UPDATE ON STATUS OF PROGRESS OF THE WORK PLAN

Date: 20 January 2022

Responsibilities of the VMSWG

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

1. VMS Objectives.[1]

2. Preferred model for a future IOTC Commission VMS, including hosting options

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

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

5. Develop possible funding models and options.

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

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

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

Where are we?

1. VMS Objectives

i. VMSWG03 **AGREED** to the following objectives:

The objective of the VMS is to support the Commission in ensuring sustainable fisheries of the stocks covered by the organization. By providing accurate and reliable information on the location and activities of the vessels fishing those stocks the VMS will reinforce the Monitoring, Control and Surveillance mechanisms of the Commission and will:

a) Improve monitoring, control and surveillance capabilities of CPCs to ensure compliance with the IOTC Conservation and Management Measures;

b) Enhance the cooperation and coordination on monitoring, control and surveillance mechanisms in the IOTC Area between coastal, flag and inspecting CPCs;

c) Increase transparency among CPCs and the IOTC Secretariat, and promote a level playing field on the control of fishing activities relating to IOTC regulated stocks;

d) Prevent, detect and deter illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing;

e) Obtain accurate, reliable and easily usable positioning data to be used for scientific research and fisheries management.

Status
Concluded

2. Preferred model for a future IOTC Commission VMS, including hosting options

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[1] Although not strictly part of the ToR of the Working Group, this item was considered as an essential component in order to allow it to progress with its work.

 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.
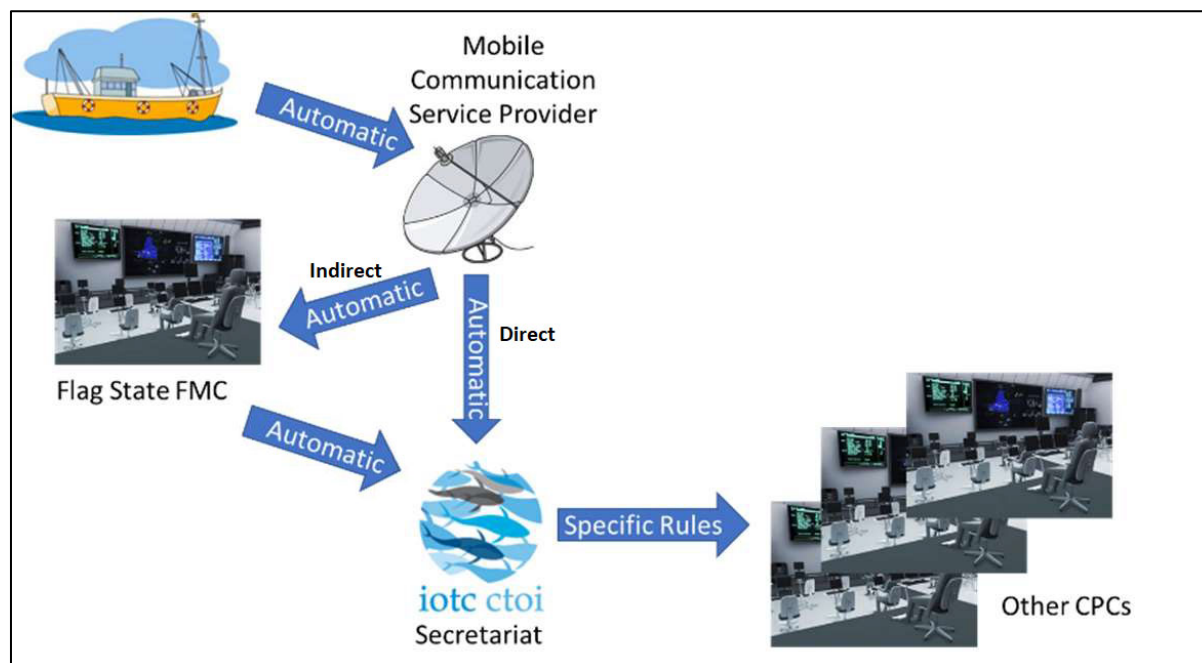

Figure 1. Adapted from *Options paper for strengthening the IOTC VMS, 2019*.

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

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

 i. VMSWG03 AGREED that the VMS should include all vessel types, including carrier, supply and support vessels.

 ii. VMSWG03 **AGREED** that non-CPC-flagged carrier vessels be requested to transmit VMS and if they fail to do so they can be excluded from the Record of Authorised Carrier Vessels.

 iii. VMSWG03 **AGREED** that all vessels above 12m length overall be the preferred option and included irrespective of whether they operate inside or outside the EEZ, and **FURTHER AGREED** that this may be achieved gradually by increasing VMS coverage from present requirements under Resolution 15/03, particularly for developing coastal States.

 iv. VMSWG03 **AGREED** that a buffer zone be set at 20nm from a coastal State's EEZ or, as an alternative, reporting 24 hours prior to the entry to the EEZ

Status
Concluded

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

i. VMSWG02 **NOTED** paper [IOTC-2021-VMSWG02-03](#), prepared by Seychelles, assessing delays between vessels' VMS reports and the receipt of same by the fisheries monitoring centre.

ii. VMSWG02 **NOTED** that paper [IOTC-2021-VMSWG02-03](#) deduced that the risk of delays of more than 10 minutes from the time the position is fixed by the VLD, to the time the coastal State receives the data, via the vessel's flag State FMC, is minimal.

iii. VMSWG02 **NOTED** a presentation prepared by the EU that showed the model in use in the EU.

iv. VMSWG02 **NOTED** that information goes first to the EU Commission's central node for communication to third parties and **FURTHER NOTED** that the average time from the vessel to the final destination is between three and four minutes.

v. VMSWG02 **NOTED** that the delays presented by EU (which has a very high volume of messages) and Seychelles (that has VMS on vessels smaller than 24m) are comparable and not significant.

vi. VMSWG02 **AGREED** that risk of tampering in the case of Option 2 Shared Decentralised is negligible.

Status
Concluded

5. **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.

i. VMSWG03 **RECALLED** the analysis and three options presented in section 4.3.4 of the Options Paper ([IOTC-2019-WPICMM02-VMS Study](#)), namely (1) a simple increase in Commission budget, proportional to CPCs contributions, (2) a greater proportion of additional funds from flag CPCs and (3) some form of cost recovery from vessels.

ii. VMSWG03 **RECALLED** the table on p33 of the Options Paper ([IOTC-2019-WPICMM02-VMS Study](#)), which presents three different total cost scenarios and **NOTED** that costs increase in accordance with the total number of vessels covered and with the frequency of VMS data transmission.

iii. VMSWG03 **AGREED** that a simple increase in the Commission budget (Option 1) to finance the VMS was preferred, since it was the most equitable and practical option.

iv. VMSWG03 **AGREED** that the current four-hourly reporting interval be maintained as a starting point, with the possibility of stepwise increases.

v. VMSWG03 **REQUESTED** that the IOTC Secretariat prepare a table presenting overall cost implications for each CPC, resulting from different numbers of vessels covered (depending on size ranges) and reporting frequencies.

vi. VMSWG03 **AGREED** that an analysis be carried out to determine the staffing, infrastructure, extra costs and data security that would be required.

Status
Ongoing. Further discussions to take place at the January 2022 meeting.

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

i. VMSWG01 **AGREED** that changes to the Resolution should be decided at the Commission level not at the VMSWG.

ii.   VMSWG03 **NOTED** the proposed amendments in Attachment 2 in the Options Paper ([IOTC-2019-WPICMM02-VMS Study](#)), and **FURTHER NOTED** the proposals presented to VMSWG03 in the Proposed Draft VMS Objectives ([IOTC-2021VMSWG03-02).](#)

iii. VMSWG03 **RECALLED** that any amendments to Resolution 15/03 should be submitted to the Commission by a CPC or co-sponsored by CPCs participating in the VMSWG.

iv.   VMSWG03 **AGREED** that scope in terms of vessel size would be decided at higher levels, based on proposed revisions in paragraphs 2 and 2bis of **Error! Reference source not found.**, of the meeting report.

v.   VMSWG03 **REQUESTED** the Secretariat to circulate a revised version of proposed amendment to Resolution 15/03 for consideration by the Members of the VMSWG

Status
Ongoing. Further discussions to take place at the January 2022 meeting.

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

i.   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 January 2022 meeting.

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

Status
Outstanding. Consider at the January 2022 meeting.