Progress Reports of the Working Party on the Implementation of Conservation and Management Measures (WPICMM), the Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) and the Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) Working Groups (WG)

Purpose

To provide the Compliance Committee with a summary of the progress made during the intersessional period, in relation to the work of the Working Party on the Implementation of Conservation and Management Measures (WPICMM), and the Working Groups on Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) and Vessel Monitoring System (VMS).

Background and Progress

Working Party on the Implementation of Conservation and management measures

The Working Party on the Implementation of Conservation and management measures (WPICMM) derives its mandate from IOTC Resolution 17/02.

The Seventh Session of the WPICMM was held virtually, from 14 to 15 February 2024, and it was chaired by Mr Benedict Kiilu (Kenya). A total of 60 participants attended the Session. In all, the meeting made 3 recommendations, which require the consideration of the CoC21. The report of the Seventh meeting of the WPICMM is available as a resource document in the CoC21 meeting page, section "*Reports from other meetings*", IOTC-2024-WPICMM07-R. The consolidated set of recommendations of the WPICMM07 is available in its Appendix 4.

CDS Working Group

Proposals for a Resolution to introduce a catch documentation scheme, especially for the major IOTC species, were unsuccessfully put forward by CPCs at the Commission's 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th (2009 – 2013) annual Sessions. As a way forward, the Commission agreed at the 17th (2013) Session to set up an IOTC Working Group to make progress on a catch documentation scheme. An *ad hoc* Working Group, with only three active CPCs, worked to further develop a terms of reference (ToR) for a Catch Documentation Scheme Working Group, based on an outline that was presented at the Commission's 17th Session. Little progress was made after that and work on the ToR was suspended after the 19th (2015) Session of the Commission, to await the outcome of a project under the ABNJ Programme, on Tuna Traceability and CDS Best Practices.

In 2018, following the conclusion of the ABNJ's project, the IOTC Secretariat commissioned a study for the implementation of a CDS for the five major commercial species of the IOTC, including an implementation road map with associated estimated budget. The results of the study were presented in a workshop in February 2019, which preceded the WPICMM02. In its consideration of the CDS workshop report, the WPICMM02 recommended that a Working Group be constituted to guide the development of an IOTC CDS. The recommendation was endorsed by the CoC16 and S23, in 2019.

To date, the CDS Working Group has held nine meetings, the last one being on 28 September 2023. All meeting reports of the CDS Working Group are available in the CoC21 meeting page, section "*Reports from Other meetings*", IOTC-2024-CDSWG. At its last meeting, the CDS Working Group completed its work on the

CDS Strategy, leaving the development of an electronic CDS system as sole element from the ToRs outstanding, although with the incorporation of a new one: the drafting of a proposal for an IOTC Resolution on CDS. Given its technical nature, the CDSWG decided to commission the preparation of the e-CDS Concept paper to a consultant. However, delays from the donor agency in recruiting a consultant led to the postponement of further discussions by the CDSWG until after the Commission meeting in 2024. As a result, no recommendation was put forward through the WPICMM07 for the consideration of CoC21.

VMS Working Group

The CoC16 noted paper IOTC-2019-WPICMM02-VMS Study, which provided options for strengthening the IOTC VMS and further noted paper IOTC-2019-CoC16-05a, which summarised the work of the Steering Group, and subsequently recommended the formation of a VMS Working Group (VMSWG). CoC16 (CoC16.33 Para 109) recommended the establishment of a VMS Working Group, chaired by Mr Stephen Ndegwa (Kenya), to progress the work associated with strengthening the IOTC VMS, as per the ToR in Appendix 8 of IOTC-2019-CoC16-R. This was subsequently endorsed by S23 (IOTC-2019-S23-RE_Rev1_FINAL).

To date, the VMS Working Group has held seven meetings, the last one being on 26 September 2023. The reports of all meetings of the VMS Working Group are available in the CoC21 meeting page, section "Reports from Other meetings", IOTC-2024-VMSWG. As of today, the VMS Working Group has concluded 4 of the elements outlined in its Terms of Reference (VMS Objectives; preferred model for a future IOTC Commission VMS, including hosting options; scope and application of the VMS; method for ensuring real time or near real time position reporting), while 4 elements remain pending (develop possible funding models and options; the considerations of improvements to Resolution 15/03; development of rules and procedures for the sharing, use and protection of VMS data, and; to develop mechanism for the smooth transition of the existing to the new system). During the course of the work of the VMSWG, two new elements were incorporated to its tasks: technical cooperation between the Secretariats of the GFCM and IOTC on VMS, and; the development and implementation of an IOTC Pilot Project on VMS. At its last meeting, the VMSWG agreed upon the Terms of Reference for an IOTC Pilot Project on VMS. However, delays from the donor agency in recruiting a consultant/service provider led to the postponement of further discussions by the VMSWG until after the Commission meeting in 2024. As a result, no recommendation was put forward through the WPICMM07 for the consideration of CoC21.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- That the CoC21 **NOTE** paper IOTC-2024-CoC21-11, which presents the progress of work of the Working Party on the Implementation of Conservation and Management Measures, the Catch Documentation Scheme and the Vessel Monitoring Systems Working Groups.

- That the CoC21 considers the two recommendations arising from the WPICMM07 meeting and, as appropriate, **ENDORSE** the recommendations.

- That the CoC21 **NOTE** the slow progress of the CDS and the VMS Working Groups.