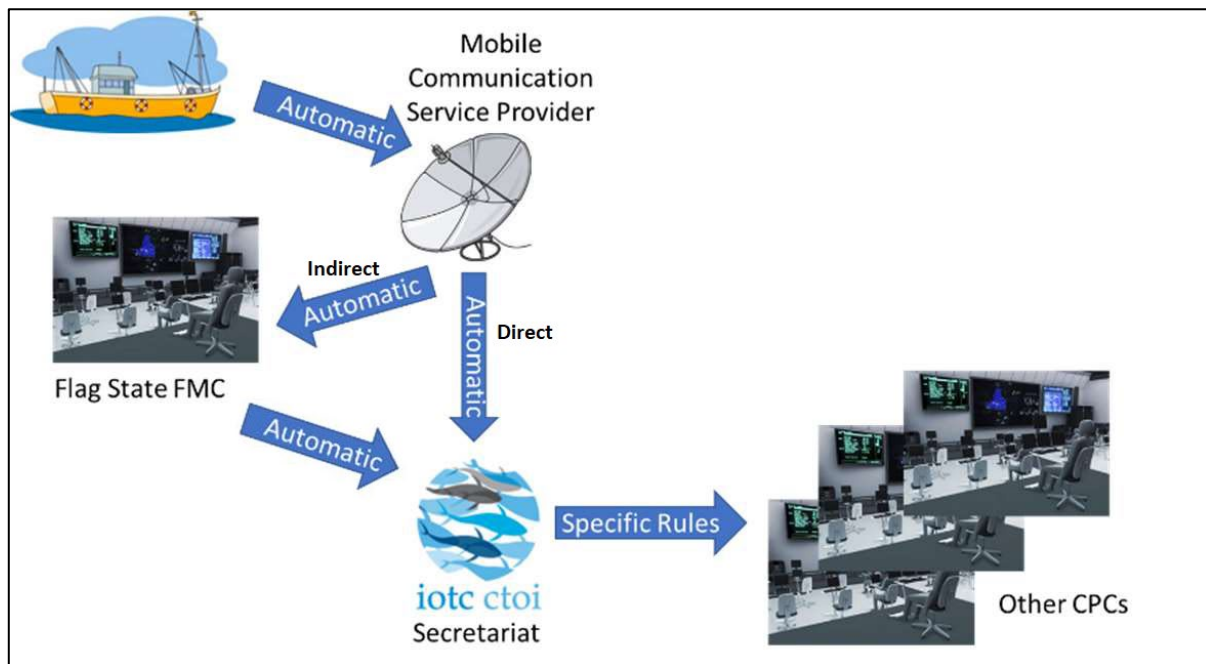


Figure 1. Adapted from *Options paper for strengthening the IOTC VMS, 2019*.

Figure 1, above, is a schematic representation of what the VMS Working Group had recommended for the Compliance Committee's (CoC) consideration at its 18th Session in May/June 2021, but unfortunately the report was not adopted in time for the recommendation to be presented to the CoC18.

However, it can be concluded that this represents the **AGREED** option, at the level of the VMS Working Group.

Status
Concluded

2. Scope and application of the VMS (e.g. vessel types and size, geographic scope)

- i. VMSWG01 **AGREED** to use the scope defined in Paragraph 1 of Resolution 15/03 in the first instance. That is, the vessel monitoring system shall apply to all vessels flying of 24 metres in length overall or above or in case of vessels less than 24 meters, those operating in waters outside the Economic Exclusive Zone of the Flag State fishing for species covered by the IOTC Agreement within the IOTC area of competence.
- ii. The Chair **REQUESTED** Members to review the report of the consultant and its Attachment ([IOTC-2019-WPICMM02-VMS Study](#)) before the next meeting

Status
Ongoing. Members to review the report of the consultant and its Attachment before the next meeting.

3. Method for ensuring real time or near real time position reporting (e.g. direct, indirect or simultaneous polling)

- i. VMSWG01 **NOTED** that there should not be any significant delay in receiving VMS data if reports come directly from the vessels or via the flag State Fisheries Monitoring Centre.
- ii. VMSWG01 **REQUESTED** that European Union and Seychelles provide a summary to the next meeting on how the transmission of VMS data works in practice between flag State and coastal State, highlighting any risk of tampering and any mitigation measures that might apply.

Status

Ongoing. European Union and Seychelles provide a summary to the next meeting on how the transmission of VMS data works in practice.
--

4. Develop possible funding models and options.

Of the RFMOs/RFBs directly consulted, most (and certainly all of the RFMOs) have chosen to fund their VMS through their normal budget. That is, CPCs contribute to the costs of the VMS through the general contributions formula, rather than through any special arrangement for flag CPCs etc. This is likely to be the most appropriate funding avenue for IOTC, at least in the short term.

However, this implies an increase in each CPC's contribution of anywhere between 8 and 18%, and that may well prove difficult to accept in a single increase and to sustain in the longer term. This could be partially mitigated in two ways:

- Commence contribution increases early – the section below sets out a proposed timeframe for key decisions and developments and this timeframe would suggest that the total cost increase would not be borne for several years. IOTC could proactively increase contributions early in the timeframe to cover the start-up costs (such as recruitment) and perhaps even to hold the additional funds in trust to defray ongoing costs and stage further increases
- Investigate a direct cost recovery arrangement – Vessels fishing in the EEZs of Pacific island countries pay registration fees to both the FFA and the Parties to the Nauru Agreement and these registration fees are used inter alia to fund the centralised VMS' operated by those agencies on behalf of the countries. The huge diversity in profitability and operation of IOTC vessels would be a complicating factor, but some form of cost recovery – even if only limited to vessels fishing in high seas or other EEZs – would be an effective mitigation against contribution increases. (Referenced from *Options paper for strengthening the IOTC VMS, 2019*)

Status

Outstanding. Consider at the September meeting.
--

5. Consider improvements that can be made to Resolution 15/03.

- VMSWG01 **NOTED** that Attachment 2 of the consultant's report provides proposed amendments to Resolution 15/03 and **AGREED** that discussion of this be referred to the next VMSWG meeting.
- VMSWG01 **AGREED** that changes to the Resolution should be decided at the Commission level not at the VMSWG.

Status

Ongoing. Consider further at the September meeting.
--

6. Develop rules and procedures for the sharing, use and protection of VMS data.

- Establish an expertise-based intersessional working group to develop rules and procedures for the sharing, use and protection of VMS data. (Referenced from *Options paper for strengthening the IOTC VMS, 2019*)

Status

Outstanding. Consider at the December meeting.

7. Develop mechanism for the smooth transition of the existing to the new system, if required.

Status

Outstanding. Consider at the December meeting.

Next Meetings

Monday 13 th December 2021 from 1100 – 1500hrs Seychelles time via ZOOM
--