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Organization of the  
United Nations



Indian Ocean Tuna Commission  
Commission des Thons de l'Océan Indien

IOTC-2025-VMSWG08-R[E]

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# Report of the Eight Meeting of the Vessel Monitoring System Working Group

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Held by videoconference, 10 February 2025

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**DISTRIBUTION:**

Participants in the Meeting  
IOTC CPCs  
Chairperson IOTC  
Chairperson IOTC Compliance Committee  
Chairperson IOTC Scientific Committee

**BIBLIOGRAPHIC ENTRY**

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Contact details:

Indian Ocean Tuna Commission  
Abis Center - Blend  
Providence Industrial Estate  
PO Box 1011  
Mahé, Seychelles  
Ph: +248 422 5494  
Email: [IOTC-secretariat@fao.org](mailto:IOTC-secretariat@fao.org)  
Website: <http://www.iotc.org>

## HOW TO INTERPRET TERMINOLOGY CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT

This Report has been written using the following terms and associated definitions so as to remove ambiguity surrounding how particular paragraphs should be interpreted.

**Level 1:** *From a subsidiary body of the Commission to the next level in the structure of the Commission:*

**RECOMMENDED, RECOMMENDATION:** Any conclusion or request for an action to be undertaken, from a subsidiary body of the Commission (Committee or Working Party), which is to be formally provided to the next level in the structure of the Commission for its consideration/endorsement (e.g. from a Working Party to the Scientific Committee; from a Committee to the Commission). The intention is that the higher body will consider the recommended action for endorsement under its own mandate, if the subsidiary body does not already have the required mandate. Ideally this should be task specific and contain a timeframe for completion.

**Level 2:** *From a subsidiary body of the Commission to a Contracting Party or Cooperating Non-Contracting Party (CPC), the IOTC Secretariat, or other body (not the Commission) to carry out a specified task:*

**REQUESTED:** This term should only be used by a subsidiary body of the Commission if it does not wish to have the request formally adopted/endorsed by the next level in the structure of the Commission. For example, if a Committee wishes to seek additional input from a CPC on a particular topic, but does not wish to formalize the request beyond the mandate of the Committee, it may request that a set action be undertaken. Ideally this should be task specific and contain a timeframe for the completion.

**Level 3:** *General terms to be used for consistency:*

**AGREED:** Any point of discussion from a meeting which the IOTC body considers to be an agreed course of action covered by its mandate, which has not already been dealt with under Level 1 or level 2 above; a general point of agreement among delegations/participants of a meeting which does not need to be considered/adopted by the next level in the Commission's structure.

**NOTED/NOTING:** Any point of discussion from a meeting which the IOTC body considers to be important enough to record in a meeting report for future reference.

**Any other term:** Any other term may be used in addition to the Level 3 terms to highlight to the reader of the IOTC report, the importance of the relevant paragraph. However, other terms used are considered for explanatory/informational purposes only and shall have no higher rating within the reporting terminology hierarchy than Level 3, described above (e.g. **CONSIDERED; URGED; ACKNOWLEDGED**).

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## 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

1. The meeting was held online, via Zoom, on 10 February 2025.
2. The List of Participants is provided in [Appendix 1](#). A total of 39 participants attended the meeting. The eighth meeting of the Vessel Monitoring System Working Group (VMSWG08) was chaired by Mr Stephen Ndegwa (Kenya).

## 2. INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS

3. The Chair of the VMSWG08 **INVITED** participants to introduce themselves.

## 3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MEETING

4. The VMSWG08 **ADOPTED** the Agenda in [Appendix 2](#) and **AGREED** with the meeting arrangements.

## 4. PRESENTATION BY THE CONSULTANT - PROPOSAL, DESIGN AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE IOTC VMS PILOT PROJECT

5. The VMSWG08 **NOTED** paper [IOTC-2025-VMS Pilot Project-01](#), the 1st interim report entitled “Consultant Report - Proposal, Design and Requirements of the IOTC VMS Pilot Project” that aims to:
  - a. establish the technical requirements and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for designing the IOTC Regional Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) Pilot Project
  - b. Test Interoperability based on different scenarios,
  - c. Develop IOTC standardized rules for data sharing, confidentiality and security,
  - d. Evaluate the technical feasibility of a regional VMS.
6. The VMSWG08 **NOTED** key elements from the Consultant’s report, such as the scope, VMS data contents, reporting frequency and the different system components for the data collection, processing, storage, distribution, data security and confidentiality.
7. The VMSWG08 **NOTED** that only three CPCs (Australia, Philippines and Seychelles) have volunteered to participate in the IOTC VMS Pilot Project, following the call to volunteer VMS Pilot Project send by the Secretariat on 15 October 2024 (REF IOTC2024-303).
8. The VMSWG08 **NOTED** the need to agree upon SOPs before starting the Pilot Project and establish structured guidelines, considering IOTC [Resolution 15/03](#) *On the vessel monitoring system (VMS) programme* and its proposed amendments, in addition to [Resolution 12/02](#) *on Data confidentiality policy and procedures*.

## 5. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION - PROPOSAL, DESIGN AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE IOTC VMS PILOT PROJECT

9. The Chair of the VMSWG08 **RECALLED** that the agreed scope for the IOTC Regional VMS covers all fishing vessels from 12 metres of length overall and above.
10. The VMSWG08 **NOTED** the low number of volunteering CPCs and **FURTHER NOTED** that the European Union might also volunteer some large-scale vessels to participate in the IOTC VMS Pilot Project.

11. The VMSWG08 **RECALLED** the impediments expressed by two CPCs during the previous meetings of the Compliance Committee (CoC21) concerning their legal difficulty and **ACKNOWLEDGED** that their absence in the VMSWG meetings creates doubts on whether they are in support for implementing a Commission’s VMS.
12. The VMSWG08 **AGREED** to request to the Commission, via the Working Party on Conservation and Management Measures (WPICMM08) and the Compliance Committee (CoC22), clarify whether there exists consensus for implementing a regional IOTC VMS and if not, whether the VMSWG continues the technical discussion.
13. The VMSWG08 **NOTED** that CPCs, regardless of whether they have volunteered to participate in the Pilot Project, could contribute by providing details of their national VMS for consideration and inclusion in the IOTC VMS Pilot Project.
14. The VMSWG08 **NOTED** that the integration of e-RAV with the regional VMS will help crosscheck vessel details and trigger alerts for non-authorized vessels.
15. The VMSWG08 **NOTED** that the regional VMS will receive and store data on both MTUs and vessel identifiers.
16. The VMSWG08 **NOTED** that the system should be cost-effective, and that non-essential functionalities or data requirements should be excluded from the IOTC VMS Pilot Project.
17. The VMSWG08 **NOTED** the lengthy timeframe for implementation and the need to work in parallel to the Pilot Project implementation to advance VMSWG’s work.
18. The VMSWG08 **NOTED** the comment by the consultant that all current VMS monitoring tools provide geo-fencing capabilities.
19. The VMSWG08 **NOTED** the importance of considering the design of a regional VMS that can accommodate the future needs of the VMS of IOTC.

## 6. PRESENTATION BY THE CONSULTANT - IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF THE IOTC VMS PILOT PROJECT

20. The VMSWG08 **NOTED** the 2<sup>nd</sup> interim report [IOTC-2025-VMS Pilot Project-02](#), entitled “Consultant Report - Implementation Plan of the IOTC VMS Pilot Project” that outlines the implementation plan, budget estimation, key technical and operational requirements and implementation time frame, necessary to establish a functional Vessel Monitoring System under the framework of the IOTC VMS Pilot Project.
21. The VMSWG08 **NOTED** the key recommendations for success presented by the consultant, which included:
  - a. Establishing robust data-sharing agreements,
  - b. Expand participation with additional CPCs,
  - c. Prioritise scalable cloud-based solutions,
  - d. Define core functionalities for the pilot phase,
  - e. Harmonise data formats and exchange protocols,
  - f. Emphasise training and technical support,
  - g. Implement operational feedback mechanisms and key performance indicators (KPI).

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22. The VMSWG08 **NOTED** that the VMS Pilot Project would be structured into three main phases, pre-bidding preparation phase, bidding phase and implementation, and commissioning phase.

## 7. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION - IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF THE IOTC VMS PILOT PROJECT

23. The VMSWG08 **AGREED** that the VMS Pilot Project would be structured into three main phases, pre-bidding preparation phase, bidding phase and implementation, and commissioning phase.
24. The VMSWG08 **NOTED** the proposal to organise the envisaged training under the Pilot Project for volunteering CPCs in person and **FURTHER NOTED** the potential benefit of inviting non-volunteering CPCs to attend the training, conditioned by the availability of funds.
25. The VMSWG08 **AGREED** to extend the time frame for feedback on the two Consultant Reports until the end of February, for the Consultant's consideration and inclusion in the final reports.
26. The VMSWG08 **NOTED** that the 2nd interim report outlines a list of specifications classified into three levels: mandatory, highly desirable, and optional.
27. The VMSWG08 **REQUESTED** the Consultant with the assistance of the Secretariat, to draft a list of specifications for the regional VMS, for consideration at the next VMSWG. The list of specifications will be presented as an annex of the final Consultant reports.
28. The VMSWG08 **REQUESTED** the Consultant with the assistance of the Secretariat, to compile and provide all decision points that may require validation by the Commission within the two reports, for CoC22. The list of decisions will be presented as an annex of the final Consultant reports.

## 8. IDENTIFYING ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS AND DEVELOPING RULES OF PROCEDURE TO DEVELOP A REAL-TIME DFAD MONITORING SYSTEM (DFAD-MS)

29. The VMSWG08 **NOTED** paragraph 23 of IOTC Resolution 24/02, which tasks the VMSWG, in support of the IOTC Compliance Committee, to work on identifying administrative arrangements and developing rules of procedure to develop a real-time Drifting Fishing Aggregating Devices (DFAD) Monitoring System.
30. The VMSWG08 **NOTED** the limited time available to discuss this item of the agenda and **AGREED** to defer the discussions to future meetings of the Working Group.

## 9. WORK PLAN FOR THE WORKING GROUP (WG) AND SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR THE YEAR 2025

31. The VMSWG08 **NOTED** the current status of progress on the tasks outlined in the VMSWG ToR and **FURTHER NOTED** that the following tasks are not yet finalised:
- Develop possible funding models and options;
  - Consider further improvements that can be made to Resolution 15/03;
  - Develop rules and procedures for the sharing, use and protection of VMS data;
  - Develop mechanism for the smooth transition of the existing to the new system, if required.

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32. The VMSWG08 **NOTED** the following activities that could be undertaken, in parallel to the Pilot Project, to advance the work of the VMSWG:
- e. Considering the progress of the Pilot Project to confirm, or propose an alternative, funding model.
  - f. Proposing new amendments to Resolution 15/03 to better reflect the IOTC regional VMS and any associated Annexes (e.g., SSP) that might need to be developed to support the regional VMS;
  - g. Developing rules and procedures for the sharing, use and protection of VMS data with due consideration to FAO's policy on confidentiality and information technology security provisions and Pilot Project's specific requirements, and;
  - h. Developing a plan to transition to a regional VMS, based on the current level of VMS implementation and compliance.
33. Noting the work of the VMSWG was established in the ToR since 2019, the VMSWG08 **NOTED** the need to revise the VMSWG ToR.
34. The VMSWG08 **AGREED** on the need to establish a workplan to advance the work of the VMSWG concerning the ongoing tasks and any regulatory aspects, while the regional VMS Pilot Project is being implemented.
35. The VMSWG08 **REQUESTED** the Chair to propose a tentative workplan to CoC22 for its endorsement.

## 10. DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT VMS WG MEETING(S)

36. The VMSWG08 **AGREED** to meet, contingent upon confirmation by the Commission that there is consensus to implement a regional IOTC VMS and that the VMSWG continues, on the 20 May 2025.

## 11. OTHER BUSINESS

37. There was no other business.

## 12. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

38. The Report of the meeting was adopted by correspondence on 24 February 2025.



## APPENDIX 1 LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

### CHAIR

Mr Stephen NDEGWA  
Kenya Fisheries Service  
Kenya  
[ndegwafish@yahoo.com](mailto:ndegwafish@yahoo.com)

### PARTICIPANTS

Mr Neil ANSELL  
European Fisheries Control  
Agency (EFCA)  
European Union  
[Neil.ANSELL@efca.europa.eu](mailto:Neil.ANSELL@efca.europa.eu)

Mr Eric APPLEYARD  
Fisheries Maritime Authority  
Australia

Ms Amanda ARTEAGA  
Fisheries Monitoring Center  
Spain  
[aarteagas@mapa.es](mailto:aarteagas@mapa.es)

Mr Roy ASEKA  
Kenya  
[royaseka@gmail.com](mailto:royaseka@gmail.com)

Mr Ismail ASHRAF  
Maldives  
[ismail.ashraf@fisheries.gov.mv](mailto:ismail.ashraf@fisheries.gov.mv)

Ms Julie BIBI  
Fisheries Authority  
Seychelles

Mr Aris BUDIARTO  
Indonesia  
[arisbudiarto@gmail.com](mailto:arisbudiarto@gmail.com)

Mr Jaime CARCELLER  
Fisheries Monitoring Center  
Spain  
[jcarceller@mapa.es](mailto:jcarceller@mapa.es)

Mrs. Rista Devi Juniar  
Indonesia  
[Devikp17@gmail.com](mailto:Devikp17@gmail.com)

Ms Loreen ESTHER  
Seychelles Fisheries Authority  
Seychelles  
[llesther@sfa.sc](mailto:llesther@sfa.sc)

Ms Norma E GARCIA NUNEZ  
DG MARE  
European Union  
[Norma-Erendira.Garcia-Nunez@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Norma-Erendira.Garcia-Nunez@ec.europa.eu)

Ms Maleeha HALEEM  
Fisheries Compliance Section  
Maldives  
[maleeha.haleem@fishagri.gov.mv](mailto:maleeha.haleem@fishagri.gov.mv)

Mr Miguel Herrera  
OPAGAC  
Seychelles

Mr Neil Hughes  
Fisheries Maritime Authority  
Australia  
[neil.hughes@awe.gov.au](mailto:neil.hughes@awe.gov.au)

Mr Kimiyoshi HIWATARI  
Fisheries Agency  
Japan  
[kimiyosi\\_hiwatari190@maff.go.jp](mailto:kimiyosi_hiwatari190@maff.go.jp)

Mr Rashid IMAN MUSA  
Kenya  
[imamrshd@yahoo.com](mailto:imamrshd@yahoo.com)

Mr Feliantonino Robson  
KALAKA  
Madagascar

Mr Prasit  
LUESRITHAWORN SIN  
Thailand  
[prasit\\_kim@hotmail.com](mailto:prasit_kim@hotmail.com)

Mr Lalu LUTFI  
Indonesia  
[lalulutfi@gmail.com](mailto:lalulutfi@gmail.com)

Mr. Satya Mardi  
Indonesia  
[Satyamardi18@gmail.com](mailto:Satyamardi18@gmail.com)

Ms Laura MAROT  
European Commission  
DG Maritime Affairs and  
Fisheries  
European Union  
[Laura.marot@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Laura.marot@ec.europa.eu)

Ms Yuka MATSUZAWA  
Fisheries Agency  
Japan  
[yuka\\_matsuzawa450@maff.go.jp](mailto:yuka_matsuzawa450@maff.go.jp)

Mrs Sri PATMIARSIH  
Indonesia  
[sripatmiarsih@gmail.com](mailto:sripatmiarsih@gmail.com)

Mr. John PEARCE  
MRAG  
United Kingdom  
[j.pearce@mrage.co.uk](mailto:j.pearce@mrage.co.uk)

Mr Michael PEEL  
United Kingdom  
[Michael.Peel@defra.gov.uk](mailto:Michael.Peel@defra.gov.uk)

Iaian ROSS  
Australia

Neetu PRASAD  
India

Mr Tolotra RABEMANANTSOA  
Madagascar

Ms Kate SMITHERS  
United Kingdom  
[Kate.Smithers@defra.gov.uk](mailto:Kate.Smithers@defra.gov.uk)

Mr Nicolas VUILLAUME  
IOTC Consultant  
France  
[nvuillaume@groupcls.com](mailto:nvuillaume@groupcls.com)

Mr Febrianto WARDHANA  
UTAMA  
Ministry of Marine Affairs and  
Fisheries  
Indonesia  
[febrianto.wardhana@kcp.go.i  
d](mailto:febrianto.wardhana@kcp.go.id)

Mr. Aekkarat WONGKEAW  
Fishing and Fleets  
Management Division  
Thailand  
[aekfish@hotmail.com](mailto:aekfish@hotmail.com)

#### **OBSERVERS**

##### **The PEW Charitable Trusts**

Mr Nikolas EVANGELIDES  
[nevangelides@pewtrusts.org](mailto:nevangelides@pewtrusts.org)

Mr Glen HOLMES  
[gholmes@pewtrusts.org](mailto:gholmes@pewtrusts.org)

**International Seafood  
Sustainability Foundation (ISSF)**  
Kerrie ROBERTSON  
[krobertson@iss-foundation.org](mailto:krobertson@iss-foundation.org)

##### **Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)**

Mr Johnny LOUYS  
[johnny.louys@siofa.org](mailto:johnny.louys@siofa.org)

##### **Sustainable Fisheries & Communities Trust (SFACT)**

Ms Beatrice KINYUA  
[beatrice.kinyua@sfact.org](mailto:beatrice.kinyua@sfact.org)

##### **Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)**

Tiana RANDRIAMBOLA

#### **INDIAN OCEAN TUNA COMMISSION SECRETARIAT**

Mr José Antonio ACUÑA  
BARROS  
Compliance Officer  
[Jose.Acuna@fao.org](mailto:Jose.Acuna@fao.org)

Mr Gerard DOMINGUE  
Compliance Manager  
[Gerard.Domingue@fao.org](mailto:Gerard.Domingue@fao.org)

Mr Florian GIROUX  
Compliance Coordinator  
[Florian.Giroux@fao.org](mailto:Florian.Giroux@fao.org)

**APPENDIX 2**  
**ADOPTED AGENDA**

**ADOPTED AGENDA FOR THE EIGHT MEETING OF THE VMS WORKING GROUP**

**Date:** 10 February 2025

**Location:** Online

**Platform:** Zoom

**Time:** 1100–1500 hrs Seychelles time

**Chair:** Mr Stephen Ndegwa, **Vice Chair:** Mr. Shoukot Chowdhury

1. **OPENING OF THE MEETING** (Chair).
2. **INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS** (Chair/Plenary).
3. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MEETING** (Chair/Plenary).
4. **PRESENTATION BY THE CONSULTANT - PROPOSAL, DESIGN AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE IOTC VMS PILOT PROJECT** (Secretariat/Consultant)
5. **REVIEW AND DISCUSSION - PROPOSAL, DESIGN AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE IOTC VMS PILOT PROJECT** (Chair/Plenary)
6. **PRESENTATION BY THE CONSULTANT - IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF THE IOTC VMS PILOT PROJECT** (Secretariat/Consultant)
7. **REVIEW AND DISCUSSION - IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF THE IOTC VMS PILOT PROJECT** (Chair/Plenary)
8. **IDENTIFYING ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS AND DEVELOPING RULES OF PROCEDURE TO DEVELOP A REAL-TIME DFAD MONITORING SYSTEM (DFAD-MS)** (Chair/Plenary).
9. **WORK PLAN FOR THE WG AND SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR THE YEAR 2025** (Chair/Plenary).
10. **DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT VMS WG MEETING** (Plenary).
11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS** (Plenary).