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**APPENDIX 8.**
**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR AN IOTC VMS WORKING GROUP**
**Background**

At the IOTC 20<sup>th</sup> annual session in 2016, the Commission agreed to Terms of Reference for an IOTC options paper for strengthening the IOTC VMS and appointed a Steering Group to oversee this work (IOTC-2016-S20-R, paragraphs 61-62, Appendix IXB). Following initial work by the Steering Group, Pontus Consulting was engaged to provide advice to the Commission on strengthening the IOTC VMS.

The consultant was asked to:

*To provide the Commission with options for strengthening the IOTC VMS, such that the VMS provides an effective platform for the monitoring and controlling IOTC fisheries, consistent with the Commission's management regime. Specifically, in monitoring and controlling the activities of vessels authorized to operate in the IOTC Area of Competence. The establishment of a regional or Commission VMS should also be considered, taking into account the costs and benefits, the existing national VMS approaches as well as regulatory framework, technical, confidentiality and Secretariat staffing requirements.*

The consultant's report was provided to the IOTC in February 2019. It was considered by the Working Party on the Implementation of Conservation and Management Measures in February 2019 and was presented, together with recommendations from the VMS Steering Group, to the Commission at its 23<sup>rd</sup> annual session in 2019.

These Terms of Reference provide a means to progress work on an IOTC VMS.

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed at IOTC24 to ensure their ongoing suitability.

**Establishment of the Working Group on VMS**

In order to progress consideration of options to strengthen the IOTC VMS, the Commission agreed to establish an expertise-based working group to undertake work during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 intersessional periods.

1. The VMS -WG is established as a working group of the IOTC under the Compliance Committee. The VMS-WG will be chaired by Mr Stephen Ndegwa (Kenya) and coordinated by the IOTC Secretariat.
2. The VMS-WG is open to all CPCs and interested observers. CPCs participating in the working group are encouraged to ensure that participants have sufficient technical expertise.
3. The VMS-WG may also invite experts, including from other intergovernmental organisations who are working on VMS matters, to provide advice to inform the VMS-WG's deliberations.
4. The VMS-WG will provide advice to the Standing Committee on Administration and Finance as the case requires.
5. The VMS-WG will aim to undertake its work electronically.
6. CPCs will notify the Secretariat of their representative(s) by no later than 31 July 2019.

**Responsibilities**

1. Further consider and provide advice on the consultant's report as required, as well as the VMS Steering Group's report.
2. Consider and provide advice on the following issues, such as:
  - Preferred model for a future IOTC Commission VMS, including hosting options
  - Scope and application of the VMS (e.g. vessel types and size, geographic scope)
  - Method for ensuring real time or near real time position reporting (e.g. direct, indirect or simultaneous polling)

3. Develop possible funding models and options.
4. Consider improvements that can be made to Resolution 15/03.
5. Develop rules and procedures for the sharing, use and protection of VMS data.
6. Develop mechanism for the smooth transition of the existing to the new system, if required.