


FFA

FORUM FISHERIES COMMITTEE
ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTEENTH MEETING

Virtual
11 - 14 May 2021

Agenda Item:	16
Paper Number:	FFC118-WP13
Title:	Outcomes of 24th MCS Working Group Meeting

Summary

This is a report on the outcomes from the 24th MCS Working Group (MCSWG24) Meeting and highlights key recommendations for FFC consideration.

Each recommendation is contained in a box and these will be presented one at a time for consideration by the Committee. Members are encouraged to consider each recommendation in advance of the FFC meeting so that decisions can be taken as expeditiously as possible.

Recommendations

The Committee is invited to:

- i. Note the MCSWG24 Summary Recording of Proceedings at Attachment A;
- ii. Endorse the specific recommendations from MCSWG24 listed in paragraphs 4 – 11; and
- iii. Provide comment on any MCS issues or areas which require additional or priority attention, including with respect to the national priorities of members.

Introduction

1. The 24th virtual MCS Working Group meeting (MCSWG24) was held from 23-26 March 2021 and was attended by all Members. The meeting was also attended by Observers and key partners including SPC, WCPFC, PNAO, PIFS, WWF, NOAA, PEW, INTERPOL, International MCS Network and Global Fishing Watch.
2. Members and Observers participated in productive discussions relating to national and regional MCS issues. A number of specific recommendations were made to FFC118 for consideration in addition to other tasks and actions to be undertaken by the Secretariat. Participants were also encouraged to brief their delegations to FFC and provide the necessary context to the Summary Record of Proceedings along with advice concerning the specific recommendations.
3. Two other related MCS meetings were held virtually prior to the MCSWG24 - the HMTC workshop and the Regional Observer Insurance workshop. The outcomes of the HMTC workshop will be covered under Agenda 15 and outcomes from the Regional Observer Insurance workshop will be covered under Agenda 18a.

Specific MCSWG24 recommendations for FFC118 consideration and endorsement

4. The MCSWG24 discussed a number of key MCS work areas including:
 - **Impacts of COVID-19 on MCS tools** - Noted the need for ongoing review of MCS processes to adapt to the current situation.
 - **MCS data sharing** - Noted that advances in technologies have implications on the current approaches to sharing fisheries data and information and agreed that Members consider sharing sanitised MCS data and information to support and progress pilot trials of emerging technologies.
 - **Update on ongoing collaboration with Emerging Technology providers** - Noted the Secretariat's progress in engagement with technologies service providers and tasked the Secretariat to engage with Members and partners to develop a technology engagement policy to guide this work.
 - **Update on Year 2 of the implementation of the Regional MCS Strategy** - Noted the positive progress on implementation of the RMCSS and encouraged Members to actively participate in future RMCSS surveys.
 - **Current work to update the IUU quantification study** - Data collection to support the Study is still ongoing and the final report will be provided to FFC later in 2021.
 - **Update on work to progress Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring** - The Secretariat and partners are progressing work related to EM on cost benefit analysis, standards and recruitment of an EMER Coordinator position. The Secretariat was tasked to work with Members and partners to identify work required to implement the FFC114 decision regarding ER.
 - **Update on maritime boundaries work** - Updates included work by SPC GEM on boundaries for outer EEZs, treaty lines and points. In June 2020, Member EEZs in the FFA VMS were updated with SPC datasets and in November 2020, SPC completed and released boundaries for 12nm, 24nm, AZ and HS pockets. The maritime boundaries datasets will be made available via the Pacific Data Hub - (<https://pacificdata.org>).

FFC118 is invited to endorse the MCSWG24 Summary Record of Proceedings which is attached as **Attachment A**.

Regional Observer Coordinators Workshop (ROCW21) Outcomes

5. MCSWG24 discussed the outcomes from the ROCW21. The main discussion at the workshop was on how the Secretariat, Members and partners will implement the recommendations of the observer livelihood and safety study. It was recognised that implementation of the recommendations will involve close collaboration between the Secretariat, Members and partners.

6. Another ongoing observer operational issue discussed at previous Regional Observer Coordinators workshops and again at ROCW21 relates to observer pay rates, and PIRFO Trainer pay rates. Current regional observer pay rates were considered low compared to observer pay rates provided by other RFMOs and by Australia and New Zealand. PIRFO Trainers' pay rates were also considered low compared to FFA consultancy rates despite the expertise and specialty of these Trainers who are PIRFO trained and have progressed through the PIRFO framework.

MCSWG24 recommended that:

- i. FFC task FFA Secretariat to work with Partners to implement the observer livelihood & Safety study recommendations; and
- ii. FFC task the Secretariat to review the observer and PIRFO trainers pay rates.

Observer Insurance Minimum Standards Workshop outcome

7. MCSWG24 discussed the outcomes of the regional Observer Insurance Minimum Standards workshop. Observer insurance has been an outstanding issue amongst Pacific Islands observer programmes for over 25 years. The uncertainty around insurance coverage is a key weakness in the safety arrangement for many observer programmes in the region. This matter has been on the regional agenda for years but has not been resolved, which has placed Pacific Island observers' insurance cover in question. The Workshop agreed that:

- (i). FFC consider injury, illness, death, loss of belonging and damage or injury caused by the observer, as the best practice minimum standards for risks covered by an observer insurance policy for endorsement, as appropriate;
- (ii). A definition of "full insurance coverage" is included as a proposed amendment to the HMTTC this year 2021. "Full insurance coverage" means insurance that covers door to door protection (based on 5 years of average Observer wages for i, ii, iii) for the following risks: death and an appropriate proportion thereof for injury, illness, loss of belongings, damage or injury caused by the observer)
- (iii). The Secretariat reports to the FFC on the mechanisms envisaged for the Observer Compensation Scheme.

8. Outcome (ii) above will be discussed in detail under **Agenda 13**.

MCSWG24 recommended that the outcomes are provided to FFC118 for further consideration and endorsement.

HMTTCs Update Implementation

9. MCSWG24 discussed the implementation of HMTTC including the review of the HMTTC covering its 'scope' and 'application'.

10. The review includes several proposals for amendments in response to the FFC114 directive and proposed changes within the HMTc framework ranging from new paragraph numbers, standardisation of terminologies through the framework and development of languages emanating from Members' interventions at the pre-MCSWG meeting.

11. Detailed discussion on the proposed amendments will be covered under **Agenda 13**.

MCSWG24 tasked the Secretariat to provide a report to clarify issues relating to the legal foundation, scope and application of the HMTcs to FFC118.

CDS Workshop outcome

12. MCSWG24 discussed the outcomes of the 1st Catch Documentation and Enhancing Compliance workshop (CDECW1) held between 9-11 March 2021. The key outcome from CDECW1 is the updated draft FFA CDS Framework. The draft Framework was shared with Members and partners for comments prior to and during CDECW1.

13. MCSWG24 discussed and provided additional input to the framework to ensure it is relevant, practical and more applicable at national level.

MCSWG24 recommended the FFA Regional CDS Framework (***Refer to Attachment 5 of MCSWG24 Summary Record of Proceeding***) be forwarded to FFC118 with changes to reflect the discussions in relation to the scope and application of the Framework.