The Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean

Twenty-First Regular Session of the Technical and Compliance Committee

Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia
24 - 30 September 2025

SUMMARY REPORT

Issued: 14 November 2025

List of Abbreviations

ACAP	–	Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels
AIS	–	Automatic Identification System
AR Pt2		Annual Report Part Two
BBNJ	–	Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction
CCFS	–	(Vessel-level) Compliance Case File System
CCM	–	Members, Cooperating Non-members and participating Territories
CCMLAR	–	Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources
CCSBT	–	Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna
CMM	–	Conservation and Management Measure
CMR	–	Compliance Monitoring Report
CMS	–	Compliance Monitoring Scheme
CNM	–	Cooperating Non-Member
dCMR	–	draft Compliance Monitoring Report
EEZ	–	Exclusive Economic Zone
EM	–	electronic monitoring
EPO	–	Eastern Pacific Ocean
ERandEM	–	electronic reporting and electronic monitoring
EU	–	European Union
FAC	–	Finance and Administration Committee
FAD	–	fish aggregation device
FAO	–	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFA	–	Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency
FSM	–	Federated States of Micronesia
HCR	–	Harvest Control Rule
HS	–	Harvest Strategy
HSBI	–	High Seas Boarding and Inspection
HSP1	–	High Seas Pocket 1
IATTC	–	Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission
ICCAT	–	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
IOTC	–	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
ISC	–	International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean
ISSF	–	International Seafood Sustainability Foundation
IWG	–	Intersessional Working Group
JTF	–	Japan Trust Fund
MCS	–	monitoring, control, and surveillance
MOU	–	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	–	Management Procedure
MSE	–	Management Strategy Evaluation
NC	–	Northern Committee
NGO	–	non-governmental organization
NPD	–	non-public domain
NPFC	–	North Pacific Fisheries Commission
OM	–	Operating model

PNA	–	Parties to the Nauru Agreement
PNA+	–	PNA members, Tokelau, and Vanuatu
PNG	–	Papua New Guinea
PSM	–	port state measure
RBAF	–	risk-based assessment framework
RFMO	–	Regional fisheries management organisation
RFV	–	Record of Fishing Vessels
RMI	–	Republic of the Marshall Islands
ROP	–	Regional Observer Programme
SBT	–	Southern bluefin tuna
SC	–	Scientific Committee
SciData	–	scientific data
SIDS	–	Small Island Developing States
SPC	–	Pacific Community
SPRFMO	–	South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation
SSP	–	Scientific Services Provider
SWG	–	small working group
TCC	–	Technical and Compliance Committee
USCG	–	United States Coast Guard
USA	–	United States of America
VDS	–	Vessel Day Scheme
VMS	–	Vessel Monitoring System
WCPFC	–	Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission
WCPO	–	Western and Central Pacific Ocean

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1 — OPENING OF MEETING

1.1 Welcome

1. Mat Kertesz (Australia), Chair of the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC), welcomed delegates and participants to the 21st meeting of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC21). TCC21 was conducted as a hybrid meeting and began with opening formalities at 8:30 am (Pohnpei time) on 24 September 2025.

2. Josie Tamate, Chair of the WCPFC, acknowledged and welcomed the TCC Chair, Heads of Delegations and their respective teams, observers, the Executive Director, and the Secretariat. She thanked the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) for their welcome and ongoing support. She noted the dedication of the TCC Chair in progressing the compliance monitoring report (CMR) process and thanked the Australian Government for its support in allowing him to serve an additional year as TCC Chair. She noted the effort invested over time to streamline consideration of the CMR, acknowledged with appreciation the efforts by all those involved to review the draft CMR, and stated that while discussions on the CMR would be held in closed session, the views and suggestions from observers are important as WCPFC works to strengthen capacity systems and processes. She stated that the Transhipment intersessional working group (IWG) was disestablished at the Commission's 21st meeting (WCPFC21) in 2024, and that a delegation paper had been submitted by a member to address some issues discussed by the Transhipment IWG. She welcomed the development, stating it provides an opportunity for ongoing dialogue and discussions, especially in addressing concerns that have been raised over the years on transhipment, data gaps, and underreporting. She observed that as Commission Chair and together with the chairs of NC, SC, and TCC, she had circulated a letter setting out the expected outcomes for WCPFC22, highlighting that the key purpose of the work, recommendations, and advice from SC and TCC would be to inform the Commission's decisions at WCPFC22. She stated that her goal was to have all reports and recommendations from NC, SC, TCC, and various IWGs presented or reviewed by the Commission in the first day or two of that meeting and urged TCC21 to keep this in mind as they developed their recommendations. She looked forward to the discussions at TCC21 and to TCC's recommendations for the Commission's consideration in December.

3. WCPFC Executive Director, Rhea Moss-Christian, greeted participants and welcomed the participation and remarks of the Commission Chair. She observed that the Commission has prioritized work on climate change, and there is continuing work on addressing the impacts of fishing on bycatch species. She noted that the changing demands and challenges facing the Commission were resulting in changes in the work of the Secretariat. She reflected on upcoming decisions related to the ongoing harvest strategy work for various tuna stocks and stated that the healthy state of tuna stocks provides an opportunity to address key challenges that TCC has long grappled with, many of which are very technical but still hugely significant. She noted the need to be honest about where attention and resources will improve data availability and accuracy and stated that in addressing the need for independent verification, the Secretariat is considering how to best support members in meeting their various obligations to WCPFC. She noted the advice of TCC is critical in ensuring that the Commission continues to meet its objectives.

4. The TCC Chair thanked the Commission Chair, the Executive Director, and members for their support. He noted the need for TCC to make clear recommendations and decisions to facilitate the work of the Commission and reflected on the improvements to the CMR process. He stated that TCC21 would

continue past practice and make use of intersessional and small working groups to progress specific issues. He then declared TCC21 open.

5. The following members, cooperating non-members, and participating territories (CCMs) attended TCC21: American Samoa, Australia, Canada, China, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Cook Islands, Curacao, El Salvador, European Union (EU), Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, France, French Polynesia, Guam, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, Republic of Korea, Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States (USA), Vanuatu, and Vietnam.

6. Representatives from the following regional organisations attended TCC21: the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA), and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).

7. Observers representing the following organisations also attended TCC21: Agreement on the Conservation of Albatross and Petrels (ACAP), BirdLife International, Global Fishing Watch (GFW), Global Tuna Alliance, International MCS Network, International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF), Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew), Sharks Pacific, The Nature Conservancy, and the University of the South Pacific.

8. A list of attendees is provided as **Attachment A**.

1.2 Adoption of agenda

9. A provisional agenda for TCC21 was posted on 26 June 2025 (WCPFC-TCC21-2025-01).

10. TCC21 adopted the agenda.

1.3 Meeting arrangements

11. The TCC Chair outlined the meeting arrangements and indicative schedule (WCPFC-TCC21-2025-02).

12. TCC21 confirmed the meeting arrangements without adjustment.

2 —EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT ON TECHNICAL AND COMPLIANCE MATTERS

Paper: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-04

13. The Executive Director presented WCPFC-TCC21-2025-04 *Executive Director's Annual Report on Technical and Compliance Matters*. The report contained a consolidated overview of work undertaken since TCC20, linking intersessional activities over the past year with TCC21's agenda and workplan. It also included an update on the Secretariat's collaboration with other regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs), a tasking from WCPFC21. The report provided an updated overview of the Commission's monitoring and data collection tools in Attachment 1. The Executive Director noted the

work being done by IWGs and working groups (WGs), as detailed in the paper, and referenced work on seabird guidelines, and a request from SC21 to TCC21 to consider the practicality of some technical and mitigation requirements. She referenced collaboration with the Northern Committee (NC) on the Pacific bluefin tuna measure and monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) obligations that were adopted in 2024. She also referenced the work of the Secretariat on collaboration with other RFMOs in 2025 through participation in the Tuna Compliance Network and the Pan Pacific Fisheries Compliance Network, where Secretariat compliance managers were able to exchange information and more importantly understand how the technical requirements of data sharing could be met, noting that the MOUs the Commission has in place with these RFMOs were sufficient to allow for that data exchange, and that work was progressing to address operational data exchange requirements. She introduced the new members of the restructured compliance team, noting that the changes reflected the increasing volume of data and information that CCMs collect and report, and the need for the Commission to adjust how data are used, and importantly how the Commission connects that information to robust management and conservation decisions. She stated the Secretariat had sought to improve CMS reporting through an enhanced online facility and automated production of reports, and through work on developing online dashboards to better manage CCM and vessel reporting obligations. She acknowledged with appreciation the funding support from Canada for that effort.

Discussion

14. Niue, on behalf of FFA members, acknowledged and thanked the Executive Director for the annual report to TCC21, stating it provided a useful update and summary of the Commission's monitoring tools. FFA members recognized the work of the Secretariat to improve the value of routine and ad hoc analysis and reports and encouraged the Secretariat to put in place measures to ensure papers are circulated on time, at least 1 month before TCC. FFA members also recommended that the required TCC reports (RP01–RP09) be published by June or July each year to free up Secretariat capacity for other papers, including finalisation of the CMR. They stated that the automated and reproducible report generation work should make this readily achievable.

15. Korea thanked the Executive Director for her comprehensive report on the work of TCC over the prior year, noting that the compliance work of the Commission is cited often by other RFMOs as best practice, and stated their belief that the Secretariat's efforts are behind this achievement. They noted the growing number of working groups, which demonstrate the Commission's commitment to robust intersessional efforts to move forward with important compliance-related work. Korea stated its appreciation for the Secretariat's follow-up to the request to report back to the Commission and TCC regarding the engagement with other RFMOs, and its understanding that the Secretariat had been actively engaging with discussions related to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement. Noting that although BBNJ discussions are not directly involved in or currently have any direct bearing on TCC, Korea stated it would be useful to have a report from the Secretariat at TCC22 on engagement with other RFMOs and BBNJ discussions as well.

16. The European Union thanked the Executive Director for a very comprehensive and well-structured report, noting the overview of activities undertaken throughout the year and engagement with other relevant organizations, and stated their appreciation for the attachment to the report that contained an overview of monitoring tools, and supported having this presented every year. The EU also encouraged the Secretariat, to the extent possible, to provide documentation for TCC as early as possible, noting that although 1 month in advance was probably impossible for some documents, such as those related to the

CMR process, having documents at least 2 weeks before the meeting would be a good target. The EU indicated this should also apply to documents submitted by CCMs.

17. The USA commended the Executive Director and Secretariat staff for their efforts in support of the work of the Commission and stated its support for efforts to modernize the Commission's infrastructure and processes.

18. Indonesia stated that the dashboard developed by WCPFC was a significant improvement and thanked those (including donors) involved in its development. They stated the Executive Director's report was very useful and enabled them to easily find relevant documents, noting the report was very well structured. Indonesia stated they were learning a lot that they may be able to apply at the national level, and welcomed the opportunity to participate in productive discussions at TCC.

19. The Executive Director thanked CCMs for their feedback, which would be taken onboard for reporting at TCC22. She agreed papers should be more timely, particularly given how technical they are, and stated that this would be addressed as part of the ongoing restructuring of the Secretariat's Compliance division, with efforts to streamline and make the production of reports more seamless and automatic, and that the Secretariat would endeavour to have papers out far earlier in 2026.

20. TCC21 welcomed the *Annual Report of the Executive Director* on the technical and compliance activities undertaken since TCC20 and recognised the substantial body of TCC-related work that takes place intersessionally as well as year-round (TCC21-2025-04).

21. TCC21 noted the desirability as well as the challenges of the timely submission of Secretariat papers and CCM delegation papers to TCC. TCC21 recommended that the Secretariat publish the annual reports (RP.01–RP.09) by June or July each year to free up Secretariat capacity for the preparation of other TCC papers and the dCMR in future.

22. TCC21 tasked the Secretariat to report to TCC in future on engagement in the BBNJ processes.

3 — TCC WORKPLAN

23. The TCC Chair noted that the updated TCC workplan for 2025–2027, provisionally adopted by WCPFC21 and updated to reflect the outcomes of that meeting (TCC-01), had guided the development of the provisional agenda. He suggested leaving the workplan open as the outcomes of TCC21 could affect the work plan for the next few years. If needed, the TCC Chair and TCC Vice-Chair could work with the Secretariat to capture outcomes from TCC21 discussions and prepare a revised version for WCPFC22.

Discussion

24. RMI, on behalf of FFA members, thanked the TCC Chair for the provisional Workplan 2025–2027, and supported the workplan.

3.1 Introduction of delegation papers

Paper: TCC21-2025-03

25. The TCC Chair stated that six delegation papers and a working paper by the Scientific Services Provider (SSP) would be introduced to support further work in the margins and to guide how discussion of the underlying topics would be addressed during the meeting.

26. RMI introduced WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP12 *The review and assessment of paragraph 37 of CMM 2009-06*, which calls for a decisive review of paragraph 37 of CMM 2009-06. The paper highlighted serious compliance and enforcement challenges associated with the current impracticability exemption, with widespread longline transhipment on the high seas becoming the norm rather than the exception. They noted that the practice undermined monitoring, control, and surveillance efforts; created opportunities for IUU fishing; and eroded transparency in the management of highly migratory fish stocks. RMI stated that there was a clear gap between MCS regimes applied in ports versus those applied in the high seas, and that gap continued to widen. They noted that the Commission had achieved important milestones in e-monitoring and labour standards but that these become vulnerable to monitoring impediments when applied in the high seas. RMI proposed strengthening the Commission's regulatory framework by eliminating high seas longline transhipment, requiring transhipment in designated ports, and enhancing reporting and inspection obligations. The paper set out specific recommendations for amendments to CMM 2009-06, including paragraph 37 as well as related paragraphs and annexes, to close the loopholes and reinforce WCPFC's collective commitment to sustainable and accountable fisheries. RMI stated the proposal invited TCC21 to carefully assess the risks posed by the current exemption, consider the operational feasibility of a full high seas transhipment ban, and advise the Commission on moving toward more effective compliance, enforcement, and transparency in the WCPFC Convention Area (CA). This was further discussed under Agenda Items 5.6 and 7.5.2.

27. The USA introduced WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP02 *Proposed improvements to the compliance case file system*, outlining nine proposals for further enhancing the compliance case file system (CCFS). The United States indicated that its proposals were organized by how cases are initiated: four proposals are relevant to all CCFS cases, one is specific to Article 25, and four address ROP-initiated cases only. The USA sought feedback from other members on the specific elements of the proposal. It was noted that the paper was also posted in the Online Discussion Forum. This was further discussed under Agenda Item 5.8.

28. Japan introduced WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP08 *Proposal on VMS Reporting Status Tool (VRST)* , which proposed three functional improvements to the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) reporting status tool (VRST). The first was that the “in port status”, which is set manually, should be maintained unless location data outside the flag CCM’s exclusive economic zone (EEZ) is received from the vessel. Japan stated that while it recognized that the VRST was a powerful tool that assists flag CCMs in reviewing and verifying the VMS status of the vessels, some operational challenges remained. For example, even after setting a vessel's status as “in port” because its location had been confirmed, the status often reverts to “pending” the following day, even if the vessel remained in port for several days or weeks. This was mainly caused by the vessel's main power being switched off and on while in port. The first proposal aimed to streamline the VMS status checking process by preventing daily checks for such vessels in port. The second proposal was to enable flag CCMs to review VMS reporting history for up to one year instead of one month as currently implemented. The third proposal was to enable flag CCMs to change the past VMS statuses in batches over a period up to one year. Japan stated the proposal would be discussed under agenda item 7.5.4 and welcomed comments, questions, or suggestions prior to the plenary discussions.

29. New Zealand introduced WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP09_Rev01 *Update from New Zealand on review of CMM 2018-03 (Seabirds)_Rev01*. It acknowledged the work done on the CMM review to date and thanked CCMs who actively engaged through the process. New Zealand noted that the review was initiated in response to growing concerns about the declining populations of foraging seabirds in the WCPO, stating that the work was significant and required immediate attention as it reflected the collective responsibility of CCMs to avoid adverse impacts on marine biodiversity, preserve ecosystem integrity, and minimise the risks of long-term irreversible effects from fishing operations. In 2022, the Commission agreed to undertake a review of CMM 2018-03 in 2023 and appointed New Zealand to lead the work. In 2024, New Zealand proposed a suite of amendments including a requirement for the use of three standalone mitigation measures south of 25°S. However, no consensus was reached on these changes and the Commission requested that New Zealand continue leading the review in 2025. In May 2025, New Zealand issued a Circular outlining the review process and invited CCMs to provide comments on the science that was reviewed in 2024, share any new science or supporting information, and give further feedback on New Zealand's proposal for CMM 2018-03 (first tabled at WCPFC21). The paper was provided to SC21 for consideration and following feedback from CCMs, New Zealand prepared the revised proposal in DP09, which took a more targeted, phased approach to better facilitate progress, and proposed three priority recommendations specifically focusing on the Southern Hemisphere where conservation concerns were greatest. This was further discussed under Agenda Item 7.8.

30. Japan introduced WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP04_Rev01. *Review of Tori-line Specifications for large longline vessels in the South Pacific under CMM 2018-03: Evaluating Effectiveness and Practicality - Rev01* They noted that the paper was discussed at the SC21 to address specification for tori lines, which currently included highly detailed technical requirements. However, to date those specifications had not undergone a thorough review. In light of seabird mitigation measures adopted by ICCAT and IOTC, Japan proposed categorizing the technical specification into two distinct groups. Measures that significantly affect the effectiveness and operational practicality of a tori line should be designated as legally binding minimum standards. Other elements should be classified as technical guidelines. This approach would clarify for fishermen which specifications were most critical for maximizing the effectiveness of tori lines while also supporting more efficient inspections by enforcement officers. Japan stated that the two-tiered approach was endorsed by SC21 and Japan welcomed feedback from CCMs for the adoption of the proposal at WCPFC22. This was further discussed under Agenda Item 7.8.

31. Canada introduced WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP05 *Update on Review of CMM 2017-04 Marine Pollution*, which was further addressed under Agenda Item 7.8. The paper provided a concise overview of the review, the proposed plan for 2026, and draft text, along with all the comments received to date. Canada stated it received detailed and very helpful input throughout 2025 and thanked CCMs and observers for their active engagement in the review process to date. They welcomed further input in anticipation of submission to the Commission.

32. The TCC Chair introduced Lesley Hawn (USA), interim chair of the Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring Intersessional Working Group (ERandEM IWG), and noted the opportunity for participants at TCC21 to re-engage on EM development. The interim ERandEM IWG Chair advised TCC21 that she would be consulting with delegations in the margins of the meeting and welcomed input from CCMs on the workplan for 2026.

33. The SSP introduced WCPFC-TCC21-2025-25_rev1 *Data Standardization to Improve Efficiency of WCPFC Data Provision - revision 1*, noting it proposed standardized approaches for scientific data submissions, with the aim of streamlining annual data submissions. This would enable SPC to process

these data in a more timely manner, reduce errors in the submissions as a result of less processing and reformatting, and allow more time to review data quality in advance of the SC and TCC, which SPC currently has limited capacity for because of the time required to process and prepare the data. The expected outcome was more accurate and timely data for the work of the SC and TCC. The paper proposed multiple data submission options, including CSV file formats if e-reporting is not used. The bulk of the paper therefore focused on outlining the proposed CSV formats and guidelines. The SSP encouraged all CCMs to review the paper and the CSV templates that had been provided in a zip file associated with the paper on the TCC website, and to look at the public-facing website associated with the GitHub repository. This repository detailed the data formats and provided more guidance, including examples on how the templates should be populated. The issue was further discussed under Agenda Item 7.9.

34. The TCC Chair noted two additional delegation papers tabled by CCMs: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP03 *Implementation Report of CMM 2024-05 in accordance with paragraph 11* (Japan) and WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP07 *Proposed process to review current reporting requirements and mitigation measures in CMM 2018-04 (Sea Turtles)* (USA), noting that while these would not be presented, CCMs were encouraged to engage with the relevant CCMs on these. The Chair referenced a number of other delegation and observer papers provided for TCC21's attention, including (i) two papers in relation to collaborative MCS activities WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP01 *Report to WCPFC TCC on Operation Nasse 2025* from the USA, and WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP11 *Summary of Collaborative High Seas Boarding and Inspection (HSBI) and Aerial Surveillance Activities Conducted by Canada During "Operation NORTH PACIFIC GUARD" in 2024*; (ii) three TCC21 observer papers tabled to present views on various TCC21 agenda items from Birdlife International, Sharks Pacific and the Pew Charitable Trust; and (iii) Circular 2025/60 on information regarding IUU fishing from the IMCS Network. The TCC Chair also referenced a number of intersessional working group processes underway, with informal meetings of the FAD Management Options (FADMO) WG and the ROP IWG held prior to TCC. He noted that a meeting of the Port State Minimum Standards Measure review and a meeting relating to the development of voluntary regional guidance for HSBI would both be held in the margins of TCC21. The TCC Chair also noted a small working group, to be headed by Ilkang Na (Korea), the TCC Vice-Chair, would be established for considering CNM requests, as advised to the TCC21 Heads of Delegations meeting, and stated that a request was made during presentation of delegation papers to establish a small working group to consider WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP02 from the USA.

35. RMI, on behalf of FFA members, commented on the proposal in DP02 and stated that in light of the need to hear from the Secretariat on impact on workplan and budget, including technical feasibility of the proposals, and on FFA members' small delegations, they preferred to discuss the issues in plenary rather than a small working group. The TCC Chair suggested delaying a decision on whether to establish a small working group until the relevant plenary discussion and then determine whether a working group was needed. The USA thanked the Chair for the suggestion and FFA members for suggesting an update by the Secretariat on the potential implications of the proposal, noting it and other CCMs would benefit from having that information. Cook Islands supported the points made by FFA and the approach that the Chair suggested, with a presentation from the Secretariat when the agenda item was discussed.

36. New Zealand noted that it tabled WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP10 *Audit Points for Crew Labour Standards : CMM 2024-04*, which comes into force in 2028, and wished to consider the audit points well ahead of the implementation date. It welcomed discussions with CCMs.

37. The TCC Chair noted the paper mentioned by New Zealand and WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP06 *Proposal for the Development of a Comprehensive WCPFC Monitoring Program through Establishment of an Overarching CMM* from the USA, and encouraged engagement by CCMs with the proponents.

38. TCC21 tasked the TCC Chair and TCC Vice-Chair to develop an updated *TCC Workplan (2025-2027)* for consideration at WCPFC22.

4 — CNM REQUESTS

Paper: TCC21-2025-05_rev01

39. The TCC Chair stated the Secretariat received eight requests for CNM status in 2025 from the Bahamas, Curacao, Ecuador, El Salvador, Liberia, Panama, Thailand, and Vietnam, all of which were renewal applications.

40. Hilary Ayrton, WCPFC Fisheries Management and Compliance Adviser, stated that CNM requests for 2026 were outlined in WCPFC-TCC21-2025-05_Rev01 *Cooperating Non-Member Requests for 2026*. She noted the relevant measure for CNM requests was CMM 2019-01, and that historical information dating back to 2009 was available on the CNM section of the WCPFC website, as well as the full list of requests for 2026. She confirmed the Secretariat received requests from all current CNMs, each of which was received before the deadline of 26 July 2025, as required under paragraph 1 of CMM 2019-01. With regards to financial contributions, she stated that as reflected in Table 1 of TCC21-2025-05, seven CNMs had paid their assessed contributions for 2025 in full, and one CNM (Curacao), had yet to pay their contribution for 2025 as of the start of TCC21. She invited TCC21 to review the applications for CNM status and make recommendations to the Commission for its consideration at WCPFC22.

41. The TCC Vice-Chair briefly reviewed the process by which CNM applications would be reviewed and looked forward to working with the CNM SWG members.

42. In response to a query from Korea, the TCC Chair stated that two CNMs (El Salvador and Panama) were present in person at TCC21, four CNMs (Curacao, Thailand, Vietnam, Liberia) were registered to participate online, and two CNM applicants (Bahamas and Ecuador) were not registered for TCC21. Korea suggested that CNMs (including the Bahamas and Ecuador) be invited by the Secretariat to participate in the CNM SWG meeting to enable any questions to be answered.

43. Niue, on behalf of FFA members, emphasised that renewal of CNM status must be contingent on a clear and verifiable commitment to comply with the national laws and regulations of licensing CCMs, as well as all CMMs and provisions of the WCPFC Convention. This included the commitment to make full financial contribution as required for by Articles 17 and 18 of the Convention. They stated that failure to meet these established requirements should not be rewarded with granting of CNM status for another year. They also stated CNM applicants must actively participate in Commission meetings and be fully available to answer any questions regarding their application, stating that the Commission and TCC cannot accept information from individuals who do not formally represent the applicant, as this undermined transparency and accountability.

44. Curacao advised that its payment was in progress.

45. The TCC Vice-Chair provided a report on the deliberations of the CNM SWG, which met in a hybrid format. Five CNM applicants were present and three were absent. The CNM SWG noted some discrepancies between intended fishing activities as shown in the CNM applications and those that CNMs

were actually engaging in, and the CNM SWG therefore requested those CNMs to update their applications accordingly and submit their revised applications to the Secretariat. In addition, some applicants expressed interest in discussing participatory rights. The TCC Vice-Chair indicated that these issues were likely to be raised at WCPFC22.

46. Panama stated that its current participation rights apply to carrier and tanker vessels engaged in transhipments, bunkering, and supply. Panama requested expansion of those rights for 2026 to include up to five Panama-flag purse-seine vessels currently registered in the Commission under the flag of Ecuador, which would transition to the Panamanian flag. Panama noted the following:

(i) The request would not increase overall fishing effort, as the vessels currently fish within the EEZs of the PNA under Ecuador's flag. Panama proposed a reflagging to allow them to operate under the Panamanian flag while remaining fully subject to the conditions and fishing-day allocations granted by the respective coastal States.
(ii) Panama stated it had held bilateral discussions with PNA members to ensure the transition fully respects national laws, licensing systems, and regional arrangements, noting the five vessels to be reflagged will operate only for the number of fishing days and under the specific conditions that each coastal State assigns through its licenses or bilateral agreements. No additional fishing days or effort can be created beyond those authorizations.
(iii) Panama reiterated its commitment to continue to provide all scientific and catch data on time, cooperate with HSBI, maintain full traceability of its fleet, and fully comply with all CMMs adopted by the Commission, while meeting the required financial contributions. Panama stated its compliance record in the WCPFC and in other RFMOs demonstrates that it acts with transparency and responsibility.

47. Panama stated it was seeking to deepen its partnership with the region and to offer a competitive and reliable flag for major tuna operators, which would enable leading companies to keep their investment under the Panamanian flag while fishing in WCPFC waters, supporting shared goals of sustainable management and economic growth. Panama stated it would work closely with coastal States to ensure that the transition strengthened cooperation and delivered lasting benefits for tuna conservation.

48. TCC21 provided the following recommendations and technical advice to WCPFC22 on Cooperating Non-Member (CNM) requests:

a) TCC21 reviewed the following eight applications for CNM status and is forwarding them to WCPFC22 for consideration: Bahamas, Curacao, Ecuador, El Salvador, Liberia, Panama, Thailand, and Vietnam.

b) TCC21 reminded CNM applicants of the obligations included in CMM 2019-01, particularly paragraph 3 and paragraph 11(a), which states that CNMs shall "comply with all conservation and management measures adopted by the Commission.". It was noted that compliance issues of some applicants were pointed out during the CMR process and that there would be further discussions leading up to WCPFC22 meeting where further considerations will be given to the applications in relation with the compliance status of each applicant.

c) TCC21 noted that some required information, such as compliance and data submission status, etc, had not been provided in the cases of some applications. These are:

- Curacao: transhipment data
- El Salvador and Ecuador: responses to VMS audit points
- Viet Nam: comments on compliance record (para. 3(b) and para. 11(a) of CMM 2019-01)

TCC21 requested that those applicants provide such missing information during the TCC21 meeting to the extent possible or within 21 days after TCC21.

It was noted that Curacao and Viet Nam provided the missing information during TCC21.

d) TCC21 also reminded CNM applicants of the importance of attendance at the TCC and Commission meeting where the applications are considered. Their attendance is essential for demonstrating their commitment to the Conventions' objectives. Furthermore, CNM applicants are obliged to provide all data required to submit in accordance with relevant conservation and management measures, as stipulated in CMM 2019-01. Failure to meet these obligations may adversely affect the consideration of their CNM applications.

e) TCC21 noted the importance of real-time VMS positions sharing of CNM vessels operating in the overlap to help deter IUU fishing. TCC21 recommends CNMs work with the Secretariat to implement VMS data sharing with WCPFC.

f) TCC21 noted that Bahamas, Ecuador and Liberia were not present at the meeting and requested them to clarify the reason why they were unable to attend the meeting. Those countries were invited to provide their response to the Secretariat and the CNM WG Chair.

g) TCC21 noted the usefulness of the Commission's electronic reporting tools such as TSER (Transhipment Electronic Reporting System) and encouraged the CNM applicants to use the tool if their vessels are to tranship on the high seas.

h) TCC21 also noted all the eight applicants' statements of commitment to ensure payment of financial contribution during the meeting. TCC21 noted that the contributions of Bahamas, Ecuador, El Salvador, Liberia, Panama, Thailand and Vietnam for 2025 were paid, confirmed by the WCPFC Secretariat during TCC21.

i) TCC21 noted that Curacao's payment for 2025 contribution had not been made at the time of review and that Curacao would make the payment as soon as possible.

j) TCC21 reminded that CNMs should ensure that financial contributions are paid in a timely manner.

k) TCC21 noted the discrepancies between the intended fishing activities as shown in the application template and those that they are actually engaging in, and requested that the

applicants to provide updated information to the Secretariat, as appropriate, clearly indicating their intended fishing activities and the purpose of seeking CNM status.

l) TCC21 noted that the review by TCC of all eight applications for CNM status was complete and recommends WCPFC22 consider all applicants for CNM status.

5 — MONITOR AND REVIEW COMPLIANCE WITH CMMs

5.1 IUU Vessel List

Paper: TCC21-2025-06

49. The WCPFC Fisheries Management and Compliance Adviser introduced WCPFC-TCC21-2025-06 *Draft IUU Vessel List and Current WCPFC IUU Vessel List*. With regards to the draft IUU vessel list for 2026, she stated that the Secretariat received a submission from New Zealand on 15 July 2025 regarding three Indonesian flagged vessels presumed to have conducted IUU fishing activities in the WCPFC CA during 2023 and 2024. The draft IUU vessel list and supporting documentation was circulated by the Executive Director to all CCMs on 30 July 2025. On 9 September, an update of the current and draft IUU vessel lists was circulated to all CCMs, noting that the Secretariat had not received any additional suitably documented information regarding vessels on the draft IUU list for 2026, or the 2025 WCPFC IUU vessel list. With regards to the current IUU vessel list, on 13 January 2025, the Secretariat wrote to relevant regional fisheries management organizations requesting any information about the vessels on the current WCPFC IUU vessel list for 2025. No information was received in response to this request. On 10 September, with support from the relevant CCM, an update on the current IUU vessel list for 2025 was circulated to all CCMs, which contained information related to some vessels on the current IUU list. The Secretariat confirmed that as of the opening of TCC no further additional information had been received. TCC21 was invited to recommend a provisional 2026 IUU vessel list for the Commission to consider at WCPFC22 and to recommend as appropriate any changes to the current WCPFC IUU vessel list for 2025, or provide other relevant recommendations.

50. The TCC Chair noted that TCC21 had two tasks related to the IUU vessel list: review the draft IUU list for 2026 and review the current (2025) IUU vessel list.

Discussion

Draft IUU List for 2026

51. New Zealand stated it presented to the Commission, evidence concerning three vessels flagged to Indonesia that were alleged to have engaged in unauthorized fishing on the high seas in High Seas Pocket one (HSP1) within the WCPFC CA. The vessels were detected as part of New Zealand's ongoing support to FFA operations. On 14 March 2024, a New Zealand Defence Force aircraft conducted an aerial surveillance patrol of HSP1. The Bintang Bahagia 81 was stationary on the high seas and at the time the vessel was not listed on the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels (RFV). Subsequent analysis of the Bintang Bahagia 81 showed that it entered the area on two separate occasions and judging by the vessel track, it was alleged to have conducted sustained fishing activity. Further activity was revealed through AIS analysis of the Bintang Bahagia 79 and Marceljaya 26, which also showed AIS tracks within HSP1. All

evidence obtained was referred to Indonesia pursuant to Article 25(2) of the Convention and to date, New Zealand stated it had received feedback or notification from Indonesia on the level of fines, which related to the VMS non-reporting. However, New Zealand stated it was still awaiting an update on the investigation into the unauthorised fishing elements of those two vessels. New Zealand acknowledged and thanked Indonesia for their constructive engagement to date and looked forward to further engagement with Indonesia during TCC21, and stated it hoped to update TCC before the end of the meeting on next steps.

52. Indonesia stated that as of September 17 2025 an administrative sanction of Indonesian rupiah (Rp) 248 million had been imposed on the vessel Marceljaya-26, while investigations related to the Bintang Bahagia 81 and Bintang Bahagia 79 were ongoing.

53. Korea thanked New Zealand and Indonesia for the updates, noting that Indonesia advised that the Marceljaya 26 had been sanctioned, and inquired regarding the amount of the fine in US dollars. Regarding the Bintang Bahagia 79 and 81, Korea acknowledged Indonesia's advice that their investigation was currently ongoing, and inquired whether the vessel was authorized by Indonesia but not on the WCPFC RFV, or if the vessel was not authorized by Indonesia at all. Also, Indonesia indicated the VMS was turned off and a fine for turning off the VMS was imposed. Korea stated it would like more information about the status of the vessels and the investigation, and actions taken to date.

54. Indonesia stated that the fine levied on the Marceljaya-26 was equal to about US$15,000. Regarding the Bintang Bahagia 81 and Bintang Bahagia 79, these were not authorized to fish within the WCPFC CA, because their national licenses were limited to fishing within Indonesia's EEZ, in Fisheries Management Area (FMA) 716 and 717, and therefore Indonesia needed to gather further information and evidence to determine appropriate sanctions, because the VMS was off during the violation.

55. The EU thanked New Zealand and Indonesia and asked for clarification whether the information provided was new and if progress had been made, in particular in terms of the various investigations and sanctions where appropriate.

56. The TCC Chair noted that both Indonesia and New Zealand stated they would hold discussions during TCC21. The Chair encouraged discussions in the margins of TCC21 and encouraged CCMs to approach Indonesia or New Zealand where they wanted further information in relation to the proposed listings. Korea supported the approach to addressing this issue, and mentioned for the record that any flag CCMs whose vessels were listed on the draft IUU list were strongly encouraged to provide written information in advance of TCC to enable meaningful discussion to take place, rather than providing verbal information on the floor, as the latter made it very difficult for CCMs to consider further information provided during the meeting. The TCC Chair stated he would consider recommendation language around that as a general process issue. Australia suggested the Commission and TCC consider what would be appropriate action in terms of sanctions imposed for these types of offences.

57. The USA thanked New Zealand for its detailed information regarding the nominated vessels, which were observed during the FFA-led Operation Rai Balang in March 2024, and stated that the US Coast Guard (USCG) also participated in this operation, and detected by aerial surveillance, one of the nominated vessels on the high seas, noting that the vessel was not on the WCPFC RFV or transmitting on VMS.

58. Following further consultations, New Zealand stated its understanding that of the three vessels, the investigation of the Marceljaya 26 was complete and sanctions (equivalent to about US$15,000) had

been levied on the vessel operator. Because the vessel was operating its VMS the entire time, the fine related purely to unauthorized fishing outside of its license authorization for HSP1. The Bintang Bahagia 81 and Bintang Bahagia 79 had been fined for VMS non-reporting (about US$6,000 to US$7,000) each and were under constant surveillance by the authorities in Indonesia. However, the unauthorized fishing in HSP1 remained under investigation for both vessels, with no sanctions applied to the operators to date. New Zealand stated that the information was in the WCPFC Compliance Case File System (CCFS), and accessible only to New Zealand and the Secretariat, which New Zealand stated was clearly not ideal for the discussion at TCC21. New Zealand noted it had good engagement with Indonesia.

59. Indonesia stated that the three vessels on the provisional WCPFC IUU list 2026 (Marceljaya-26, Bintang Bahagia 81, and Bintang Bahagia 79), were licensed only to operate with small pelagic purse seine gear in Indonesian waters of FMA 716 and FMA 717. Any activities beyond those limits were considered a breach of Indonesia fisheries regulations. Following detailed investigations by Indonesia's Directorate of Fleet Operations Surveillance and the Directorate of Enforcement on Violation, administrative sanctions were imposed in accordance with Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries regulations. Under the regulations, the sanction process followed a staged approach. Applying this framework, both Bintang Bahagia 79 and 81 were sanctioned for vessel monitoring system violations, with further enforcement decisions to be made regarding the fishing license breach. Bintang Bahagia 79 was fined Rp112 million and Bintang Bhagi 81 was fined Rp108 million with both fines fully paid. Warning letters were also issued to both vessels. Marceljaya-26 was subsequently fined Rp248 million in September 2025, with the sanctions fully paid. These measures reflected Indonesia's enforcement approach where administrative sanctions were the primary tool, while criminal penalties were reserved as the ultimate remedy for the most serious violations. Indonesia stated it had also engaged in direct discussion with New Zealand regarding this matter. To ensure transparency and mutual understanding of the enforcement measures taken, Indonesia stated it continued close vessel surveillance and was analysing observer reports and logbook records to determine whether further action was required. Through these measures, Indonesia stated it was demonstrating its commitment to preventing, deterring, and eliminating IUU fishing and upholding its obligations under CMM 2019-07. Indonesia respectfully requested that this enforcement action and ongoing process be fully acknowledged in the consideration of the draft IUU list for 2026.

60. Korea indicated that in its view the fines imposed on the Marceljaya-26 (of about US$15,000) were insufficient as a deterrent to stop the vessels from engaging in further unauthorized activities. Korea acknowledged that CCMs have differing regulations but stated there should be some standards for considering whether sanctions have been sufficient. Korea noted Indonesia's statement that more serious violations face more serious sanctions and asked about the more serious violations of fishing without authorization on the high seas. Korea inquired how VMS information was monitored and controlled by Indonesia, noting that all Korean distant water fishing vessels have a functioning VMS onboard and Korean FMC monitors them 24/7; when a vessel goes into an area where it lacks authorization to fish Korea is immediately alerted, and thus is the first one to find any breaches of such violations. Korea stated it was not comfortable in removing these vessels from the draft IUU list at this stage. Korea also noted that the three provisionally listed vessels had the same flag registration number and IMO number and wondered if this was simply an error.

61. Indonesia thanked New Zealand for its help in addressing the issue during TCC21, while noting that the discussions may need to continue after TCC21. Regarding Korea's concern regarding the penalty imposed on the Marceljaya-26, under Indonesia's current regulations the maximum penalty was US$15,000. Indonesia stated it was addressing that during its internal discussions and looking at other possible sanctions for the case. Regarding the other two vessels, Indonesia stated there were several

challenges and slow progress, but the investigation was continuing. They also stated they would recheck the IMO number for these vessels, which were definitely distinct vessels. Indonesia proposed the issue remain open for discussion until the Commission meeting.

62. The EU noted this was a matter for the Commission as a whole to address, stating that the provision of any new information and exchanges with all CCMs in a timely manner were prerequisites to allow TCC to expedite its deliberations within the time frame of the meeting. The EU noted the information from Indonesia provided across the floor and stated it was difficult to analyse, share with expert colleagues, and expect to receive feedback that could allow CCMs to provide views in response. While appreciating the efforts from Indonesia, the EU stated they did not support removing the vessels from the draft IUU list and stated their hope that more information would be provided to Commission members in the secure section of the website to allow WCPFC22 to make a meaningful determination on the retention of the vessels on the IUU list. The EU also indicated that if members were to evaluate the deterrent nature of any sanctions that have been imposed, some estimation of the actual value derived from any illegal activity was needed, and such information had apparently not been provided. The EU requested that Indonesia provide such an estimation in any new submission to the Commission.

63. The USA supported New Zealand's intervention and agreed the penalty for the violation was not commensurate or proportionate with the potential violation.

64. The Cook Islands on behalf of FFA members noted the update provided by Indonesia on its national-level actions. Given that the investigations were ongoing for the three Indonesian flagged vessels and noting New Zealand's suggestion to maintain them on the provisional IUU list for 2026, FFA members expressed support for New Zealand's nomination of the three Indonesian flag vessels to remain on the provisional IUU vessel list at this stage. FFA members strongly encouraged Indonesia to provide further updates and any new developments through the Secretariat in a timely manner regarding the two vessels under investigation before WCPFC22.

65. Australia noted its agreement with the comments made by Korea, the EU, the USA and other CCMs and stated it did not support removing these vessels from the draft IUU list given the severity of the issues. They stated their understanding that some investigations were ongoing, and as noted by the EU, CCMs had not yet had the chance to fully review all relevant documents. They also expressed concerns regarding the low level of the penalty amounts and stated their understanding from Indonesia's statement that other sanctions may be possible (such as license suspension and revocation), and asked if those had been considered. Australia also inquired about the opportunity within Indonesia's legislative framework for additional court proceedings and the imposition of greater fines.

66. Indonesia stated they would continue discussions with New Zealand. Regarding the additional sanctions raised by Australia, Indonesia stated it was pursuing that approach, but that several processes would need to be completed with various parties in the government. Indonesia also inquired regarding a deadline for providing additional information, including any additional interventions in writing.

67. The TCC Chair strongly encouraged Indonesia to provide any additional information in writing at least two weeks before WCPFC22.

2025 WCPFC IUU List

68. RMI, on behalf of FFA members, supported the retention of vessels currently listed on the WCPFC IUU list for 2025, and acknowledged the information from the IMCS Network, which was circulated to CCMs through WCPFC Circular No. 2025/60. They stated it clearly demonstrated that IUU fishing networks were highly complex and adaptive with beneficial ownership hard to locate, making them difficult to dismantle and posing serious and ongoing challenges for regional fisheries management, which underscored the need for stronger and more collective action. RMI stated that FFA members therefore continued to advocate for innovative approaches, such as those first raised at TCC11. Some vessels have remained on the IUU List for more than 10 years and continued to be of serious concern to FFA members, particularly as these vessels have also been listed on the IUU Lists of other RFMOs. Over the years, FFA members had consistently raised the following options for consideration:

- Active cooperation by CCMs to gather and share information about these vessels with the Commission, including prompt advice on any new intelligence obtained.
- Letters from the Executive Director to other RFMOs to encourage cooperation in locating these vessels. However, FFA members noted that no new information has been forthcoming to date.
- Inclusion of vessel master's name and nationality on the WCPFC IUU List.

FFA members also requested an update from the Philippines on the status of its investigation into the activities of its flagged vessel Kuda Laut 03, in line with the decision and conditions imposed by the Commission at WCPFC20.

69. The Philippines offered updated information concerning the vessel FV Kuda Laut 03, which had been included in the WCPFC IUU list since 2024. In a decision on February 12, 2024, the fishing vessel was found liable for its third offense, violating Public Act 8550 by engaging in unauthorized fishing and failing to comply with vessel monitoring measures. The ruling resulted in the vessel's owner being fined ₱10.5 million. Additionally, the vessel's commercial fishing vessel license was suspended with effect from the date the decision was received. The vessel owner appealed, arguing that the penalty for violation of Section 88 should be applied per voyage, and that he had already been penalized for the same fishing trip. The company's representatives claimed that their vessel remained at sea for months and had previously settled a separate case for a different sighting within the same voyage. However, in July 2024, the Adjudication Committee upheld the original decision, reaffirming the penalties. Subsequently, in October 2024 the company filed an appeal with the Department of Agriculture. On January 15, 2025, the appeal was dismissed outright, affirming the decision of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Adjudication Committee. The respondent had since elevated the appeal to the Office of the President, where the case was currently awaiting resolution. The FV Kuda Laut 03 was currently docked in General Santos City and had been prohibited from leaving port and the vessel's license had been revoked. The Philippines stated it did not object to listing the vessel in the 2026 WCPFC IUU vessel List while the appeal process was ongoing. The Philippines stated it would provide official written updates and information to the Secretariat and CCMs as the case progressed.

70. The EU inquired whether the information provided by the Philippines had already been submitted to WCPFC, and if not, encouraged the Philippines to submit the information by writing to the Secretariat ahead of WCPFC22, where the IUU list will be formally adopted.

71. The TCC Chair stated that the information provided by the Philippines was in response to a request made over the floor for information and had not been previously received, and noted the request for provision of a written update prior to WCPFC22.

72. Korea thanked the Philippines for the additional information, and the IMCS Network for conducting further investigation at the request of the Commission, stating they were looking forward to further discussions in closed session during TCC21 regarding the contents of the investigation.

73. The TCC Chair stated that the Heads of Delegations (HODs) meeting prior to TCC21 discussed the additional information provided by the IMCS Network to the Commission, some of which was sensitive and therefore had been circulated only to CCMs. He noted that further discussion of that would take place in closed session.

74. The Philippines stated it would submit a written update as soon as the report was signed by their National Director of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, hopefully during TCC21.

75. The TCC Chair noted discussions had been held in closed session on the additional analysis provided and circulated to CCMs for vessels already on the WCPFC IUU vessel list. Agreement was reached that there would be a TCC21 outcome requesting the IMCS network to work with the relevant CCMs to make available to TCC and WCPFC22 relevant information from the report that does not include confidential personal data and can be made publicly available, preferably by the deadline for submission of information papers to WCPFC22 after circulation to CCMs for comment, and also a TCC21 request that the relevant CCM provide an update on its investigation on this matter to WCPFC22.

76. TCC21 recommended that CCMs with vessels on the draft IUU vessel list provide a written update on progress with investigations and sanctions, including information allowing for an appreciation of deterrence prior to TCC.

77. TCC21 referred to the nomination by New Zealand for the **BINTANG BAHAGIA 81**, **BINTANG BAHAGIA 79** and **MARCELJAYA-26** to be included on the draft IUU vessel list and agreed to place the **BINTANG BAHAGIA 81, BINTANG BAHAGIA 79** and **MARCELJAYA-26** on the provisional IUU vessel list for further discussion at WCPFC22.

78. TCC21 recommended to WCPFC22 that the four fishing vessels **NEPTUNE**, **FU LIEN No.1**, **YU FONG 168** and **KUDA LAUT 03** on the WCPFC IUU Vessel List in 2025 remain on that list for 2026.

79. TCC21 requested the IMCS Network to work with the relevant CCM to make available to TCC and WCPFC22 relevant information from the report that does not include confidential personal data and can be made publicly available preferably by the deadline for submission of information papers, after circulating to CCMs for comment. TCC21 requested that the relevant CCM provide an update on its investigation on this matter to WCPFC22.

5.2 Provisional CMR Covering RY 2024

Paper: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-07_rev1

80. The TCC Chair introduced WCPFC-TCC21-2025-07_rev1 *TCC Chair's Process for Developing a Provisional Compliance Monitoring Report at TCC21*, noting that key elements were reviewed at the TCC21 Head of Delegation meeting. The TCC Chair noted several issues to be decided regarding how the CMR review would proceed. In relation to the review of the aggregate tables, the analysis that was put together on the subsampling approach indicated the need for clearer guidance on application of a subsampling approach to guide the use of ROP-sourced information. The Chair proposed that TCC21 would not include the ROP-sourced review of the aggregate tables, while noting there were aggregate tables drawn from non-ROP data. These were comprised of Article 25(2) cases that were not subject to the same concerns related to imbalance, and it would be worthwhile for TCC to review those aggregate tables. The Chair noted guidance from the Commission over several years that the process should be led by CCMs rather than the Secretariat or Chair, and proposed a process in which CCMs are given the opportunity to raise issues in relation to the tables presented.

Discussion

81. Chinese Taipei inquired whether all cases, especially from 2023 and 2024, under the CCFS have been reviewed and updated by the Secretariat based on the responses provided, noting if the aggregate tables were sourced from the CCFS but status hadn't been comprehensively updated, the tables might not reflect the investigation progress that had been made by the flag CCM.

82. The Secretariat stated that at the time the papers were prepared for TCC21, it was able to confirm that all updates from CCMs had been reviewed and included prior to release of the aggregate tables document. However, if updates were submitted into the online system after the paper was released, while staff would be working through those as much as possible, a further revision of the paper would likely not be issued. Any late updates would be picked up in a subsequent update of the paper.

83. Regarding the random sampling methodology, the Cook Islands stated on behalf of FFA members, that they agreed with the recommendation that it was premature to apply a subsampling approach at this stage, and supported further refinement of the methodology. They also welcomed the opportunity to provide further feedback on TCC21-2025-09 after TCC21, and supported limiting TCC21's aggregate table review to Article 25(2) cases.

84. The TCC Chair provided an overview of the CMR process for TCC21, which he stated would be undertaken in four stages. The first stage would be a review of "capacity assistance needed" statuses from previous years, as outlined in Annex 1 of TCC21-2025-07. The second stage would be a review of progress by CCMs to resolve implementation gaps identified in previous CMRs from reporting years 2022 and 2023. He stated that TCC20 undertook a trial process for considering existing implementation gaps, which went well, and that has been integrated into the CMR process for 2025. Implementation gaps identified in previous CMRs that would be reviewed at TCC21 were in Annex 2. The third part would be a review of issues arising from the draft CMR (dCMR) and the application of a compliance status for reporting year (RY) 2024; issues to be reviewed were in Annex 3. Where possible, all of the existing practices were detailed in TCC21-2025-07. The Chair noted that there were about 115 potential issues to be addressed. Fourth, and relevant to the preceding discussion, was the review of the aggregate tables; the Chair noted that this would be limited to data sourced from Article 25(2) cases. Following the CMR review process, the Chair in conjunction with the Secretariat would develop the dCMR and an executive summary for

review. The Chair noted that if issues remained after the review of the dCMR by TCC21, CCMs would have the opportunity to provide additional information in writing following TCC21, with a view to clearing issues before finalizing the CMR at WCPFC22 for adoption by the Commission.

85. The European Union noted that in previous meetings they expressed discomfort at not using all information that it was available to TCC for the CMR discussion, including the information coming from the ROP. The EU stated it would not repeat the points made previously but recalled the concerns of members in relation to the imbalance between purse seine and longline and stated the need to ensure that issue does not recur. The EU inquired what the ratio was between the 25(2) cases that concerned purse seine vessels and longline vessels. The TCC Chair stated that the information requested by the EU could be determined and provided when TCC reconvened to consider the CMR.

86. The TCC Chair addressed the need to determine how to apply the status of "priority non-compliant" under the new CMM. In 2024, TCC followed its standard practice, but the TCC Chair stated that based on his views and those of the Secretariat, TCC's guidance was needed on how to proceed. He explained that the new CMM had amended the wording for the application of a status of "priority non-compliant", and that wording related to the need to integrate the work that the Commission had undertaken on considering the risk of different obligations, which led to development of the risk-based assessment framework (RBAF). He noted that the compliance status table (Annex 1 of CMM 2023-04, included in para. 19 of TCC21-2025-07) provided three criteria for priority non-compliant, the first of which was non-compliance with high-risk priority obligations and associated audit points, which was the critical one being addressed. The second criteria (repeated non-compliance with an obligation for two or more consecutively assessed years) was a standard process. The third was any other non-compliance identified as priority non-compliant by the Commission. The Chair noted the need for guidance on criteria 1 and 3, and noted that TCC21-2025-09, para. 18(ii) included a proposed approach for determining this factor based on a mix of existing practice and the information made available through RBAF. The Chair reviewed the elements of para. 18(ii), and stated that an additional outstanding issue in relation to implementation of the CMR process regarded whether it would be undertaken in open or closed session. He noted that TCC was to some extent governed by the Commission's data rules, in this case regarding the Annual Report Part Two (AR Pt2), and that these were considered non-public domain (NPD) documents as TCC reviewed information in the dCMR. The Commission had not changed the NPD status of that information, and therefore information considered in the compliance review process was NPD data. As such, to undertake a compliance review process in open session would require consensus and consent from all CCMs to release their NPD data. The Chair stated his understanding from the HODs meeting that they had not reached such a consensus and therefore would need to undertake the CMR process in closed session. In opening the discussion on the topic, the Chair noted a prior discussion about the need to undertake a process, which is flagged in the TCC workplan, on reviewing the NPD data status of the information that goes into the CMR process.

87. The European Union noted their longstanding preference to hold the CMR in open session in order to ensure high levels of transparency and accountability. The EU stated that beyond those comments of principle, it wanted to ensure the right question was being asked. He noted the debate on whether there was NPD data in the AR Pt2 and stated that what was important was not whether the reports included NPD data, but whether any of that NPD data would be presented or disclosed. The EU likened the situation to stock assessments, which were ultimately based on NPD data, but presented to the Scientific Committee in open session.

88. The TCC Chair stated that when undertaking the CMR process and putting the dCMR on screen, the information presented was drawn directly from CCMs' AR Pt2, which were NPD data. He noted the debate about whether all of the information this was being presented warranted that status but stated that the Commission had not made a decision to apply a different category to that information, and that CCMs would have to consent to release of that information. He contrasted the situation with information presented to the SC, which was drawn on analyses of CCM data, but with a different level of sensitivity, and careful application of the data rules.

89. The EU noted it was important to try to reach a common understanding and stated they did not disagree that the AR Pt2 as a report might be considered NPD data, but that the Secretariat had undertaken an analysis of the content of the reports and not been able to identify NPD data. He noted that the likely mis-specification of the AR Pt2 served to block the holding of the CMR process in open session.

90. The USA supported the European Union's intervention that the CMR should be held in open session for members and observers to participate, and noted the debate was perhaps a legacy of the early days of the CMR process. The USA suggested it could map out a path forward for 2026 toward removing the CMR from Annex 2 of the Data Rules if members were so inclined, and referenced WCPFC-TCC18-2022-12 *CMS-IWG paper in response to TCC17 recommendation on WCPFC data rules (with supporting MS Excel file)* developed by the CMS-IWG chair and the Secretariat. The USA noted some key points relevant to the discussion that it hoped would generate interest in a future revision of the process, in particular that nearly all data now in the dCMRs is publicly available outside of the AR Pt2. The information that was available exclusively within the AR Pt2 was almost entirely related to the implementation obligations, so not operational catch and effort type data. The USA urged members to consider that the only real, potentially non-public information that would be discussed was related to implementation, but that even that could be overcome in the exercise that TCC would undertake in 2026. The USA urged CCMs to look at WCPFC-TCC18-2022-12, and seriously consider the options in paragraphs 40 and 41.

91. The TCC Chair thanked the USA for offering to take this work on and for drawing attention to work previously undertaken. The TCC Chair agreed that this was in some respects a legacy issue, but that in absence of consensus to change the approach, the CMR process would be undertaken in closed session at TCC21. He encouraged CCMs to work with the USA to address the issue in the year ahead. The TCC Chair also stated that the provisional CMR for 2025 covering 2024 activities would be finalised at WCPFC22. He noted that CCMs that had undertaken to provide additional information to inform further consideration of the compliance issues at WCPFC22 had 21 days from the end of TCC21 to submit additional information.

92. TCC21 agreed to review the Aggregate Tables in relation to Article 25(2) cases.

93. TCC21 agreed to undertake the CMR process for RY 2024 in four stages:

i) Review of Capacity Assistance Needed statuses from previous years.

ii) Review progress by CCMs to resolve implementation gaps identified in previous CMRs from RY2022 and RY2023.

iii) Review of issues arising from the *draft Compliance Monitoring Report* (dCMR) and application of a compliance status for RY2024.

iv) Review of the Aggregate Tables limited to data sourced from Article 25(2) cases.

a. Review of overarching tables (dCMR02 pp 30-50) for CCM comment
b. Review of outstanding (>104 weeks) cases in the CCFS (no cases to review)

94. TCC21 agreed to the approach proposed by the Chair for the determination of the obligations to which the status of Priority Non-Compliant will apply as set out in paragraph 18 of TCC21-2025-07_rev1.

95. TCC21 held the CMR discussions in closed session despite the concerns expressed by some CCMs.

96. TCC21 submitted the *Provisional CMR covering RY 2024*, containing its provisional compliance assessment, and recommended the report to WCPFC22 for its consideration and final assessment.

97. TCC21 recalled that in accordance with CMM 2023-04, there were a limited number of pCMR assessments where TCC21 agreed that additional information could be provided up to 21 days following the close of TCC21.

5.3 Review progress on addressing/closing CCFS cases older than 24 months

Paper: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-08

98. WCPFC Deputy Compliance Manager, Eidre Sharp, presented WCPFC-TCC21-2025-08 *Matters related to the issue of CCFS cases older than 24 Months* noting that it responded to a tasking that arose from discussions on various matters relating to case file management through TCC and the Commission. In 2024, the Commission agreed there were certain situations where a case could not be completed. The Secretariat was tasked to report on the closeout of cases that related to those discussions and the implementation of a process for closure of cases that could not be fully completed. TCC19 asked CCMs to provide information on their statutes of limitations, and that information was included in the report. A new status for cases where an investigation was not completed was developed and implemented in an amendment to the CCFS released in 2024; it listed reasons why investigations may not be completed, drawn from responses and information provided by CCMs. These included national authorities' statutes of limitations, which served as a cutoff date beyond which it was impractical to pursue a case, and other situations that prevented an investigation from accessing the information required to support a decision on whether sufficient evidence existed to pursue prosecution. At present, 67% of all cases were open and under investigation, and in most instances CCMs would progress the investigations as rapidly as possible. About 35% of cases had been fully closed; of these 18% could not be completed, most often because the crew or the master had changed, meaning key people required for an investigation were not available. Other issues given were that the operator or owner was no longer accessible (may have gone bankrupt, for example), or the date of the event exceeded the national statute of limitations. Sometimes there were multiple reasons. The rate of closures was currently lower for cases originating from observer trips and CCMs were aware of ongoing work (through the ROP IWG for example) that sought to support access to information for cases. Some of those delays meant that cases were delayed beyond the standard 24-

month period listed in the CMS measure. Legal frameworks in place across CCMs varied widely; some had statutes of limitations specific to fisheries offences, while others included fisheries cases within more generic offence and penalty regimes and laws. In summary, the lack of consistency created an uneven risk that could undermine the deterrence effect because some cases were investigated through to completion, while others were delayed, potentially to the point the case could not be completed. Early data sharing could support responsible actions by flag CCMs and it would be useful for CCMs to consider factors that would help address barriers to the systematic closure of cases through completed investigations.

Discussion

99. New Zealand, on behalf of FFA members, thanked the Secretariat and noted the information contained in the paper. They supported the prioritisation of the ROP-IWG's work to streamline the reporting of ROP data in the CCFS, which would reduce delays in case notification, improve the provision of supporting documentation (including from CCMs observer programmes), and improve the quality of data collection. They noted the paper's reference that "more recently the primary constraint has become the availability, within the Secretariat, of IT professionals capable of loading this data and of Compliance staff to review and check draft cases created from the ROP data", and sought clarification, especially in view of the recent restructuring and the added staffing support to the Compliance Team.

100. The Secretariat provided a brief background on the process by which cases that arise from a notation by an observer during an observer trip ends up in the CCFS. After the observer completes a trip, the observer data is processed through the national or subregional observer programme. That information flows to the SSP and is included in SPC's databases and a portion of the data that relates to ROP data fields for ROP classified trips is considered to be WCPFC ROP data. Then periodically the WCPFC ROP data is provided by the SSP to WCPFC Secretariat. When an update of WCPFC ROP data is provided by the SSP to the Secretariat, there are some IT processes which have to occur for the information to be transferred into the CCFS. There the Secretariat conducts a review, because some data notations do not actually become cases; for example, a vessel may have an exemption to a FAD closure, which is not known to the observer, and the Secretariat ensures such notations are not included as cases. Therefore, the time it takes for cases to arrive, be uploaded, and then be enabled as new cases in the CCFS can vary. The Secretariat stated that this process is separate from reviews that are triggered when CCMs make updates to cases; the latter have benefitted from the staff restructuring, which has served to focus more resources on the day-to-day functioning, and thereby addressed many of the reasons for the delays in compliance case file updates.

101. RMI on behalf of PNA+ (comprising PNA members, Tokelau, and Vanuatu), thanked the Secretariat for the paper and stated they appreciated that the paper highlighted the fact that cases originating from Article 25(2) of the Convention requests were routinely closed, but those from the ROP data showed significant backlogs with fewer closures since 2020 because of delays in data updates. This was the reason PNA+ had proposed during the ROP-IWG session for ROP cases to be generated from Article 25(2) requests. They acknowledged that 67% of the ROP-originated cases remained open and committed to continue to progress those cases towards the Commission meeting in December with the use of the new case status to facilitate cases that were in the CCFS for more than two years.

102. Korea thanked the Secretariat for the comprehensive report and supported the use of the "investigation not completed" case status in the CCFS as a way to manage cases that cannot be progressed to a normal completion. They also endorsed the prioritization of the ROP-IWG's work to streamline the

reporting of the ROP data in the CCFS to reduce delays in case notification. Korea encouraged CCMs to provide statute of limitation information to the Commission, and if possible, the process for investigation, to provide fuller knowledge about what CCMs are doing in terms of their investigations.

103. The USA thanked the Secretariat for the report and attention given to the issue, stating it appreciated the summary of national statutes of limitations in Annex 1 for some CCMs, and encouraged other CCMs to provide the information to the Secretariat. The USA stated it was pleased with the "investigation not completed" function, and would be interested in exploring the ability to identify multiple reasons for accuracy of reporting and data compilation, and sought input from the Secretariat and other CCMs on this. The USA stated it would be helpful for SPC and the Secretariat to publish information on the existing procedures that they have established for how the CCFS is periodically updated with new cases that are derived from ROP data.

104. FSM, on behalf of PNA+, inquired how recommendation (a) (to review implementation and the use of the "investigation not completed" case status in the CCFS) should be undertaken as CCMs had yet to consider the applicability of the new case status for older cases. On recommendation (b), PNA+ supported prioritizing the work now before the ROP IWG to correct the process and refine it for future ROP cases to improve accuracy in identifying and assessing CMM potential infringements that may require investigation. Regarding recommendation (c), FSM proposed implementation of the Article 25(2) timeframe of two months for such requests to be provided in the CCFS, with notification of the cases to the Flag State and relevant CCMs.

105. The EU thanked the Secretariat for the paper and noted the work required more collective investment from all CCMs. They stated it touched on an area captured in the delegation paper (TCC21-2025-DP02) from the USA briefly discussed earlier and deserved more work from TCC, including in an informal setting, to address challenges experienced in making sense of information included in the CCFS. The EU stated it hoped that this opportunity would be provided at some point. They also supported the prioritization of the ROP IWG work. Regarding use of the "investigation not completed" code to address long-pending cases, the EU observed that the code's lack of specificity may be misleading, because it did not enable discrimination between cases where the flag CCM had done its due diligence, but was unable for various reasons to complete an investigation, and those where the investigation was not completed because the flag CCM simply did not do its due diligence.

106. Japan supported the intervention from FSM regarding the status of "investigation not completed", noting Japan had not used this option because of uncertainty about the process. For the sake of transparency, Japan asked that the Secretariat continue the review of this status, supported the proposal by the USA for a more comprehensive approach, and expressed interest in working on that.

107. Pew stated that the paper from the Secretariat showed there were a number of cases that could not be progressed because a change in vessel ownership occurred or because the owner could not be found, noting this was an issue in other RFMOs as well. A common issue was the lack of a standardized definition of the ultimate beneficial owner of the fishing vessel that could then be incorporated into the regulatory frameworks around the world. Pew stated it would be eager to assist WCPFC in developing a definition of the ultimate beneficial owner of fishing vessels and suggested such work would be of use to WCPFC members to help identify the actual parties with a controlling interest in these vessels, and then ultimately to help members further progress these cases.

108. Sharks Pacific highlighted a core concern raised in the Secretariat's paper on CCFS cases older than 24 months and made a related point with fisheries observers in mind. They stated that most cases arising from observer data (about 70+%) remained unresolved, with many effectively timed out by domestic statutes of limitations or rendered moot because of changes in vessels' flags, ownership, or crew. That meant that despite the extraordinary efforts of the observers, the evidence that they collected often failed to lead to accountability. They stated that the gap undermined the credibility of the compliance system and sent the wrong signal to the fleets operating in the region. Furthermore, it sent a signal to the observers that the Commission does not care about them and the risks that they take to deliver actionable information, because that information was ultimately ignored. Sharks Pacific stated that they had heard this directly from observers and stated that introduction of the "investigation not completed" category was a modest step forward in transparency, but not a solution to the underlying problem. The reality was that without timely access to observer reports, some CCMs simply could act within their domestic legal timeframes. This created an uneven playing field, where one flag CCM may prosecute a violation while another with a shorter statute of limitations could not, even for the same infraction, and that inconsistency eroded both deterrence and trust among members. For these reasons, Sharks Pacific stated that TCC must prioritize the work of the ROP-IWG to streamline and accelerate the flow of observer data into the CCFS as has been recommended by other CCMs, and ensure that observer reports were delivered promptly and in full so that flag CCMs can meet their obligations before the legal clock ran out. Sharks Pacific stated they recognized the role of practical enforcement barriers such as vessel and crew changes, and suggested that TCC explore solutions, such as suggested by Pew, to prevent those factors from becoming loopholes. They stated that if the Commission wanted to be serious about compliance, it needed to ensure timely, consistent, and enforceable follow up.

109. The TCC Chair stated that there was a fairly uniform recognition of the need for prioritisation of the ROP IWG's work to streamline reporting of ROP data in the CCFS, and noted discussions related to the work of the ROP IWG would be held later in the agenda. He referenced questions that were raised seeking clarification about the review of use of the "investigation not completed" case status, and the TCC Chair stated that the ongoing discussion highlighted that a number of CCMs and observers recognised it helped to some extent and recognised the utility of that status, but questioned whether use of that term could enable the reason for an investigation not being completed to be distinguished. The Chair observed that this went to the question of whether review of "investigation not completed" should be more procedural or process oriented, noting that some thought would have to be given to what a more process-driven review of "investigation not completed" would entail. The Chair noted useful commentary regarding the statute of limitations, stating 11 CCMs provided information on their statutes of limitations, which had helped in understanding these challenges.

110. The USA, in response to a request from the TCC Chair to clarify its proposal, stated that it was referring to WCPFC-TCC21-2025-08 (e.g., paragraph 14) regarding procedures established by SPC-OFP and the Secretariat, and stated it was recommending that those procedures be identified and published to support CCM awareness.

111. TCC21 recommended to WCPFC22 that it endorse the prioritization of ROP-IWG work to streamline the reporting of ROP data in the CCFS to reduce delays in case notification, improve the provision of supporting information and improve the quality of data collection indicating potential issues.

112. TCC21 recognised the utility of the "Investigation not completed" status in the CCFS and the categories: crew/master changed, vessel or owner/operator no longer exists, date of event exceeds

national statute of limitations, vessel flag changed and unable to progress with new flag state. TCC21 tasked the Secretariat to continue the review of the "Investigation not completed" status and to report to TCC22 on the progress in closing cases older than 24 months.

113. TCC21 requested CCMs, including CNMs, that had not already done so to provide information to the Secretariat on statute of limitations and on the process they adopt for investigation of CCFS cases.

114. TCC21 tasked the Secretariat and SSP to provide information to TCC22 on the existing flow of data between the SSP, Secretariat and CCMs used to create new CCFS cases arising out of observer sourced data and to update the CCFS pages for those cases with new information.

5.4 Further develop and implement sampling methodology for CCFS

Paper: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-09

115. The Chair noted that when the WCPFC CMS CMM was amended by the Commission at WCPFC20, the new measure (CMM 2023-04) included a tasking for the Secretariat in paragraph 15b. The tasking is for the Secretariat to develop and use, in consultation with the SSP, a scheme for randomly sampling observer-related cases from the online CCFS for the purse seine fishery on a trip basis, designed to achieve the level of coverage in the CMR for ROP purse seine trips determined for the longline fishery by the SSP for the most recent year for which these data are available. He noted that this was a longstanding issue for the Commission, stating that TCC20 did not consider the aggregate tables because of the ongoing need to develop the sampling methodology. That work was continued by the Secretariat, supported by consultants, and the Secretariat developed a report on progress in implementing the sampling methodology for the CCFS.

116. Dr. Lara Manarangi-Trott, WCPFC Compliance Manager, introduced WCPFC-TCC21-2025-09 *Report on progress for implementing the sampling methodology*, noting the involvement of Saggitus consultants, the TCC Chair, and TCC Vice-Chair. She reviewed the background leading to the effort, which sought to ensure a balanced approach to the CCFS and its use in the CMS process, given the 100% purse seine observer coverage requirement, and minimum 5% observer coverage for longline fisheries. At TCC20, the Secretariat presented WCPFC-TCC20-2024-09_rev1 that used a simplified approach that took a single percentage based on the most recent longline observer coverage rate from 2018 to 2023. It confirmed that the application of the approach would leave the Article 25(2) non-observer-based cases intact; there were various ways that the sampling could be approached, which affected the outcomes and areas of potential bias.

117. The Compliance Manager stated that at the time, the Secretariat sought guidance from CCMs and TCC about how to proceed, in particular about preparation of the aggregate summary tables report, which was complex. TCC20 tasked the Secretariat to undertake further work with the SSP to refine the methodology specifically and to try and ensure that the WCPFC's databases of trips that were linked to compliance cases could appropriately be matched to the list of trips that were recorded for data sets maintained by SPC, such as log sheets and observer data. The Secretariat also received input on how to undertake the analysis.

118. TCC21-2025-09 responded to the request for an update in 2025; Annex 1 (prepared by Saggitus) provided an update on further analysis done after TCC20. The paper demonstrated three different

sampling approaches and discussed how representative each approach was, concluding the year-specific percent sampling that took into account variations in year-to-year purse seine observer coverage was likely the most balanced approach. The paper also noted that at the time of preparation, information was not available from SSP to link VMS and observer trips. The Compliance Manager noted that there was also a draft Appendix 3 to the provisional CMR that members would have an opportunity to review, which applied the same sampling approach as used at TCC20. Figures and tables that showed the impact of the subsampling approach were also included in the supplementary paper to the Observer Program Annual Report (WCPFC-TCC21-2025-RP02_suppl).

119. The Compliance Manager noted that Annex 1 of TCC21-2025-09 indicated that such a sub-sampling approach should not be used for CCM compliance assessment, because sub-sampling was random and sampling rates were relatively low, and thus the selected data sets may not be representative of the overall data in some years. The paper urged further discussion, consideration, and guidance about the aggregate table report in paragraph 282 of the CMS measure, and further discussion about the TCC process. The paper also invited TCC to task CCMs to provide feedback on the format specifications for the aggregate report processes and the preferred subsampling approach at a date after TCC, with a report to WCPFC22 with recommendations for an approach to be implemented in 2026.

120. The TCC Chair thanked the Secretariat and consultants for their work and invited comments on the analysis of the subsampling approach.

Discussion

121. Korea thanked the Secretariat and the consultant for the analysis. Regarding option 3 (year-specific percentage sampling adjusted for the purse seine observer coverage rates), Korea stated that the observer coverage requirement was 100%, and 100% should be assumed unless non-compliance was verified by compliance evaluation, because the analysis paper indicated there were some reasons behind why the purse seine coverage was not calculated as 100%. Except for impacts and waivers due to Covid (which was some years ago) there were three factors that could affect purse seine observer coverage, but these were technical issues, and because subsampling itself is not a compliance evaluation, 100% coverage should be assumed unless verified otherwise by the compliance evaluation. Korea looked forward to further discussion on the issues.

122. Tonga, on behalf of FFA members, thanked the Secretariat for the work, and emphasised the need for fairness, particularly for SIDS, to ensure data treatment did not create disproportionate burdens or misrepresent compliance performance. They supported further refinement of the methodology, and tasking CCMs to provide feedback on the report format, TCC processes, and preferred approaches post-TCC, with the TCC Chair to report recommendations to the Commission in 2026. Given FFA members' scheduled meetings in the last two weeks of October, they proposed submitting feedback by the end of October.

123. The USA agreed that subsampling should only be done for scientific purposes at present and that TCC suggest that a subsampling approach for compliance purposes not move forward until after the ROP-IWG streamlining work was complete, and upon further review and consideration of the method. The USA observed that although the current monitoring rates appeared imbalanced in favour of purse seine vessels at 100% versus 5% for longline, the scientific data collection really may be imbalanced, and this didn't carry over into the enforcement of alleged infringements. The USA observed a significant imbalance in enforcement, as noted in WCPFC-TCC21-2025-RP04, with 90% to 100% of HSBI involving longline vessels.

They stated that the cases that are not ROP-initiated and which primarily involve longline vessels are prosecuted at a much higher rate than alleged infringements by purse seine vessels, which are primarily the subject of ROP-initiated cases. Beyond that, the USA expressed concerns about the potential burden on both SPC and the Secretariat in undertaking the subsampling approach. They inquired about the trade-offs that SPC and the Secretariat make when it came to resourcing and staffing of the imbalance analysis. The USA stated that a particular concern would be the significant resources required to develop harvest strategies for the Commission and suggested the need to determine if the subsampling work impacted the harvest strategy work, and if so, what should be given priority.

124. The EU stated it had expressed its concerns with the overall approach, and now remarked on the effort, time, and resources allocated to the process. They noted that most of the work appeared to be independent of what process will be adopted and which approach would be used. The EU stated that the work was leading to results that were not reliable and that would not be meaningfully usable, and did not seem the best use of WCPFC's limited resources. The EU referenced the point made by many CCMs that the current process resulted in a biased picture in terms of the potential or alleged infringements that are recorded for purse seine in relation to those recorded for longline due to the imbalance in observer coverage rates. They suggested a simple way of addressing that could be to derive from the 5% of longline coverage what the potential number of infringements for longline would be if coverage was 100%. The EU stated it would not oppose any of the options proposed but reiterated their discomfort with the approach. They also asked for clarification regarding Table 1, which showed that in no year in the record was 100% observer coverage reached for the purse seine fleet.

125. FSM, on behalf of PNA+, stated their understanding of the conclusions of TCC21-2025-09 about the limitations of the sampling approach, but suggested the analysis in this paper missed some key points: that the issue stemmed from proposals to apply corrective actions that do not work because of the unfairness or the imbalance resulting from the monitoring imbalance, and that the sampling process was designed to address the imbalance, but the core problem of the low longline observer coverage remained. They stated that using the low longline observer coverage rates could result in a data set that was not representative for some years for both the longline and purse seine fisheries. PNA stated it would have been prepared to have TCC use the sample data for the aggregate tables using option three for the sampling, but stated they accepted the reasons for not using observer-sourced data in the aggregate tables. PNA stated they would provide further comments and expected that the outcome would mean some significant changes to the CMS CMM in 2026. They noted that observer data could still be used for Article 25 requests for investigation of an alleged violation.

126. Japan stated its preference regarding the subsampling method was for option three. It recognized the concerns raised by other CCMs regarding observer coverage and reiterated that observer deployment in longline fisheries had been a significant challenge. Compared to purse seine operations, longline trips were considerably longer, making observer duties more demanding. The living conditions on fresh longline vessels were often poor, and the nature of longline fishing operations made deploying observers to vessels very difficult. Meanwhile, the implementation of EM was progressing, and Japan stated the potential for EM as a substitute for human observers should be explored. Under CMM 2023-01, a scheme had been introduced that allowed for increases in bigeye tuna catch limits in conjunction with higher observer or EM coverage in longline fisheries. In response, longline fishing nations were working to expand their coverage, and Japan stated it was important to review the progress of these efforts. For that reason, Japan stated it did not support increasing observer coverage at this stage, but also recognized the difficulties of the sampling efforts. They stated they would like to work with other members to address the issue.

127. The TCC Chair noted the broad discussion and reflected that the efforts described in the paper were in response to a clear direction from the Commission to try and find a way to implement the measure adopted by the Commission. The Chair noted the substantial issues that were raised and would need to be addressed at WCPFC22 and during the CMS measure discussions in 2026.

128. Saggitus noted an issue with Table 1 in the paper was essentially what data were available for assessment purposes for the CMS. Why those percentages for purse seine observer coverage are < 100% was articulated in the paper and informed the choices between options two and three. As the TCC Chair pointed out, option 2 basically assumed 100% coverage in the purse seine fishery and a straight percentage from the longline fishery. Option 3 was based on whether or not data were available. So although 100% of vessels may have had observers onboard, for various reasons some observer reports may not have been received, and thus they may not have had the ability to evaluate the compliance on that trip. Therefore, coverage was reduced because the data were not sent in.

129. The USA noted that SC21 underlined that low observer coverage undermined the reliability of the longline scientific data. TCC had repeatedly highlighted that low observer coverage in the longline fleet undermined compliance monitoring, which was directly relevant to the CCFS discussions. Comments by Japan and others reinforced that expanding EM was a priority of the Commission, and if carried out could easily overcome the perceived imbalance in an enduring manner that would never be attainable by the subsampling effort.

130. The Executive Director stated that, notwithstanding the fact that this work came out of a specific request, CCMs were correct to question the value and the utility of its continuation, and to consider resourcing, attention, and prioritization. She stated that it was correct to question the direction that the work takes TCC in addressing the fundamental issues it is required to address, which are monitoring, data collection, and advising the Commission on those needs, and where needs or issues need to be monitored or data collection needs to be strengthened so that decisions around conservation and management are based on robust data. This discussion was relevant to understanding where the Commission was (and was not) putting its attention and resources, including improving data collection and availability of data in the longline fishery. She stated the need to ensure the data that WCPFC's stock status evaluations were based on was robust, and that WCPFC made progress in closing really important data gaps, and addressing ongoing needs, noting that WCPFC may otherwise face external pressure on these issues from other initiatives and organizations. She stated that ultimately CCMs must determine whether this is the correct place to invest for value and return versus other initiatives that might have better outcomes.

131. Australia acknowledged valuable points raised by both Japan and the USA. Regarding EM, they recognized that it was an effective solution to scale up independent monitoring of the longline fisheries that TCC should actively consider. Australia recognized that the Commission adopted interim standards in 2024, and stated they could support making it a high priority for TCC to look at how EM can be scaled up effectively across the longline fishery to address compliance challenges as well scientific data needs. Australia stated it was worth considering developing specific compliance data needs that could flow through the use of EM in the longline fishery.

132. The TCC Chair noted the progress to improve independent monitoring coverage in the longline fishery, which had been an issue in discussions on the implementation of the CMS for many years. He noted the open question about what to do in terms of implementation of the current CMS. The TCC Chair invited comments on the proposed sampling methodology for CCFS, noting that the direction of some work in the ROP-IWG may affect this.

133. The EU stated its preference was that a paper be prepared with options and possibly key conclusions from work undertaken by the Secretariat and SPC and prospects for the continuation of such work.

134. The USA stated it would appreciate a potential assessment from the Secretariat as regards the resource effects or impacts of the analysis, perhaps presented for consideration at WCPFC22.

135. The TCC Chair encouraged additional comments in the coming weeks via email to inform development of the paper.

136. TCC21 requested CCMs to provide feedback to the TCC Chair and the WCPFC Secretariat on the format specifications for the aggregate report, the TCC processes and the preferred subsampling approach, if any, no later than 31 October 2025.

137. TCC21 requested the TCC Chair, taking into account the feedback provided by CCMs to prepare an options paper for WCPFC22 with recommendations on an approach to subsampling for the CMR in 2026, which would include consideration related to feasibility and the resource implications for the Secretariat from the options for consideration of FAC.

5.5 Review and assess the Commission's Implementation of CMM 2013-06

Paper: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP13

138. The TCC Chair stated that TCC was tasked, as a standing agenda item related to the special requirements of developing States, to review and assess the Commission's implementation of and compliance with CMM 2013-06. TCC20 recommended that the Commission at WCPFC21 task TCC21 to continue discussions on approaches for reviewing and assessing the Commission's implementation of and compliance with CMM 2013-06.

Discussion

139. Niue on behalf of FFA members noted that the TCC Workplan 2025–2027 indicated that TCC21 would discuss the approach to review of the Commission's implementation of CMM 2013-06, which was a central instrument for operationalising Article 30 of the Convention. They stated that it reflected the Commission's commitment to recognising the special requirements of developing States, in particular SIDS and participating territories, in developing and adopting CMMs. For FFA members, CMM 2013-06 remained a critical tool to ensure SIDS' development aspirations and vulnerabilities were central to WCPFC decision-making and CMM proposals. To guide TCC21's review of the Commission's implementation of CMM 2013-06, FFA members provided a proposed approach for assessing compliance with CMM 2013-06, paragraphs 1 to 4, (detailed in WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP13), building on TCC20's consideration of WCPFC-TCC20-2024-30 *Implementation of CMM 2013-06 on the criteria for the consideration of conservation and management proposals*.

140. Samoa, on behalf of FFA members, put forward two recommendations for paragraph 1:

a. a minor amendment to the adopted paragraph 1 audit point to include a requirement for the report to be submitted consistent with an agreed template. The amended audit point would therefore read as follows:

'Secretariat confirms receipt of a report consistent with the agreed template outlining efforts by the reporting CCM to cooperate, either directly or through the Commission, to enhance the ability of developing States, particularly the least developed among them and SIDS and territories in the Convention Area, to develop their own fisheries for highly migratory fish stocks, including but not limited to the high seas within the Convention Area.'

b. TCC21 recommends tasking the WCPFC Secretariat to develop a template, that includes associated reporting guidelines, to strengthen and streamline CCM reporting on paragraph 1, as proposed by the WCFPC Secretariat in TCC20-2024-30.

FFA members stated that to ensure that CCMs providing meaningful support to SIDS and territories were recognised appropriately, the reporting template should include a breakdown of the types of cooperation and support made available to SIDS and territories. This would ensure clear and meaningful reporting, including appropriate attribution of CCMs' efforts to support SIDS and territories. FFA members stated they would be happy to provide further detail on this draft template during TCC.

141. Vanuatu stated on behalf of FFA members that Paragraph 2 of CMM 2013-06 was a Commission obligation to ensure that any CMMs did not result in transferring, directly or indirectly, a disproportionate burden of conservation action onto SIDS and territories. While SIDS undoubtedly have a primary role in identifying instances of disproportionate burden, the Commission (and not only SIDS) carry this responsibility. To assess the Commission's compliance with paragraph 2, FFA members supported TCC assessing this Commission-level obligation and proposed the following:

a. TCC assessing how the Commission addressed and avoided any potential or actual disproportionate burden in the previous year.

b. conducted under the plenary CMS agenda item at TCC and be informed by the Secretariat compiling any mitigation action taken by the Commission to any identified disproportionate burden in the previous year.

142. Fiji, on behalf of FFA members, highlighted the fact that CCMs and the Commission had been implementing paragraph 3, CMM 2013-06 for over a decade (i.e. the completion of the 13-06 checklist). Noting their view that CCM implementation was intrinsic to any Commission action or obligation, FFA members stated that the existing CCM implementation of paragraph 3 should be enshrined within a corresponding audit point for this obligation. FFA members proposed the following audit point for paragraph 3, aligned to the existing agreed Commission practice:

'*A CCM submitting a proposal has also submitted a completed '13-06 checklist' AND has consulted with FFA members and territories in the completion of the checklist.'*

Fiji stated that FFA members noted that the proposed audit points merely prescribed the existing process currently applied by CCMs, and encouraged CCMs to support this proposed audit point.

143. Kiribati, on behalf of FFA members, stated that paragraph 4 placed a binding obligation on CCMs to cooperate to mitigate implementation burdens on SIDS where a disproportionate burden had been demonstrated. It provided a non-exhaustive list of potential mitigation responses for CCMs to use where

a SIDS had demonstrated a disproportionate burden of conservation action in implementing specific obligations. To support assessment of this obligation, FFA members proposed that:

> TCC annually assesses the Commission's compliance with paragraph 4 through consideration of any identified or demonstrated cases of disproportionate burden. TCC shall conduct this assessment in plenary session under the CMS agenda item and shall consider:
>
> a. what mitigation measures or special requirements the Commission has implemented to address the disproportionate burden, including para 4(a), (b), (c) and (d) actions, as well as any special requirement categories outlined in CMM 2013-07; and
>
> b. the efficacy of any identified mitigation measures.

FFA members welcomed the constructive engagement of CCMs.

144. The TCC Chair thanked FFA members for bringing the issues forward, and stated that the FFA's draft proposals would be made available on the TCC21 meeting webpage for the further consideration of CCMs.

145. Korea noted they would need more time to review the proposals from FFA to be able to provide detailed responses. Korea stated that its initial response was that they recognized the importance of the implementation of CMM 2013-06. Regarding the audit point proposed, it was suggested that the consultation with SIDS was a prerequisite for any proposals to be submitted but stated that in practice, it would be extremely difficult for a proposal to be submitted by the deadline if consultation was a prerequisite and consultations were lengthy, which was possible because there were 17 FFA members. Korea noted they would be happy to engage in further discussions after considering the proposal.

146. Australia supported the need for CCMs to have additional time to consider the text as presented.

147. The EU noted the need to address the overall concept of the CMM and the obligation to cooperate as members of the WCPFC in achieving it, and suggested the amendment was not helpful in that regard. The EU stated they provided the requested information in a very detailed manner each year and would continue doing so but that two-way interaction was needed for such a process to be meaningful. The EU noted that much support was provided by different CCMs, which was captured in reports, but it was not clear what needed to be provided. For members providing support to SIDS, it was essential to understand whether the support contributed to addressing the issue in specific terms, which required a feedback loop that was currently absent, and suggested the need to establish such feedback so that CCMs could understand the impact of the support they provided.

148. Niue, on behalf of FFA members, noted the tasking of the Commission to TCC and the importance of the implementation of Article 30 and CMM 2013-07, recognizing the importance of assessing the impact of proposals on SIDS according to CMM 2013-06. They noted that WCPFC20 endorsed the recommendation that TCC as a standing agenda item review and assist the Commission's implementation of compliance with CMM 2013-06 for the previous year. They stated that the tasking to TCC was clear and included reviewing and assessing compliance with implementation of 2013-06. On that note, FFA members stated the recommendations were intended to assist TCC undertake this Commission tasking and were not new, as they were based on previous TCC and Commission discussions, including WCPFC-TCC20-2024-30. FFA members requested that the EU in that sense consider the recommendations put forward by FFA members as needed for TCC to implement the tasking from the Commission.

149. Cook Islands stated that as a SIDS they placed utmost importance on both consolidation and enhancement of how the Commission and its subsidiary bodies implement Article 30 of the Convention. Cook Islands stated they therefore strongly supported the proposed approach submitted by FFA for assessing paragraphs 1 to 4 of CMM 2013-06. They noted the proposed approaches were consistent with the Commission's and TCC's consideration of 2013-06 implementation and provided a clear and repeatable approach for assessing compliance with CMM 2013-06. The Cook Islands highlighted that collective efforts to clarify how the Commission implements its Article 30 applications, including through the implementation of relevant CMMs such as CMM 2013-06 and CMM 2013-07, served two very important functions: it ensured the Commission was supporting the special requirements of developing States as required under the Convention and CMMs, and provided a solid platform for non-SIDS CCMs to highlight and showcase their efforts to cooperate and support SIDS special requirements as well as direct efforts to avoid disproportionate burden. They stated that in their view, any such support from non-SIDS CCMs should be clearly captured within the Commission's work and considerations. They welcomed constructive engagement on the issue and looked forward to enhancing the Commission's implementation of CMM 2013-06.

150. RMI supported adoption of the recommendations as proposed by FFA members. With respect to the EU's comment, RMI stated the proposal aimed to support the two-way street that's required of the consultative process in implementing Article 30 through 2013-06.

151. The EU stated the concept being discussed was important and enshrined not only in the Convention but also in other high-level international instruments. The EU stated it was important to address that, and the Commission had committed to doing so. The question was how to do this in the context of TCC. The EU stated there was broad agreement that for conducting assessments, there was a need to have the capacity to identify metrics, measurable options, tools, and means that allowed for making meaningful assessments. One merit of the proposal was that it required a debate on how to quantify support for SIDS in a way that could be assessed by TCC. The EU stated it had a genuine interest in discussing with FFA whether they had identified means that in specific terms would allow undertaking this assessment for the Commission. The EU stated this was an important key point that should be discussed prior to adoption of the proposed recommendations.

152. Japan stated their delegation submitted a question to the FFA Secretariat that was much the same as that from the EU delegation, noting the comment by the EU was reasonable: first discuss how to identify this aspect and then go to the next step as suggested by FFA in the paper.

153. Australia supported the FFA proposals as worded, noting this was critical to ensure that there was effective consideration of SIDS. Australia stated it was important to have a process for TCC to assess how the Commission could address and avoid any potential or actual disproportionate burden, and that should be considered on the agenda as suggested.

154. RMI stated that the effort was to pull together the existing loose practice so that it became part of an obligation to the measure. RMI stated that most if not all CCMs (including FFA members) had gone through the checklist by way of practice and the proposed amendments took into account those past practices. The amendment was to ensure that practice not only continued but was streamlined.

155. The EU agreed the process was rather loose and there were different levels of discussion and stated the hope that at some point an open and frank exchange could be held on the merits. The EU inquired how the process had contributed to addressing the issues it was supposed to address and

whether there had been other collateral positive or negative impacts of this implementation, suggesting a review of this approach as a whole would be worthwhile. Regarding the proposal by FFA members, the EU agreed there was room for improvement, and stated its understanding that the obligation applied to the Commission as a whole, to all the members of the Commission, but what was proposed did not cover the concept because it was only those that were submitting a proposal that were supposed to do something. For this to be inclusive and provide a role for all CCMs as required under the obligation, feedback from FFA members was required. The EU stated that if an audit point was to be agreed, it should have a role for all members participating in the process. The EU hoped FFA members could consider that in terms of addressing the concept of the obligation itself.

156. Chinese Taipei sought clarification, noting the second component stated that CCMs should consult with FFA members and territories, and asked whether this had a specific range or meant all FFA members and all territories, noting usually CCMs will submit a delegation paper or proposal during the meeting or in the margins of the meeting. They inquired whether consultation with all FFA members and territories would still be required in that case.

157. New Zealand strongly supported comments from FFA members on 2013-06 amendments, noting that the WCPFC was unique in that the Convention Area also included the EEZs of SIDS. They stated this was potentially the only example globally of securing provisions, which directly impact on SIDS resources, to implement these binding provisions in their own fisheries waters. New Zealand suggested such a situation would not occur in the Northern Hemisphere. New Zealand stated that FFA had to propose the recommendations because the Commission had constantly failed to uphold the principles of CMM 2013-06 and FFA members had somewhat been forced into this position.

158. Marshall Islands stated that if all SIDS and territories could be consulted, they should be, noting a process under FFA for doing so, and suggested that the FFA Secretariat was the focal point for members and should be contacted in terms of proposals that were being submitted. They also noted that Japan, the USA and others had consulted with FFA members at the margins of management options consultations or WCPFC meetings, which reflected the consultation process underlying CMM 2013-06. The 2013-06 checklist had been useful but in some respects was done without consultations of the Pacific SIDS or the FFA membership. The FFA proposal ensures the consultation process and RMI stated this did not reflect an effort by SIDS to block measures, but was about enabling an understanding of what will happen if something becomes an obligation. RMI stated that WCPFC had 44 measures with many obligations, and no doubt more measures will be added. The FFA amendment aimed to improve consultations between SIDS and other Commission members in implementing Article 30.

159. Cook Islands supported the interventions made by Marshall Islands and New Zealand, and thanked CCMs for the very helpful discussions. They noted that an assessment of the impact of a proposal on SIDS could not be determined without appropriate and meaningful consultation with SIDS. To reject the elements being added in the proposed audit point for consultation was directly not meeting the requirements under Article 30 and CMM 2013-06 as RMI outlined. Cook Islands stated that this was the current practice and it was concerning that CCMs sought to move further away from identifying and responding to the special requirements of SIDS as required in the Convention.

160. Japan thanked RMI for their comment. Japan stated it had held a consultation with FFA almost every year to discuss important issues in advance of the Commission meeting. Japan posed a practical question on how to implement this audit point. They noted that under their current practice they contact the FFA Secretariat to have a bilateral consultation and the FFA Secretariat responds, and inquired how

that process would be detected by the WCPFC Secretariat, in terms of an audit point. Japan also reserved further comments about the implications of the proposal, noting that while they understood what RMI was requesting, when it came to the legal implications, Japan's legal bureau may have a comment on how the requirement could result in unfair treatment among members under the Commission, and thus Japan's delegation needed to carefully consider that aspect. Japan noted it would directly communicate with FFA following TCC and hold bilateral consultations with FFA in October, and during that time Japan's government would have enough time to have internal consultations about the implications of the audit point. Japan stated its delegation was unfortunately not in a position to support the recommendation at TCC21.

161. Chinese Taipei thanked RMI for the explanation, noting the proposed audit point was somewhat different from the original task of the CMM, which stated that the Commission should give special consideration to SIDS and territories. Chinese Taipei noted not all FFA members were SIDS, and not all territories were members of FFA. They stated that even if they consulted with FFA, which includes most SIDS, they would still need to consult with the territories, given the requirement of the provision. Chinese Taipei also noted the EU's comment that this was an obligation for the Commission, and asked if a CCM failed to present a 2013-06 checklist, would that mean the Commission didn't give special consideration, and is non-compliant, or just the one CCM.

162. China concurred with the interventions by Chinese Taipei and Japan.

163. RMI stated that territories were to be consulted as well, and that the entire process was about engagement to understand proposals and encouraged CCMs to engage in the consultation process that entails the checklist and started the process so CCMs could understand each other as various proposals were made to the Commission. RMI noted that the amendment aimed to streamline engagement with other Commission members in understanding the implications of proposals under consideration.

164. New Caledonia extended appreciation to FFA members for the proposal and supported it, and thanked them for recognition of territories in the recommendation. They emphasized the need to consult with territories as much as with the FFA members when it comes to proposals, noting the importance of being able to engage in those discussions and be consulted in the same way as other CCMs.

165. Canada thanked FFA for the proposal and advancing the issue. Canada stated it would reserve its position on the proposal as unfortunately it had not had time to consider the proposal internally. Canada stated it recognized the challenges and the gaps that exist to appropriately track the implementation of these critical commitments and would welcome further discussions leading up WCPFC22, and stated they would reach out to FFA.

166. French Polynesia thanked FFA members for the paper and supported the proposed approach for assessing compliance with CMM 2013-06. They particularly appreciated the recognition of the specific situation of SIDS and participating territories and supported efforts to reinforce application of Article 30 of the Convention.

167. American Samoa supported the intervention by New Caledonia.

168. Korea stated it fully recognized the importance of consultations with SIDS and participating territories, but raised some technical questions regarding the audit points in paragraph 3. As mentioned in previous CMS discussions, Korea stated it believed that audit points were being chosen that may create obligations outside the CMMs. Korea noted that the current CMM 2013-06 stated, in para. 3, that in

considering any new proposal, the Commission shall apply a number of questions. The proposed audit point para. 3 stated that "a CCM submitting a proposal has also submitted a completed '13-06 checklist'". Korea stated it could agree with that, but the latter part of the proposed audit point ("AND has consulted with FFA members and territories in the completion of the checklist") raised a practical concern in submitting proposals. Korea noted the 30-day deadline for working and delegation papers, and the need for CCMs to consult internally (Korea observed it had internal stakeholders, including five different agencies, other stakeholders, and various NGOs) in addition to consulting with SIDS and territories. Regarding the latter consultations, the FFA Secretariat would be the focal point, but the latter part of the year was very busy for FFA, and Korea observed it often had to wait over a week to receive feedback. Korea stated it was open to discussing various options for consultations, such as consulting with FFA members and territories leading up to a relevant meeting or during a meeting. Korea also noted that CMM 2013-06 para. 3 also stated "in considering any new proposal the Commission shall", but not "in submitting any new proposal". Korea stated it was open to further discussions with FFA members to come up with a better solution, stating that it also believed the consultation was important, and not a technicality. Korea stated it looked forward to further discussions on this.

169. The EU noted that in reference to the FFA proposal regarding para. 4 of CMM 2013-06, the same comments it raised in relation to para. 2 would apply and noted the question remained as to whether the proposed assessment was feasible, which should be discussed prior to committing to it. The EU concurred these issues should be explored and suggested that would require dedicated work before putting forward and agreeing with such a proposal.

170. In the course of further discussions, CCMs agreed to support the recommendations from FFA members in paras. 1, 2 and 4 in WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP13.

171. Some CCMs also noted that the assessment of compliance against paras. 2 and 4 of CMM 2013-06 would require dedicated technical work including defining appropriate, measurable indicators and approaches for identifying and assessing potential disproportionate burden, and recommended that the Commission provide guidance for the scheduling of this work.

172. TCC21 noted the Delegation Paper from FFA members TCC21-2025-DP13 on the proposed approach for assessing compliance with CMM 2013-06 on the criteria for the consideration of conservation and management proposals, which built on TCC20's consideration of Secretariat working paper WCPFC-TCC20-2025-30.

173. TCC21 recommended to WCPFC22 that it agree an amendment to the audit point of paragraph 1 of CMM 2013-06 so that it read:

> *'Secretariat confirms receipt of a report consistent with the agreed template outlining efforts by the reporting CCM to cooperate, either directly or through the Commission, to enhance the ability of developing States, particularly the least developed among them and SIDS and territories in the Convention Area, to develop their own fisheries for highly migratory fish stocks, including but not limited to the high seas within the Convention Area.'*

174. TCC21 recommended that WCPFC22 task the WCPFC Secretariat to develop a template, that includes associated reporting guidelines, to strengthen and streamline CCM reporting on paragraph 1

of CMM 2013-06, as proposed by the WCPFC Secretariat in TCC20-2024-WP30, while ensuring that there is no duplication with other reporting requirements (e.g obligations under CMM-2013-07).

175. TCC21 supported TCC assessing the Commission-level obligation in paragraph 2 of CMM 2013-06 by TCC assessing how the Commission addressed and avoided any potential or actual disproportionate burden in the previous year. This assessment will be conducted under the plenary CMS agenda item at TCC and be informed by the Secretariat compiling any mitigation action taken by the Commission to any identified disproportionate burden in the previous year.

176. TCC21 recommended that in order to support the assessment of paragraph 4 of CMM 2013-06, TCC annually assesses the Commission's compliance with paragraph 4 through consideration of any identified or demonstrated cases of disproportionate burden. TCC shall conduct this assessment in plenary session under the CMS agenda item and shall consider:

- what mitigation measures or special requirements the Commission has implemented to address the disproportionate burden, including para 4(a), (b), (c) and (d) actions, as well as any special requirement categories outlined in CMM 2013-07; and

- the efficacy of any identified mitigation measures.

177. TCC21 acknowledged the importance of CMM 2013-06 and invited CCMs to continue informal dialogue on the proposal related to paragraph 3 in *Delegation Paper WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP13* in the lead up to WCPFC22.

5.6 Review and assess paragraph 37 of CMM 2009-06

Paper: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP12

178. The TCC Chair stated that WCPFC21 tasked TCC commencing in 2025 to use TCC-2024-DP07 as a reference to continue the work required to strengthen the transhipment measure. The TCC Workplan 2025–2027 also noted that DP07 had been proposed by the PNA+ to provide a framework that TCC could use for the assessment of compliance with paragraph 37 of CMM 2009-06 relating to the determination of circumstances where it is impracticable for certain vessels to tranship or land fish at feasible and allowable locations other than on the high seas, in comparing total operating costs, net revenues, or some other meaningful measure of costs and or revenues. The Chair noted a delegation paper relevant to the issue that was introduced previously by RMI: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP12 *The review and assessment of paragraph 37 of CMM 2009-06*.

Discussion

179. Korea thanked the RMI for the paper, and stated it was quite unexpected to see this kind of proposal submitted on the first day of TCC, as the transhipment IWG work was ongoing and they had been discussing some of the elements to be revised. Korea stated it was not ready to consider this proposal and would need further consultations in Korea and with its industry.

180. Chinese Taipei agreed with the statement by Korea, and stated it lacked time to have internal discussion. They also stated that if the intention was simply to delete the text in CMM 2009-06 it was unclear if the reason indicated in the paper was valid, as banning high seas transhipment for longliners

would not necessarily help combat IUU fishing. They stated that transhipment was a recognized fishing operation in the Commission and also recognized by FAO and by other RFMOs. They stated the reason for the ban was unclear. They also noted that discussions were ongoing regarding minimum monitoring standards, and that their understanding was that high seas transhipment would have 100% observer coverage while port inspection would have 5% or 10% coverage; in addition, very few CCMs nominated their ports as ports for inspection. They closed by stating they did not understand the rationale and therefore could not support the recommendation as indicated in the proposal.

181. China thanked the Marshall Islands for their paper. They recalled the debate at WCPFC21 on this issue and concurred with the interventions made by Korea and Chinese Taipei. They noted that the economic challenges involved were addressed in their AR Pt2.

182. The USA thanked the Marshall Islands for its continued and persistent leadership on this very important issue. The USA indicated it and other members had repeatedly identified high seas transhipment as a primary vector for IUU fishing around the world. The USA stated its interest in further consideration, deliberation, and discussion of this proposal, including at WCPFC22 and beyond then if agreement could not be reached.

183. Japan concurred with Korea, Chinese Taipei, and China and stated that the management of at-sea transhipment, which was largely harmonized across RFMOs, remained highly effective in the context of combating IUU fishing. They noted that management measures concerning transhipment had been introduced by all tuna RFMOS, and that as long as those regulations were properly implemented, the risk of IUU fishing associated with transhipment was negligible. They also noted that the CMM regarding port state measures was still in the process of implementation. Under those circumstances, Japan stated it although it could not support the proposal made by the Marshall Islands, Japan was open to discussing implementation of the CMM. Japan noted that on the previous day, the ROP-IWG touched upon the issue of non-catch transfer, and stated other RFMOs had introduced requirements regarding a supply declaration, but a WCPFC measure on this had not been introduced. Japan suggested that introducing such a CMM could ensure improved management of at-sea transhipment.

184. Australia thanked RMI for the delegation paper on strengthening the regulation of transhipment, noting this was a critical issue. Australia was concerned that transhipment continued to be an activity that undermined the WCPFC measures and was consistently being identified as a high-risk activity. In addition, there continued to be gaps with monitoring, compliance, and reporting of transhipment activities and it was essential that WCPFC strengthen the regulation regarding transhipment to enhance reporting and monitoring. Finally, the intent of CMM 2009-06 was that transhipment on the high seas is only permitted by exemption and should not be considered standard practice. Australia believed that consistent interpretation and application by all members to this was fundamental to strengthen the regulation.

185. RMI stated they had been trying to solve the issue for over 16 years. They referenced WCPFC-TCC20-DP07, stating that it proved the impracticability issue was not complicated, and there was evidence that vessels actually go into port. They referenced the gains from transhipping in zone and in port, the data collection and visibility issues, and the benefits to many coastal states. RMI stated that as members of the Commission, they hold their obligations seriously in managing the fishery. They disagreed with comments made by Chinese Taipei, Japan and Korea that there was no issue.

186. Sharks Pacific thanked RMI for submitting the proposal to ban transhipment. They referenced RMI's comment that this was not a new issue, and stated for the record that when it comes to this issue,

some members had demonstrably and substantially failed to negotiate in good faith toward even a compromise solution, and as such they should not be surprised at this response, as extreme as it may seem, because it was reasonably justified. They aligned with and supported the comments of RMI, Australia, and the USA.

187. TCC21 noted the divergent views expressed on delegation paper WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP12 submitted by the Republic of the Marshall Islands and considered this issue further under Agenda Item 7.5.2.

5.7 Provisional list of obligations for assessment in 2026 CMS covering RY 2025

Paper: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-10

188. The WCPFC Compliance Manager and the Deputy Compliance Manager introduced WCPFC-TCC21-2025-10 *Development of the Provisional List of Obligations for Future CMS assessments and Review of Progress on Addressing Implementation Gaps*. The paper provided information to support the development of a provisional list of obligations to be assessed in the CMS in 2026, reviewed CCM progress in addressing implementation gaps, and highlighted enhanced features in the CMS that further streamline and support CCMs' compliance monitoring and reporting. The paper recommended capping the list of obligations for review at 50 and underscored the need for a process to guide future prioritization and the development of Audit Points.

Discussion

189. Samoa on behalf of FFA members thanked the Secretariat for the paper and supported capping the list of obligations for the 2026 CMS at no more than 50, noting this would help balance the workload for the Secretariat, TCC, and CCMs. A limited list would also ensure focused assessments and allow sufficient time for other priorities in the TCC workplan. FFA members agreed that the obligations to be prioritised should be those that present high compliance risks, taking into account the RBAF previously developed by the Commission. They should also include obligations that align with Commission priorities and were scheduled for review, those with agreed audit points, and any new or amended obligations. They supported the paper's suggested list of obligations, but for the 21 reporting and deadline obligations, recommended considering using the RBAF to determine which of these should be assessed.

190. The EU thanked the Secretariat for the paper and the recommendations, and while generally agreeing with what it outlined under recommendation b (recommend to the Commission that it adopt a list of obligations for review in 2026 that is no more than 50 obligations), they expressed concerns in relation to (i): a proposed subset of 22 of the quantitative limits. The EU stated it was uncomfortable with the proposal that some quantitative limits may be left out of the list, noting that in their view these limits were very important and should be reviewed every year. The EU stated it would like to see the details of which quantitative limits would be left out of the list for 2026 before agreeing. They also noted that while they could agree with the concept that the obligations that have a high risk of non-compliance should be prioritized, there may be obligations where the level of risk of non-compliance is low, but the consequence of non-compliance may be very severe, and stated that those are important to the EU. With that in mind the EU stated it would feel uncomfortable, for example, if in 2026 the Commission did not assess compliance with the catch or effort limits for a given stock.

191. The Compliance Manager noted the EU's position on limits and agreed to their importance in being reviewed. She referenced WCPFC-TCC21-2025-15 *Available data for verifying compliance in the Compliance Monitoring Scheme*, and discussions that would be introduced under Agenda Item 7.3 (Monitoring and verification of Tuna and Billfish CMM quantitative limits). The suggestion of a potential prioritisation was not on the basis of looking to undervalue the importance of reviewing the limits, but recognising that reviews of many of the limits was based on self-reported information. She stated this raised the question about whether continued review through the CMS of self-reported information was something TCC would like to continue to do, or whether to prioritise other obligations where there was reporting that could be useful to examine and had not been reviewed through the CMS since the agreement on audit points. She stated it could be revisited after the CMR review process had taken place.

192. The TCC Chair agreed that the discussion could be resumed following the CMR process and welcomed comments on the use of independent data to verify compliance and, and providing TCC the ability to examine other obligations, while adhering to a reasonable limit of around 50 obligations. Regarding comments made by Samoa, more guidance was likely needed on how to integrate work under the RBAF into how the obligations were prioritised, as there was no process for that at present in the development of the RBAF. The TCC Chair noted a proposed approach for identifying high-risk obligations for the purpose of assigning a compliance status, but stated there was no process for that, noting the differing views on the application of the RBAF. Guidance would be needed on how to integrate the RBAF into this process.

193. The USA welcomed further consideration of this following the discussion of Agenda Item 7.3 as suggested by the Secretariat.

194. The TCC Chair noted the discussion would remain open on the list of obligations, and would be reconsidered after the CMR review, and consideration of issues under Agenda Item 7 related to the use of independent data to verify quantitative limits. The Chair invited comments on the third and fourth recommendations, noting a recommendation from the Secretariat that CMMs with agreed audit points and scheduled for review in the next few years could be considered for inclusion in the list of obligations to provide up-to-date reporting to support the review. The Chair noted there was also a list of obligations and CMMs without audit points in Annex 6.

195. Samoa, on behalf of FFA members, stated that with regard to the development of audit points for those obligations that lack them, the Secretariat could prepare initial drafts using the existing format and template, or alternatively this could be progressed through the CMS IWG, for subsequent consideration by CCMs. They thanked the Secretariat for implementing TCC20's recommendation to provide an analysis of obligations assessed over time, including their compliance ratings, and encouraged exploring ways to further enhance the presentation of this information.

196. The TCC Chair clarified that the Commission no longer has an active CMS IWG. He stated that the TCC Vice-Chair led some work in 2024 on the development of audit points and advised that the TCC Vice Chair would address a process for that later.

197. Canada commented in relation to the Commission tasking to TCC21 to recommend to the Commission changes to the reporting template in Annex 2 of the shark measure, which was to be covered under Agenda Item 7.7. Canada advised that it planned to propose amendments aimed at streamlining shark reporting overall, and as part of this streamlining exercise they had amendments to propose to the

audit points associated with paragraphs 7 through 9 and the reporting template contained in Annex 2 of the measure. Canada welcomed input on how to go about this.

198. The TCC Chair noted another instance where audit points needed to be developed (a delegation paper from New Zealand for the Labor Standards measure), and invited the TCC Vice-Chair to address how audit points were being addressed.

199. The TCC Vice-Chair thanked the Secretariat for preparing the document in relation to the outstanding audit points for the obligations to be assessed in 2026. He stated his understanding that those audit points should be adopted at WCPFC22 and suggested that he prepare draft audit points for those obligations by the end of October to be circulated for review and comments from CCMs by around mid-November, with any final discussions to take place during WCPFC22.

200. TCC21 advised WCPFC22 that most implementation obligations with agreed Audit Points have now been reviewed by TCC, and a mechanism is in place to track progress on CCMs' implementation gaps.

201. TCC21 recommended to WCPFC22 that it adopt a list of obligations for review in 2026 that is no more than fifty (50) obligations and that consists of:

i. The twenty-two (22) Quantitative limit (QL) obligations with agreed Audit Points;

ii. CMM 2014-02 9a **IM** Fishing vessels comply with the Commission standards for WCPFC VMS including being fitted with ALC/MTU that meet Commission requirements;

iii. SciData 01 **RP** Estimates of Annual Catches, SciData 02 **RP** Number of vessels active, SciData 03 **RP** Operational Level Catch and Effort Data and SciData 05 **RP** Size composition data, CMM 2018-06 09 **RP** Submission by Member to ED a list of all vessels on national record in previous year, noting FISHED or DID NOT FISH for each vessel;

iv. One (1) additional Implementation (**IM**) Obligation where TCC is yet to review Implementation using agreed Audit Points: CMM 2009-05 01, 03, 05; *CCMs shall prohibit their fishing vessels from fishing within 1 nautical mile of or interacting with a data buoy in the high seas, and implement requirements in the case of entanglement*;

v. Two (2) Implementation (**IM**) Obligations where TCC identified Audit Point Review (CMM 2023-01 26 and CMM 2023-01 33).

vi. Additional report (RP) and report deadline (DL) obligations that brings the provisional list of obligations for the 2025 reporting year to be no more than fifty, that:

- reflect topics that would be useful for a closer focus by TCC in 2026 as guided by the TCC Work Plan and the Commission; and

- are prioritised according to compliance risk, taking into account the RBAF, obligations for which there are agreed audit points, obligations contained in new CMMs, and the length of time since obligations were previously assessed.

202. TCC21 tasked the TCC Chair and Vice Chair, in consultation with the Commission Chair, to develop a list of obligations for CMR review in 2026 for presentation to WCPFC22.

203. TCC21 agreed to a process for the development of Audit Points for submission to WCPFC22, which would be led by the Vice-Chair. TCC21 requested the Vice Chair to circulate draft Audit Points for the obligations in Annex 6 of TCC21-2025-10 and the two obligations assessed as Audit Point Review in the 2025 dCMR by the end of October, for review and comment by CCMs, with draft Audit Points being finalised at WCPFC22.

204. TCC21 expressed appreciation to New Zealand as Co-Lead for the Crew Labour Standards CMM 2024-04 for developing draft Audit Points for the new CMM (TCC21-2025-DP10), which was in line with the agreed process for proponents to prepare the Audit Point Checklist for proposed CMMs and facilitate the preparation of Audit Points.

205. TCC21 recommended to WCPFC22 that it agree an ongoing process to fill gaps in Audit Points as new CMMs are adopted and revised.

5.8 Future work to enhance the CMS

206. The TCC Chair noted a range of issues under this agenda item and a delegation paper from the USA (WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP02), briefly introduced under Agenda Item 3.

Discussion

207. The EU supported the development of a process that would allow observer participation in all meetings and proceedings of the Commission, stating its understanding that this was related to the review of data that are provided and discussed in different working groups and during TCC. The EU inquired how this could be undertaken in specific terms rather than as an aspirational objective for TCC. The EU stated it would be interested in finding ways to have a more specific approach to this issue.

208. The USA thanked the Chair for helping maintain focus on this important issue in 2026 in the work plan. The USA stated it would be interested in working with other members, perhaps via email, on developing a path forward on a confidential data review process such that it could be applied in the CMR. It stated its intention to provide a potential roadmap for this for consideration in 2026. The USA stated that its delegation paper, WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP02 *Proposed Improvements to the Compliance Case File System*, was extremely technical and detailed, and proposed nine targeted improvements to the CCFS. The USA welcomed input, including through the TCC21 Online Discussion Forum (ODF).

209. The TCC Chair noted potential implications for the Secretariat in terms of work and resources required, and suggested the need for a broad discussion of the proposals from the USA, which could then enable the Secretariat to comment on potential impacts on work and resource requirements.

210. Solomon Islands, on behalf of FFA members, thanked the USA for the paper and provided the following views on the proposed improvements set out in DP02. They stated they did not support the proposed improvement #1 on case notification for re-flagged vessels, stating that the responsibility for investigation rested with the flag State at the time of the alleged infringement. The proposed improvement risked creating an expectation that the new flag State bears responsibility, which would be

unnecessary and inappropriate. On proposed improvement #2 on automated reminders for investigation benchmarks, FFA members stated while they were open to considering automated reminders pending views from the Secretariat on technical feasibility, impact on workplan and budget, FFA members did not support setting investigation benchmarks or targeted completion dates of investigation, noting the differing capacity and resources among CCMs and the risks that such requirements might create, including unrealistic expectations and additional disproportionate burden placed on SIDS with small administrations with limited resources.

211. FSM, on behalf of FFA members, stated that on several proposed improvements (Nos. 3, 4, 5, and 9), the Secretariat should be given time to assess the technical feasibility, impacts, and alignment with its work plan, including budget and resource implications, and report to TCC, at TCC21 if possible, or otherwise to TCC22. This would enable TCC to consider the proposed improvements comprehensively and make informed decisions. On proposed improvements relating to observer-initiated cases (in particular #6 on clarifying pre-CCFS process flow) FFA members supported encouraging the Secretariat and SPC to document and publish these. However, they suggested removing the reference to ROP, as case creation from ROP data was currently undertaken by the Secretariat. On proposed improvements Nos. 7 and 8, they stated that these matters were currently under discussion in the ROP IWG and accordingly, FFA members did not support the recommendations.

212. Japan stated its delegation's general agreement with the concept suggested by the USA, but as mentioned by FSM, Japan wanted to see the budget implications and the feasibility of the suggestions from the Secretariat's perspective. Regarding No. 5 (on initiating CCMs), Japan considered that the definition of the initiating CCMs is a very technical question, which would require careful consideration, and stated they would consult further with the USA.

213. Korea stated its agreement with Japan regarding the need to consider the budgetary implications of these suggestions and looked forward to engaging with the USA and other interested CCMs to further discuss the technicalities of the proposal. Korea also proposed the need to discuss the calculation of minimum monitoring coverage to incorporate EM into the Commission's longline monitoring coverage.

214. RMI, on behalf of the PNA+, thanked the USA for bringing forward the proposal for the discussion on refining the process in the CCFS, stating most of the issues had been taken up in the ROP-IWG priority taskings. In support of FFA's position, as stated by Solomon Islands and FSM, PNA+ addressed proposals on Nos. 6, 7, 8 and 9 on observer-initiated cases. They noted that the USA approach built on the current system, in which the Secretariat generated observer-initiated cases from ROP data queries, in line with WCPFC12 pre-notification process and CMM 2023-04, paras. 10 to 15. RMI understood that proposals Nos. 6–9 aimed to clarify the pre CCFS flows, automate report provision, and revise statuses or case types, which was being taken up in the ROP-IWG discussions. However, this did not require a prior CCM request and assumed the Secretariat-led case creation was valid, emphasizing efficiency. However, the PNA approach directly challenged this, arguing it contradicted Article 25(2) of the Convention, which requires that an investigation starts with CCM request with relevant information, as well as in reference to CMM 2018-05 paragraph 11, requiring the use of ROP data for Article 25 investigations, through the cooperation and exchange of such information. PNA+ proposed that cases enter into the CCFS only after a formal CCM request from the observer provider CCM, cutting out the Secretariat-initiated case generation, and stated that the Secretariat's role should be limited to tracking record keeping, not case creation without a request. RMI noted this position was taken up in the ROP-IWG session prior to TCC21, and for these reasons and as well for proposal No. 9, PNA+ agreed with the USA regarding removing the pre-notification

of alleged incident ("PAI") cases in the CCFS, which do not relate to any binding CMM obligations, and are not worth considering in the CMR process.

215. Chinese Taipei stated that similar to Korea and Japan, they were interested in engaging with the USA on this proposal and generally supported the elements in it, stating they provided some technical queries and concerns to the USA in the margins of the meeting. They raised a question regarding RMI's statement with regards to initiation of Article 25 cases by observer provider CCMs, noting that in their understanding not all the observer providers are national observer programs, and sought clarification whether the proposal was only for national observer programs, or all observer programs.

216. In response RMI noted the language in CMM 2018-05, para. 11, which states: *CCMs shall take advantage of the information collected by observers for the purpose of investigations under Convention Articles 23 and 25, and shall cooperate in the exchange of such information, including by proactively requesting, responding to, and facilitating the fulfilment of requests for, copies of observer reports in accordance with standards adopted by the Commission, as applicable.*

217. The EU commented that CCFS is a key element of the WCPFC CMS, and was unique compared to other RFMOs. It allowed CCMs to track progress of any investigation or respond to alleged infringements. With that in mind, the EU stated it very much appreciated the paper submitted by the USA on this topic, noting many of the suggested amendments would further streamline the process and assist the Secretariat and CCMs in making better use of the CCFS. They also took note of the legitimate request from CCMs to evaluate the resources required for these kinds of improvements and amendments. The EU stated it would like to ensure this was considered in the context of other related work for the CMS, noting the resources required for other work, such as subsampling, and suggested the need to assess each task and its merits before making any determination. The EU requested broader information on the resources required at the Secretariat level for undertaking the various rounds of work related to the improvements of the CMS.

218. The TCC Chair referenced the discussion in the ROP-IWG and stated that if significant changes were made in the approach this would impact the role of the Secretariat and required resources, both in the short and long-term.

219. The USA welcomed the robust and fruitful feedback on their proposal and encouraged CCMs to continue to engage. Regarding proposal No. 1, the USA stated it agreed with FFA members, as stated by Solomon Islands, that the original flag CCM was responsible for infringements that occur when the vessel is flagged to them. The proposal sought to allow the original CCM to notify the new flag CCM of the existence of an ongoing investigation. The USA considered this as a starting point for addressing the larger challenges of reflagging while investigations are pending without affecting the flag State responsibility. The USA suggested a meeting with the ROP-IWG along with other members to address specific elements of their proposal. Regarding resourcing, they noted this was an essential part of the discussion, as noted by the Chair, and once CCMs had identified priorities among the streamlining options, the ultimate goal was to reduce the burden and increase efficiency.

220. The TCC Chair reminded CCMs that the CMS CMM will expire at the end of 2026, noting it would be helpful for TCC to provide guidance or advice to WCPFC22 on how to handle that renewal process. The Chair noted the subsampling work discussed at TCC21, ongoing work to update the RBAF, a review of non-public domain data, and the question whether there was a need to develop some SSPs to govern the CCFS and how that process would be undertaken, all of which were relevant to the CMS future work. The Chair

also noted DP02 related to efficiency in the CCFS, which touched on some issues being addressed through the ROP IWG but also relevant to the discussions under Agenda Item 5.8.

221. The USA noted the preparation of WCPFC-TCC-21-2025-DP02_supp with draft revised recommendations for improvements to the CCFS.

222. The EU, Japan, Canada, and Sharks Pacific expressed support for the revised recommendations proposed by the USA.

223. FFA members expressed concerns relating to case notification for re-flagged vessels, as proposed by the USA, and noted the need, through appropriate language in the recommendations, to ensure the proposed CCFS changes were technically feasible, have a minimum impact on the Secretariat's work plan, and did not require additional significant resources.

224. Canada commented on the proposal by the USA (DP02_supp, para. 5) to create a CCFS function allowing identification of and case access for multiple initiating CCMs, stating it would provide formal access to the CCFS for multiple participating inspecting members when contributing evidence in support of investigations, which provided a mechanism to open and manage joint cases more accurately, reflect the collaborative nature of HSBI aerial and port state compliance activities, and reduce duplication and improve transparency among inspecting CCMs. Canada considered that the recommendation would foster strengthened collaboration and multinational inspection campaigns, which the HSBI CMM formally encourages in para. 16, and had been exemplified during many of the HSBI operations, including MCS Operations Nasse and North Pacific Guard each year. Canada expressed a preference to create a lead role in the CCFS for multiple parties in order to remove ambiguity between inspecting members for the purpose of ensuring investigative accountability with the flag state and communication.

225. FFA members noted that work was ongoing by the ROP-IWG in relation to observer report and case package proposals made by the USA (in DP02_supp, paras. 6–8), and suggested those should be referred to the ROP-IWG.

226. The USA noted there was broad (and possibly unanimous) support within the ROP-IWG for adding provision of reports to the process flow, but no specific recommendations addressing the substance of the issues emerged from the ROP-IWG in time to be considered at TCC21. The USA suggested adopting language to support further consideration of the issues by WCPFC22.

227. RMI, on behalf of PNA+, suggested additional consultations be held with the USA, and taking into account the outcomes of additional discussions to be held in the ROP-IWG, with the aim of reaching agreement on the proposed recommendations in paras 6–8.

228. Following further discussions, the TCC Chair noted that TCC21 had approved recommendations 1–5, with amendments as recorded by the Secretariat during the discussions, with further consultations to take place regarding recommendations 6–8 prior to WCPFC22.

229. Additional discussions were held in the course of final clearance of the recommendations, and the following comments were made:

- Relating broadly to the proposed recommendations in DP02_supp, RMI reiterated that all submissions for proposals must be accompanied by a CMM 2013-06 assessment, and suggested this be captured in the recommendation text. The TCC Chair noted the need to distinguish

between proposed CMMs that placed new obligations on CCMs, and proposals related to business practices, and the resulting differing approach and requirements, but observed that was an issue TCC and the Commission would need to continue to address.

- Regarding proposed automated investigation timelines, FFA members stated that SIDS wished to avoid specific timelines because these could disadvantage SIDS with limited resources. In response the USA stated it also failed to meet timelines and saw value in at least being self-aware of those timelines and noted that reminders would be strictly for self-awareness. The EU noted that the proposed reminders establish no legal obligations and could be acted upon or not as desired. The EU also commented that the recommendation in question was previously cleared by TCC21 and questioned the need to return to it. The USA stated their view that there were no additional timelines or benchmarks beyond the 60-day benchmark in Article 25(2) that might be applied in this case, and if there were concerns with those benchmarks, that could warrant significantly larger discussion.

- Regarding CMM-2013-06 assessment for proposals in DP02, the EU recalled prior discussions about whether consideration of CMM 2013-06 would be needed for technical matters that do not constitute new proposals and inquired if this was properly reflected in the proposals as they were being considered. In response, the TCC Chair stated that CMM 2013-06 was a process through which the Commission and its CCMs can consider impacts on SIDS and territories and was broadly applicable. RMI reiterated that proposals must be submitted in conjunction with a 2013-06 assessment. The EU stated TCC was a technical committee, and in discussing an issue such as SOPs, was discussing technical matters and improvement of processes; the EU further characterised the discussions at TCC as a consultation process. The EU inquired whether amending the SOPs or the minimum observer standards required a checklist under CMM 2013-06 and suggested the need for TCC to focus on technical aspects and provide technical advice to the Commission, and have the Commission address the political dimensions. RMI reiterated the need for consultations.

230. TCC21 noted the expiry of CMM 2023-04 on the Compliance Monitoring Scheme at the end of 2026 and the need to extend and revise the measure as necessary.

231. TCC21 recommended to WCPFC22 that the TCC Work Plan be updated to take into account work to be undertaken in 2026 in preparation for the review of CMM 2023-04.

232. TCC21 recommended that WCPFC22 endorse the development of a working paper for TCC22 that will evaluate Commission data rules and procedures used in the CMR to inform the development of guidelines for the participation of observers in the CMS, to be led by the United States in consultation with the Secretariat and other CCMs.

233. TCC21 recommended that WCPFC22 give consideration to:

- The approach to be taken towards the sub-sampling of data for use in the Aggregate Tables;
- The development of a process for updating the RBAF to complete risk assessments for all CMMs, and to provide for ongoing RBAF for new CMMs;
- A review of non-public domain data for inclusion in the TCC Work Plan; and
- Whether there was a need to develop SSPs which govern the CCFS and if so, the process to develop and disseminate the SSPs.

234. TCC21 thanked the United States for its delegation paper (TCC21-2025-DP02) which was designed to improve efficiency in the CCFS, in which resulted in a revised document TCC21-2025-DP02_Supp.

235. TCC21 recommended that WCPFC22 adopt the following:

1. Case Notification for Re-flagged Vessels: WCPFC22 endorse the development of a CCFS re-flagging notification function that enables the "original" flag CCM to notify and provide case access to the "new" flag CCM; the "original" flag CCM shall retain responsibility to investigate and prosecute infringements conducted within its jurisdiction, provided it is technically feasible and has minimal impact on the Secretariat's work plan and does not require significant additional Secretariat resources.
2. Automated Investigation Timelines: WCPFC22 endorse implementation of automated CCFS prompts and reminders to support CCMs in tracking investigations, provided it is technically feasible and has minimal impact on the Secretariat's work plan and does not require significant additional Secretariat resources.
3. Improved Messaging Tool Identifiers: WCPFC22 agree that each narrative CCFS "Response" entry be appended with a secure and short identifier code linked to the contributing CCM user, with codes managed by the Secretariat and known only to the Secretariat and the contributing CCM's flag, to balance transparency and privacy, provided it is technically feasible and has minimal impact on the Secretariat's work plan and does not require significant additional Secretariat resources.
4. Identify Multiple Initiating CCMs: WCPFC22 endorse creation of a CCFS function allowing identification of and case access for [up to two] [multiple] Initiating CCMs, in accordance with CMM 2006-08 if applicable, who have collected direct evidence of the alleged infringement(s), based on a joint, written confirmation to the Secretariat by each proposed Initiating CCM, including the identification of a lead initiating CCM. TCC21 requested the Secretariat to provide information on the technical feasibility, and the impact on the work plan and Secretariat resources in implementing the recommendation 1-4.

236. TCC21 agreed to refer recommendations 6, 7 and 8 from the United States Delegation paper TCC21-2025-DP02_suppl to the ROP-IWG and encouraged CCMs to continue to work with the United States to progress this work intersessionally.

6 — SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS OF DEVELOPING STATES

Papers: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-11, WCPFC-TCC21-2025-12_rev1

6.1 Capacity Assistance Needs

237. The WCPFC Compliance Manager introduced WCPFC-TCC21-2025-11 *List of Capacity Assistance Requests and Capacity Development Plans*, which contained information from the 2024 CMR, and recorded the list of capacity assistance needs that the Commission formally recognised as part of the CMS. It also provided an update on Annual Report Part 2 reporting under CMM 2013-07; the CCM reports on implementation of CMM 2013-07, as submitted through the 2025 Annual Report Part 2 (covering RY2024) are included in WCPFC-TCC21-2025-12_rev1 *Responses in 2025 Annual Report Part 2 on CMM 2013-07* -

revision 1. The Compliance Manager noted that there would be some updates forthcoming as a result of the outcomes of the CMR process.

Discussion

238. The EU reflected on comments they had made during the CMR process, noting that in reviewing the capacity assistance plans that had been submitted, it was clear that in some cases those plans had been an effective tool and a means for assisting some CCMs in meeting key obligations. The EU stated it also realized that there were instances where such plans had been in place for many years — related to key obligations such as provision of scientific data, for example, or observer coverage for purse seine — where it was unclear whether the plan had any positive impact in assisting the CCMs to improve capacity to meet these requirements. The EU suggested trying to improve the process to capture whether progress was being made through these plans and to identify whether other elements needed to be considered in the process.

239. Palau, on behalf of FFA members, stated that CMM 2013-07 was adopted by the Commission in recognition of the special requirements under Article 30 on SIDS (including territories), and the measure outlined several priority areas for CCMs to cooperate directly or through the Commission to provide support and assistance to SIDS. FFA members acknowledged CCMs for their funding assistance provided through the Commission, noting this was an important agenda item for FFA members. However, they stated their concern with the inconsistencies in the detail of CCMs' reports. Incorporating a standardized reporting template into the Annual Report Part 2 would ensure consistency, transparency, and comparability, which was essential for tracking cumulative support, identifying gaps, prioritizing needs, and strengthening the ability of TCC and the Commission to assess compliance and make evidence-based decisions. As such, FFA members proposed that TCC21 task the Secretariat to develop a structured reporting template, integrated into the AR Pt2, which at a minimum, would align directly with each obligation under CMM 2013-07.

240. Indonesia stated it had not provided written responses regarding capacity assistance but wished to share their views and experience regarding capacity assistance needs, including in the CMR process. Indonesia considered this was a good way to assist developing states to meet the requirement of the CMM. Indonesia thanked New Zealand for continuing support under the WPEA project, including for technical support and expertise. They acknowledged ongoing support from SPC but stated that in some cases they lacked understanding regarding CMMs and received support directly from the Secretariat, including to develop regulations in Indonesia. Indonesia stated they would like to plan for the Secretariat to come to Indonesia to work together on regulations that could help align with WCPFC CMMs, which had been an issue for a number of years. Indonesia also noted the need to provide missing catch and effort data by December 2025, which was very challenging given the complexities of Indonesia's fisheries, noting they had discussed with SPC, the possibility of focussing on industrial or large vessels. Indonesia stated their fisheries were complex and that it was challenging to provide such data given expanding data requirements associated with WCPFC CMMs. Indonesia indicated it would seek further assistance from SPC. They also noted the harvest strategies under development for their archipelagic waters and stated that was an area where capacity assistance would be welcomed. Indonesia advised that it would seek to provide additional written information.

241. The TCC Chair thanked Indonesia for providing an overview of some very significant challenges that have been discussed by TCC and the Commission for a number of years, and welcomed Indonesia's ongoing work to address these. The TCC Chair also joined Indonesia in recognizing the significant multi-

year work and investment through the WPEA project; the efforts of Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and SPC to implement the project; and the resulting significant improvements in both fisheries management and data availability. While noting that progress, the TCC Chair acknowledged, as outlined by Indonesia, that there were significant ongoing challenges, and stated that the Secretariat had taken note of the request by Indonesia for targeted work from the Secretariat.

242. Pew stated it had developed a Compliance Self-Assessment Tool (CSAT) that it hoped would be of use to CCMs. It was designed to help countries pinpoint areas where they might need more capacity to effectively engage in the RFMO compliance process, and could be used by all RFMO members, from those with a team of one or two people and others with multiple agencies. Pew explained that the CSAT included multiple sections (on data collection, analysis, submission, and participation in the RFMO compliance meetings), each of which included multiple choice questions that were used to develop section-specific and overall capacity scores. All the answers and results would stay internal to the users, with no information sent to Pew or to anyone else. Pew stated that if any members were interested in using the CSAT tool, Pew had funds available to help with that. Pew noted that the CSAT tool was beta tested by four countries around the world and acknowledged Australia as one of the beta testing countries. Pew noted that the tool was available on its website.

243. The TCC Chair thanked Pew for its efforts, and noting he'd had some small involvement with this in his national capacity, encouraged CCMs to have a look at the information Pew made available. He noted with appreciation the effort from the Commission's civil society partners to increase capacity.

244. TCC21 referred CCMs to the capacity assistance needs and Capacity Development Plans listed in (TCC21-2025-11) and the Summary from 2025 Annual Report Part 2 CMM 2013-07 annual reports covering RY2024 (TCC21-2025-12_rev1).

245. TCC21 noted that in some cases Capacity Development Plans had been in place for some years, including on key provisions such as SciData and purse seine observer coverage, and it was not clear that the Plans have had a positive effect in improving the capacity to meet CMM requirements. TCC21 noted that at a minimum, a clear end date by which it is expected that the CAN will be met should be included in the CDP report and it should include an update on progress made towards meeting the requirements of the obligation. TCC21 recognised that some developing CCMs had highlighted their challenges in accessing targeted assistance to improve their capacity to fill the gaps in the implementation of their obligations and encouraged such CCMs to seek assistance, including from the Secretariat and the SSP (SPC-OFP) to continue to progress implementation challenges.

246. TCC21 acknowledged the importance that WCPFC attaches to CMM 2013-07 and the special requirements of small island developing States and Territories. TCC21 noted the inconsistency in reporting under CMM 2013-07 and tasked the Secretariat with developing a structured reporting template for *Annual Report Part 2* to align assistance with CMM 2013-07. This would assist in identifying gaps and prioritising the needs of SIDS.

7 — INFORMATION, TECHNICAL ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF, AND COMPLIANCE WITH CMMs

247. Dr Tiffany Vidal (SSP Scientific Data Manager -SPC) presented a report on the status of fish stocks in the WCPO, with reference to SC21-GN-WP-01 *Overview of tuna fisheries in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, including economic conditions – 2024 and* SC21-SA-WP-03 *A compendium of fisheries indicators for target tuna stocks in the WCPFC Convention Area (Rev.01).*

Discussion

248. The EU noted and supported the work by SPC, including the work to track the effects of climate change on WCPFC fisheries. The EU observed that there was an increasing disconnect between trends in catch and effort in the purse seine fishery, and inquired as to the reasons for this. The EU noted that TCC monitored compliance with effort limits to ensure the fishery was within the agreed target reference points (TRPs), and inquired regarding the use of effort (rather than catch) limits.

249. The SSP acknowledged that this was an ongoing question, one that had been discussed for many years, and noted that SPC and others have prepared papers on effort creep, including an initial paper looking at how the reporting scheme may be affecting perception of effort (SC19-MI-IP-07 *Examining Indicators of Effort Creep in the WCPO Purse Seine Fishery*). The SSP confirmed that they would seek to prepare an update in 2026, and noted that 2024 was unusual with catch and effort focussed in a relatively small area, but that there was an important broader question about whether the right information was being collected to properly assess real changes in effort and CPUE over time.

250. Niue acknowledged the work of SPC and noted the present healthy stock status and ongoing work regarding climate change and the SEAPODYM model. Niue stated that some CCMs were experiencing very low catches within their EEZs, and inquired if the extraction rate within the tropical region may be affecting local catch rates (within some EEZs), noting local-level impacts can affect food security.

251. The SSP acknowledged that local food security was a concern for members and suggested indicators other than stock assessments may be important in evaluating local stocks. They noted there was a noticeable contraction of stocks, which could be a potential indicator of some instability, and stated more consideration should possibly be given to monitoring this. Dr. Vidal also referenced the significant Green Climate Fund grant FP259, much of which will be focused on coastal FAD work, with a focus on livelihoods and sustainability for coastal communities.

252. New Zealand referenced the Kobe plot for key tuna species, and the uncertainty in those stock assessments, particularly with respect to albacore, noting it seemed as though the uncertainty was very large, and inquired whether this was driven by data gaps or lack of trust in the data, noting TCC's role in ensuring data was collected accurately.

253. The SSP stated that potential sources of uncertainty included tagging data, uncertainties around movement, potentially ontogenetic shifts and distribution associated with albacore, and the stock recruitment relationship. Key inputs to the stock assessments included CPUE and potential effort creep, and SPC often lacked informative variables to properly standardize CPUE. Enhanced data collection could collect more potentially informative data around changes in catchability. Dr. Graham Pilling (SPC) noted a key uncertainty with albacore was a lack of tagging data, as albacore did not survive the tagging process, meaning information from tags was absent. That fed into both SPC's understanding of movement and the

mortality of the stock, including natural mortality. The stock recruitment relationship steepness value, which was an issue common across all tuna stocks, had an impact on outcomes for albacore as well. He stated that developing a better understanding of the biology of albacore was important, and the ongoing close kin mark recapture (CKMR) work for the stock would hopefully improve understanding of stock status and narrow the uncertainty.

254. The TCC Chair referenced the comment by New Zealand, noting issues such as uncertainty and assessments were discussed extensively at SC but that it was important to identify issues that benefit from consideration at TCC, such as gaps in monitoring programs, and the need for an ongoing process to review monitoring strategies for management procedures (MPs) as the Commission implements harvest strategies. The TCC Chair stated it was essential for TCC to be able to review the technical nature of how the Commission conducts it monitoring, stating the need to improve how SC and TCC work together to bring information to the Commission.

255. Indonesia noted the presentation of aggregate yellowfin distribution and longline effort, and inquired if distribution used aggregate CPUE from annual catches or from other operational data. They also highlighted the SPC's Climate Dashboard (Data exploration for climate impacts on tuna) and Tuna Fisheries Assessment Report. Indonesia inquired if data from its region was captured, noting the tools helped address climate variability and climate change, and thanked the SSP for its effort.

256. The SSP stated that SPC-OFPs fisheries ecosystems monitoring and analysis (FEMA) team was working to develop more meaningful and interpretable climate change indicators, and that longline distribution of yellowfin was based on aggregate data. Dr. Vidal also noted a dramatic decline in longline fishing in Indonesia, Philippines, and Vietnam, observing that for most countries, longline fishing appeared to be increasingly replaced by the handline fishery, which was apparently more cost-effective but still quite efficient at catching larger fish.

257. The EU suggested that for future presentations, perhaps SPC could highlight some of the key gaps in data collection or other relevant scientific monitoring tools that hampered the SSP's capacity to undertake its work. They noted that a paper from SC was submitted to TCC each year, but did not always get the attention it deserved, so it could be useful to highlight the gaps in the presentation.

258. The SSP welcomed the suggestion to address data that were not being collected and that created gaps or uncertainties in stock assessments.

7.1 Consider available data and information related to potential effects of climate change on stocks and ecosystems in the WCPO

Paper: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-13

259. Kerrie Robertson (Adira Consulting) presented WCPFC-TCC21-2025-13 *WCPFC Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (CCVA) Framework: Technical and Compliance Considerations*, which addressed the CCVA in terms of technical implementation and compliance monitoring. The framework had been developed to systematically evaluate climate change risks to CMMs through assessment of hazard, exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity. From a TCC perspective, the framework provided crucial insights into:

- Operational feasibility of implementing climate-informed measures under changing conditions;
- MCS data gaps and requirements for effective climate adaptation;

- Fleet operational challenges under increasing extreme weather conditions;
- Compliance implications when environmental conditions affect implementation capacity; and
- Technical infrastructure vulnerabilities to climate-related hazards.

In particular, the pilot assessment of CMM 2017-04 (Marine Pollution) demonstrated the framework's particular relevance to operational measures, revealing how climate change acted as a risk multiplier for vessel operations and waste management compliance during extreme weather events.

260. The TCC Chair noted the enormous work that was behind the CCVA and encouraged TCC feedback on specific questions on the guidance document framework and the pilot assessments.

Discussion

261. Vanuatu, on behalf of PNA+, thanked the consultants for their work in developing the CCVA framework, particularly for trying to focus the discussion on the potential role of TCC in the framework. They supported WCPFC's work in mainstreaming climate change into the work of the subsidiary bodies and stated that for TCC it would be useful to get a sense of the timing of CMM assessments. They stated that in their view, the CCVA framework was very well structured for a high-level assessment tool, which limited its utility to periodic use cases of 5–10 years, to spot check how the implementation of CMMs was working in relation to the evolving impacts of climate change. In terms of the indicators related to extreme weather events, such as port infrastructure, they stated the data were unlikely to be readily available and would require significant investment at the WCPFC level if not self-reported by CCMs. Operational-level indicators such as observer coverage levels, search and rescue procedures, and satellite monitoring system integrity during extreme weather events were certainly core business from an MCS perspective, but would be related to specific provisions of CMMs that contained such measures. They inquired whether the CCVA would be better targeted at the operational MCS CMMs for the purpose of TCC to future proof systems in the face of climate change.

262. PNG, on behalf of FFA members, commended the consultants for the comprehensive framework, but noted significant data gaps, particularly on impacts to MCS systems, port infrastructure, and observer coverage, and the heavy reliance on literature reviews and manual scoring, which introduced subjectivity. They stated that these limitations hindered its practical use by CCMs. They stated that an important discussion to have was on the feasibility of collecting this data, the mechanism for doing so, and whether this was a path that was worthwhile to pursue. PNG welcomed other CCMs' views.

263. New Caledonia recognized that this represented one of the first global attempts to conduct climate change vulnerability assessments of a multi-jurisdictional fisheries management framework. While acknowledging the attempt to develop a framework that allowed for resource efficient and iterative updates, they joined the preceding speakers in expressing concerns regarding the data gaps identified, the availability of some of the data, and the workload that would be associated with addressing these gaps. They inquired how long it took to carry out the assessment of the CMM on marine pollution.

264. The consultant responded that it took 12 to 15 hours to complete every pilot assessment, most of which was spent doing external research on the hazards and exposure component, because the relationship between WCPFC CMMs and what they were exposed to externally was hard to find. She noted that efficiencies may arise if it was integrated into, for example, existing outputs from the SSP. She expressed sympathy for the comments regarding data gaps, noting that the exercise was intended in part to establish what the data gaps were likely to be, and the extent to which those were the correct questions to ask, noting that decisions must be made regarding the investment needed to resolve the data gaps,

and how useful the answer will be. She stated that if an expert was involved, they would find the information more rapidly, and if integrated into existing Commission outputs, the information would be developed more quickly, and the effort would not have to be repeated. However, for TCC the work would be far more extensive, possibly requiring expensive reviews into port capacity, for example, or perhaps answerable only qualitatively, through surveys or questionnaires on the lived experience of crew. She noted that if mainstreaming considerations of climate risk, it might be simpler initially to begin with biological risks and then to consider whether to expand that assessment, with the potential that there were less intense and costly but more qualitative ways of developing an answer. She stated that as was noted, the latter would introduce other issues, such as biases or overgeneralization.

265. The TCC Chair noted the question raised by Vanuatu on behalf of PNA+ on whether the CCVA would be better targeted at the operational MCS CMMs for the purpose of TCC to future proof systems in the face of climate change. He noted that was an open question for TCC to address.

266. The EU appreciated the challenge in dealing with this approach, which was quite innovative, and noted the limitations. The EU stated that ensuring the ability to capture effects of climate change across different areas of the Commission's work remained a high priority and noted the need to test available approaches. The EU stated that the initial results as presented were interesting, but in their view, of an academic nature, and stated they were unsure that the approach could bring real added value to the work of the Commission in the short term. They also observed that significant resources that would be required to pursue the work when there were already important gaps that also required mobilizing significant resources to improve the work of TCC.

267. Canada noted the presentation and the use of marine pollution as a test case, stating that this was timely as the review process of the CMM is ongoing and data gaps were to be expected, particularly when breaking new ground. Canada looked forward to using the tool to support consideration of key issues of the Commission in a more structured way, noting that as Canada had been tasked with leading the review of the marine pollution CMM, the CCVA would be a useful tool to support CCMs in thinking about the various considerations.

268. Australia supported the work of the consultants and could see its benefits, noting that given the area of compliance and data management programs covered by the framework, it was important that there be clarity about how the impacts of climate change were addressed, while not compromising the integrity of those programs. They noted that the recommendations detailed in the work were often resource intensive and there was a need to consider how these would be resourced by all parties.

269. The TCC Chair thanked CCMs for their comments and welcomed additional feedback in the lead-up to WCPFC22, and encouraged participants to spend time with the pilot assessments in the draft framework and provide comments following TCC.

270. TCC21 welcomed the presentation by the Scientific Services Provider (SSP) on the status of fisheries and recommended that in future the SSP provide information on key gaps in data collection.

271. TCC21 noted the *Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (CCVA) Framework* (TCC21-2025-13) and invited CCMs that wished to do so, to provide feedback to the consultants on the CCVA.

7.2 Review and provide input into Harvest Strategy development

Paper: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-14, WCPFC-TCC21-2025-IP04_rev1

272. The WCPFC Fisheries Management and Compliance Adviser introduced WCPFC-TCC21-2025-14 *Paper on harvest strategy development for TCC21*, noting the paper was intended to inform TCC's consideration of harvest strategy development, bringing together the most recent advice from SC and the first South Pacific Albacore Management Workshop. The paper noted progress on harvest strategy elements for skipjack, South Pacific albacore, bigeye tuna, and mixed fisheries, and the Commission's harvest strategy workplan. In line with the TCC Workplan, TCC21 was invited to review and provide input into the skipjack monitoring strategy, with a template provided for that purpose. As outlined in the TCC Workplan, there was an invitation to provide technical and compliance-related advice to support the development of harvest strategies, including harvest control rules.

273. Dr. Rob Scott (SPC-OFP) provided an update on work feeding into the skipjack monitoring strategy, noting it was considered by TCC20, presented to SC21, and could be updated by TCC21 before being submitted to WCPFC22. He noted that for each section (in Annex 2 of the WCPFC-TCC21-2025-14), there were comments made by TCC20 and a TCC21 placeholder for any comments or entries to be made this year. In some cases, information was anticipated from TCC. A primary change related to the provision of data that allowed TCC to assess the implementation of the MP; there were also updates or additions to WCPFC-TCC21-2025-IP04_rev1 *Catch and Effort Data Summaries to support discussions on the Tropical Tuna CMMs*. He noted that in IP04, effort in the pole and line fishery was now managed through the MP on effort rather than through catch, with a breakdown of catch by species, or specifically skipjack catch in some archipelagic waters. Table 16 was intended to provide information on how the MP was being implemented and whether the measures were in line with the outputs of the management procedure.

Management Procedures and Fishery Monitoring

Table 16: CMM 2022-01 monitoring – fishery performance versus management procedure (MP) baselines. Archipelagic catches are for skipjack only, from all gear types.

	Baseline		Actual levels				
Fishery component	Year(s)	MP output	2024	2025	2026	Avg 2024-2026	Notes
Purse seine (incl AW) effort	2012	53,185	47,177.0				1
Pole and line effort	2001-2004	9,988	1,242.0				2
Domestic AW catch	2016-2018	384,897	354,436.9				3

Notes

1. Effort reported as fishing days; excludes domestic Philippine and Indonesia purse seine effort
2. Effort is represented as fishing days
3. Archipelagic skipjack catches (mt) including all gear types

Source: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-IP04_rev1

274. Dr. Graham Pilling (SPC) noted that Table 16 indicated that fisheries were within the limits set by the output of the MP. He stated that it was a work in progress, and that more detail could be provided for some fisheries because some elements were controlled under the MP while other elements, such as archipelagic waters, were outside the MP. SPC made assumptions about the level of fishing occurring in those waters. He stated that it was useful to split those out so one can judge whether levels were as

expected. Table 16 included baseline years and management output, which was the level of effort based on the information SPC had that fell under each of those lines. Baseline pole and line effort (presented in fishing days in the table), was the average level of days fished in 2001–2004. At present, the MP had an output level or multiplier of 1.0; thus the 2001–2004 level was the MP output. If the MP multiplier value was 1.1, the MP output value would change accordingly. This was used to judge the subsequent years of effort. In the three columns under Actual Levels, one showed values for 2024 based on existing data; 2025 and 2026 were blank and would be completed in subsequent years. A further column would provide a 3-year average. The SSP noted that this had not been discussed by the Commission, but there was a potential for the Commission to decide that although one year was above the baseline, the next year might be below, and on average over that 3-year period — which was the management period set under this MP — the output level matched the MP target. The SSP noted that this would need to be discussed, and the column in the table would be completed in subsequent years when data are available.

Discussion

275. Australia, on behalf of FFA members, stated the Skipjack Monitoring Strategy was not a TCC priority in 2025, and noted the absence of new information in the TCC review column in Annex 2 of working paper 14, confirming their understanding that there was nothing new to assess as the MP was not run this year. Therefore, FFA members endorsed the update provided by SC21. They acknowledged the SSP's analysis, which addressed the TCC's previous queries on how the impacts of FAD closure changes under CMM 2023-01 might affect the interim MP's performance and investigating the representativeness and appropriateness of candidate CPUEs used within the MP. These analyses provided valuable clarity on the MP's robustness and the challenges that must be proactively addressed in this fishery.

276. The EU noted the prior discussion on the increasing disconnect between trends in effort and catch and asked whether this discrepancy, especially between the situation in 2012 and 2024, would be likely to trigger exceptional circumstances and how this would affect the overall performance of the MP.

277. The SSP stated that the MP was tested against factors such as effort creep, or the increased catch that might occur per fishing day within the system. The MP proved to be robust to that pattern. Part of the role of the monitoring strategy was to ensure that the stock status, for example, remained within the levels predicted to occur under MP testing, which included effort creep. The outcome from SC showed that to be the case. The SSP noted this was an area that needed to be monitored into the future to ensure significant effort creep would be detected in advance of it causing a problem for the stock. In response to a further query from the EU regarding how best to ensure that this was monitored every year, the SSP stated it produced an information paper for SC each year that looked at the patterns in the purse seine fishery in terms of whether it assessed there was effort creep occurring, and suggested it might be useful to provide that to TCC in the future to support the discussions.

278. Fiji, as co-Chair of the South Pacific Albacore Management Workshop (SPA Management Workshop), held virtually on 11 and 12 September, provided an update on the outcomes. They noted that the WCPFC22-2025-SPAMWS01 *SPAMWA01 Chairs' Summary Report* was available online for TCC's information. The workshop focused on three main areas: candidate MPs, implementing arrangements, and mixed fishery considerations. Participants reviewed the latest analysis from the SSP on candidate South Pacific albacore MPs. There were differing views on the geographic scope and the number of HCRs, but broad agreement on the adoption of a 3-year management cycle. Through a prioritization exercise, six priority analyses were tasked to the SSP ahead of WCPFC22. CCMs emphasized the importance of zone-based management and proportional allocations between the EEZ and high seas, with recognition of

coastal States rights and SIDS' special requirements. There were views shared on allocations for South Pacific albacore and the FFA membership suggested a two-step approach to allocation to agree on a proportional overall split between EEZ and the high seas areas, and the proportional allocation of the high seas component. This was another important area for management under South Pacific albacore fisheries. The FFA membership would be providing proposals on implementing arrangements ahead of WCPFC22 on mixed fishery considerations. The SSP stated that South Pacific albacore and bigeye objectives could be largely managed separately given the spatial separation of the fisheries. Some CCMs supported this approach, while others raised concerns that the mixed fisheries framework was a new concept and the Commission had not taken a decision on it. The SSP will deliver the agreed analyses before WCPFC22. A second virtual workshop on South Pacific Albacore Management was scheduled for 5 November 2025 to focus on candidate MPs and the draft CMMs. In closing, Fiji thanked CCMs for their constructive engagement and reaffirmed their shared goal of adopting the MP and its implementing measure at WCPFC22.

279. Japan referenced the presentation on the SPA Management Workshop and stated their understanding that the mixed fisheries approach had not yet been formally agreed upon by the Commission. Japan recognized some CCMs raised concerns about the geographic overlap of multiple MPs, but stated it was common for multiple MPs to be applied within a single area. Japan noted that in the North Pacific, MPs for both North Pacific albacore and Pacific Bluefin tuna were expected to be in place and applied to the same region and the same fisheries. Japan believed that further discussion was needed on whether the boundary at 10°S between the albacore MP and the bigeye MP was appropriate, and stated that from the perspective of TCC, Japan anticipated if a fishing vessel operated across this boundary, it may be difficult for CCMs to effectively enforce and/or manage the albacore catch. Japan stated it would have a constructive discussion through bilateral consultations with CCMs and would constructively engage in the discussion in the next SPA Management Workshop in November.

280. Niue thanked the co-chairs of the SPA Management Workshop and other CCMs who supported it and the ongoing MP work.

281. The USA thanked Fiji for continued leadership on developing MPs and leading the work of the Commission on South Pacific albacore. The USA inquired regarding updates on the taskings from the workshop, and what might (or might not) be achievable for either the forthcoming workshop or WCPFC22.

282. The SSP stated it aimed to finish the work for the SPA Management Workshop on 5 November.

283. New Caledonia stated it was not comfortable with suggestions and requests that implied a reduction of the implementation scope of the South Pacific albacore MP, stating its concern that this would undermine the MP's ability to effectively guarantee the sustainable management of South Pacific albacore, on which New Caledonia relies economically and for food security.

284. Australia acknowledged the work done by the SSP, particularly on tight deadlines, regarding South Pacific albacore, and highlighted upcoming deadlines for the workshop and WCPFC22, and urged CCMs to give consideration to those deadlines in putting forward options for consideration.

285. TCC21 welcomed the presentation on Harvest Strategy development and requested the SSP to continue monitoring the trends between effort and catch in the purse seine fishery, including effort creep, and to report these trends to TCC22 in 2026.

286. TCC21 reviewed information prepared by the SSP presenting information about the performance and outputs of the Skipjack MP, compared to the 2024 levels for three fishery components: Purse seine (including Archipelagic Waters) effort, Pole and line effort, Domestic Archipelagic Waters catch (refer TCC21-2025-IP04_rev1 Table 16). TCC21 noted that the information indicated that in 2024 the catch or effort in the fisheries subject to the Skipjack MP were below the levels specified by the MP for 2024-2026. Based on the discussion and information available, including Table 16 of TCC21-2025-IP04_rev1, TCC21 made updates to the *Skipjack Monitoring Strategy* using the template in Annex 2 of TCC21-2025-14 as shown in **Attachment B**.

287. TCC21 noted the presentations on the harvest strategy related outcomes of SC21 and SPAMWS01 and encouraged CCMs to have intersessional consultations with each other to address concerns raised in this Agenda and to proceed with the MSE process as planned.

7.3 Monitoring and verification of Tuna and Billfish CMM quantitative limits

Paper: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-15

288. The WCPFC Compliance Manager referenced WCPFC-TCC21-2025-15 *Available data for verifying compliance in the Compliance Monitoring Scheme*, which reviewed the status of data currently available to support compliance reviews of individual obligations in the CMS. The paper updated the Secretariat's approach to compliance verification within the CMS. Drawing on three years of applying adopted audit points in the preparation of the draft Compliance Monitoring Report (dCMR) and incorporating analytical work by consultancies, the paper reviewed available data sources, the Secretariat's verification methods, and areas where limitations persist. The paper was structured as follows:

- Part 1: Monitoring and verification of Tuna and Billfish CMM quantitative limits (covered under Agenda Item 7.3). Independent verification remains uneven. Purse seine fishing day limits in EEZs and high seas areas and the HSP1 catcher vessel limit continue to be supported by multiple data sources and are independently verified. By contrast, most vessel capacity limits, catch-based limits, and "actively fishing for" obligations rely heavily on CCM self-reporting, due to incomplete baselines, definitional ambiguities, and lack of vessel-specific data.

- Part 2: Verifying obligations aimed at mitigating impacts of fishing (addressed under Agenda Items 7.4, 7.7, and 7.8). Compliance with obligations related to FAD management, shark measures, seabird and turtle mitigation, and prohibitions on plastics and driftnets is largely assessed against CCM implementation statements. Independent verification of CCMs implementation statements remains minimal. Persistent low and uneven longline observer coverage undermines confidence in bycatch and interaction estimates, and although coverage has recovered to pre-pandemic levels, further progress will require expanded human and electronic monitoring.

- Part 3: Improving monitoring and verification of fishing activities, particularly in the high seas. Some improvements have been achieved through strengthened cross-checks of vessel data, fished/did not fish reporting, and VMS implementation. Scientific data submissions and observer coverage continue to be verified with SPC support. However, high seas transhipment reporting and daily catch and effort submissions remain only partially verified. The Secretariat has introduced automated tools to reconcile VMS and transhipment reporting, and these are expected to improve timeliness and independence of evaluations.

Strengthened verification would require coordinated action to expand observer and electronic monitoring coverage, standardize scientific data submissions, develop catch documentation schemes, and ensure provision of vessel-specific information linked to the RFV. Work underway through the FADMO-IWG, ROP-IWG, and ERandEM IWG was expected to contribute significantly to improving the robustness of compliance verification. The Compliance Manager also noted WCPFC-TCC21-2025-25_rev1 *Data Standardization to Improve Efficiency of WCPFC Data Provision - revision 1*, which discussed how data reporting mechanisms could be standardised to support annual catch and effort estimate data.

Discussion

289. Nauru on behalf of FFA members thanked the Secretariat for the comprehensive paper, which they considered had usefully outlined the data available to assess compliance, while also highlighting significant gaps, particularly where verification relied on self-reported data. They stressed that robust and independent verification was essential to uphold the credibility of the compliance process; without strong verification, assessments risked losing integrity and confidence, both within the Commission and among stakeholders. Ensuring rigorous and independent verification was therefore critical in ensuring trust in the system. They noted the constructive suggestions offered in the paper to address the identified constraints, with a recurring theme being the need for higher ROP coverage in longline fisheries and wider use of EM. FFA members stated that these issues had been raised repeatedly, and called on the Commission to strengthen independent verification by increasing observer coverage and adopting EM. They also encouraged finalisation of the work of the IWGs on ROP, FADs, and EM, to ensure improved availability of independent data, streamlined data flows (ROP), and greater use of standardised scientific data submissions, as highlighted at SC21.

290. Japan recognized the importance of the CMR process and the concern that data reporting requirements should be reviewed by and decided by the Commission, but stated that when it came to the information required by the Secretariat for the independent review, it appeared the Secretariat and the SSP could decide what kind of data were needed to verify (for example) Japan's bigeye catch limit. Japan wanted an opportunity to discuss or review the range of information required by the Secretariat to conduct an independent review, which Japan stated appeared to have changed drastically at TCC21. Japan acknowledged the difficulty for the Secretariat because the type of information needed depended on the specific situation of the fleet or country. Japan also referenced previous interventions about the practical difficulties of increasing longline observer coverage and stated that data from observers and EM may not be useful to estimate catch amount, which can be corrected by landing inspections or in other ways.

291. The European Union considered this one of the most useful papers submitted at TCC21 in relation to the CMS, with a wealth of information on key aspects of how the evaluation was undertaken, the status of independent verification, key constraints, and possible ways to address gaps and help the Secretariat undertake more independent assessments in the future. The EU urged more rapid progress in finalizing EM standards and adopting an EM implementing measure that would allow increased observer coverage, particularly in the longline fleet, as these would improve the capacity of the Secretariat to undertake independent verifications for many obligations. In addition, the EU inquired regarding para. 70 of the paper, which indicated that the evaluations of FAD-related implementation obligations were not independently verified. The EU stated its understanding that some of these obligations could be verified through observer data, and noted that this applied also for paragraph 117 of the paper, which stated that evaluations in the dCMR of transhipment observer coverage for at-sea transhipments was not independently verified. The EU asked why this was not possible given that in both instances there was (or should be) 100% observer coverage.

292. The WCPFC Compliance Manager acknowledged the feedback from CCMs. In reply to the EU, she stated these were implementation obligations and based on the formulation of the audit point, and the Secretariat would normally review the Statement of Implementation to see that there was a part A and a part B, and so the lack of independent verification in this respect was more about whether what is set out in the audit point was the current basis for the assessment, which was a simple review of the Statement of Implementation. There was additional information available from other sources, but at the moment the focus of the compliance reviews had been on simply reviewing Statements of Implementation.

293. PNG, on behalf of PNA+, noted the imbalance in monitoring of the purse seine and longline fisheries, stating that as the Secretariat pointed out, independent verification remained uneven. PNG stated that purse seine fishing day limits continued to be supported by multiple data sources and were independently verified. By contrast, most vessel capacity limits, catch-based limits, and "actively fishing for" obligations were mainly found in the longline fishery, and relied heavily on CCM self-reporting because of incomplete baselines, definition ambiguities, and lack of vessel-specific data. PNA+ supported increasing longline observer coverage to at least 10%, and where greater coverage by observer or EM had already been achieved, making data available to WCPFC and/or the SSP in a form that could be readily used for cross-checking of fishing activities. They noted that this was the most pragmatic and practical approach to improve fishery monitoring.

294. The USA supported the interventions by other CCMs with regards to the importance of EM as a critical emerging data set for independent verification, noting that EM was not interchangeable with observers, but created an entirely new set of information for the Secretariat and CCMs to consider in terms of compliance. The USA also followed up on the EU's question with regards to transhipment and verification observer coverage, and stated that based on experience and extensive discussions, during the effort to revise the transhipment CMM the USA proposed several steps that could be taken to address the data gap and gap in verification. As a reminder to CCMs, the options included a requirement in the CMM identifying which vessel the observer needed to be on (currently the CMM specifies only that the activity needs to be observed, which is a significant gap in the ability to verify observer coverage). Another element (which is similar to that in other RFMOs) would require a third-party observer provider specific to transhipment activity. Centralizing that observer placement would make it easier to verify observation of transhipment activity. The USA urged further consideration by CCMs of these issues as TCC seeks to eliminate data gaps for critical activities within the Commission.

295. Chinese Taipei suggested data could be obtained from second sources, for example, another CCM's database, and serve as independent verification. Using Chinese Taipei's fleet as an example, if it operates in a different CCM's waters then their data could be considered as independent and would not have to be further verified. With regards to the comment made by many CCMs on raising longline observer coverage, Chinse Taipei echoed the comment made by Japan and noted the need to consider the impact of different fisheries, particularly in terms of catch.

296. China noted Chinese Taipei's intervention and suggested the need for caution in choosing a source of data to verify compliance, and noted problems could arise if a CCM could not provide verified data on time.

297. Korea stated that progress in the ROP-IWG was very important to enhance data verification and supported comments by the EU and the USA on the need to progress the WCPFC's EM work, and to prioritize work to develop a mechanism through which EM coverage could be incorporated into the total coverage of longline vessels. For example, in 2023, Korea had EM coverage of 10 vessels, but could not

incorporate that into Korea's total coverage for longliners. Instead, Korea achieved 10% observer coverage using human observers. Regarding transhipment observer coverage, Korea looked forward to working with interested CMMs to develop clear provisions for transhipment regulations.

298. Pew agreed with other members about the need to increase observer coverage and facilitate the use of EM, and suggested that where fisheries data were included in meeting tables or reports that were publicly available, it would be useful to note which information had been independently verified, as that might give greater confidence or weight to that information in the public eye, and promote understanding relative to the status of these fisheries, and what can and cannot be independently verified.

299. Niue inquired in relation to Korea's intervention in relation to EM, whether they had submitted the EM data and required report to the Commission.

300. The TCC Chair noted the reference to the work of the ROP-IWG, and comments that point to the priority of the ERandEM WG and encouraged CCMs to work with the Chair of the ROP-IWG.

301. The WCPFC Compliance Manager addressed the long-standing issue with respect to "other commercial fisheries", and the issue of the baseline catch limits for certain CCMs. To date, that obligation had not been included in the list of obligations to be reviewed in part because there was no agreed audit point and the ongoing issue with baselines. She noted that some information was presented in WCPFC-TCC21-2025-IP04_rev1., Tables 14 and 15 that may be useful for TCC to consider.

302. The EU noted that the obligations regarding "other commercial fisheries" were not assessed and might not be noticed and suggested adding a reference in the CMR report, stating that even if this had not been assessed as an obligation, it was important that it be part of the report, and serve to highlight TCC's lack of capacity to undertake an assessment because of the issues that had been outlined.

303. The Chair acknowledged the EU's proposal and suggested to highlight the issue in the outcomes.

South Pacific albacore limits

304. The WCPFC Compliance Manager addressed South Pacific Albacore CMM limits, noting that TCC undertakes an annual review of the CMM. As TCC21-2025-15 indicated, reporting on the quantitative limits was based on self-reported Annual Report Part 2 information, and included a comparison with the ACE table data that SPC prepared, based on para. 4 reports that CCMs had provided. As was the case at TCC20, the WCPFC20-agreed definition of "actively fishing for" had been applied in the CMR reviewed by TCC. There was information to support TCC's review in WCPFC-TCC21-2025-IP01 *Review of CMM 2015-02: South Pacific Albacore and Summary of Reporting to WCPFC*, which was a joint paper by SPC and the Secretariat that presented the information relevant to compliance with CMM 2015-02. She noted that TCC reviewed some of this during the dCMR review.

305. The TCC Chair noted that the additional clarity in how this limit should be interpreted was beneficial in terms of TCC's process and suggested reflecting on this with respect to other obligations where TCC has had similar challenges.

Striped marlin CMM limits

306. The WCPFC Compliance Manager stated that the limits for striped marlin were vessel fishing limits; similar to the South Pacific albacore formulation, compliance was based on Annual Report Part 2

information, and verified — to the extent that data are available — based on annual catch and estimate information compiled by the SSP. There have been recognised ongoing difficulties related to the interpretation of the term "actively fishing for", and similarly terms such as "directed at" and "targeting". She noted that TCC and the Commission recognised that this presented challenges for compliance reviews. For that reason, the SSP was requested to provide additional information on catches for the determination of fishing for striped marlin, which was in TCC21-2025-29.

307. Dr. Tiffany Vidal (SSP Scientific Data Manager) presented WCPFC-TCC21-2025-29 *Available information on striped marlin catches*. The paper provided a brief background on the striped marlin catches in the WCPFC Convention Area and characterized the catches of striped marlin relative to total catch, by vessel, at the annual and trip level.

308. Chinese Taipei inquired in regards to the idea of setting a definition of "fishing for" on North Pacific striped marlin, noting that currently CMM 2024-06 did not have an effort limit referring to vessels, or fisheries "targeting" or "fishing for".

309. Tuvalu, on behalf of FFA members, stated that the results clearly demonstrated that a small minority of vessels caught up to 75% of striped marlin, while the vast majority (85%–95%) caught less than 10%. They noted the data were useful to establish clear, evidence-based definitions of "fishing for" in the striped marlin measures. To maintain consistency with the current South Pacific albacore measure, FFA members recommended defining vessels with striped marlin catch composition above 50% as "fishing for" and those below 50% as interacting with it as bycatch. They stated that a decision on this definition would enhance TCC's ability to assess the obligations under the North Pacific and South West Pacific striped marlin CMMs.

310. Chinese Taipei noted that the limit for North Pacific striped marlin was a catch limit, and was verified independently.

311. The Compliance Manager stated that the request to the SSP for the information in TCC21-2025-29 stemmed from the TCC20 outcomes, para. 29, as a result of challenges with reviewing the quantitative limits during the CMR process.

312. New Zealand supported the proposal for "actively fishing" from FFA members, noting that New Zealand had a commercial moratorium on the landing of striped blue and black marlin in place since 1988, and that of the recent recreational catch, 77% was tagged and released.

313. The USA thanked FFA members and Tuvalu for bringing the proposal to the table but was not prepared to agree to a recommendation on that definition at present. The USA recalled that in previous TCC meetings, the USA had been a strong proponent of identifying definitions for obligations where these terms were not clear. The USA had also in the past proposed potentially creating an RFV field that would allow for rapid identification or verification of vessels that may be "targeting" or "actively fishing for". In this regard, the USA was interested in further discussion on the ambiguities surrounding "actively fishing for" or "targeting", not just in the context of striped marlin, but in the context of all obligations for where this clarity did not exist. In the absence of a clear process emerging for how to address the ambiguities, the USA supported an omnibus review for members' consideration.

314. The EU thanked FFA members for their proposal and considered that there cannot be one definition that fits all in terms of defining what is a targeting fishery. The EU stated it would need more time to reflect on the issue and possibly revisit it at WCPFC22.

315. Korea stated it would like to consider the FFA's proposal regarding the definition of "actively fishing for". They also supported the view of the USA that similar definitions would be needed for other species as well, agreeing with the EU that uniform definition may not fit for all fisheries. Korea stated it would work with interested CCMs on the definition of "actively fishing for" striped marlin and other species that lack such a definition.

Pacific bluefin CMM limits.

316. The WCPFC Compliance Manager referenced CMM 2024-02 *Conservation and Management Measure for the Monitoring, Controlling and Surveillance of Pacific Bluefin Tuna* and WCPFC-TCC21-2025-28 *Reports on CMM 2024-02*, which was a list of the reports that individual CCMs had provided to the Northern Committee about their MCS measures to support Pacific bluefin management. CMM 2024-02 (para. 4) called on TCC and NC to separately review the implementation of MCS measures reported by CCMs and based upon the results of that review, provide recommendations to the Commission. The Compliance Manager invited feedback on the approach to take for the review.

317. TCC21 noted the useful Secretariat paper on *Available data for verifying compliance in the Compliance Monitoring Scheme* (TCC21-2025-15) which explains the basis for how the Secretariat approaches the identification of data for compliance verification purposes.

318. TCC21 noted the ongoing nature of some specific issues where the lack of data for some fisheries and relevant monitoring programmes impacted on the ability of TCC to take compliance assessments. This applied to CMM 2023-01, paragraph 48 (*Other Commercial Fisheries*) where there was no baseline from which to assess compliance and no Audit Point.

319. TCC21 also noted that there were ongoing challenges for assessing compliance with obligations that were tied to expressions such as "actively fishing for" or "fishing for" a particular stock. The development of definitions of "fishing for" a particular species, as had occurred with SP Albacore, would assist with the assessment of compliance with such obligations. TCC21 recognised the different views of CCMs regarding the appropriateness of a common approach across stocks and fisheries and recommended that WCPFC22 consider this issue further.

320. TCC21 noted the presentation by the Secretariat of TCC21-2025-28 on reporting of MCS measures for Pacific Bluefin Tuna.

7.4 Improving FAD management and monitoring arrangements

Paper: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-16B_Rev1

321. The FADMO-IWG Chair reviewed progress of the intersessional working group, noting its updated summary report (WCPFC-TCC21-2025-16B_Rev1). He stated three main items required further discussion, relating to (i) satellite buoy data transmissions requirements, (ii) FAD logbook data fields, and (iii) vessel types allowed to deploy FAD-related activities. He anticipated continuing intersessional discussions prior to WCPFC22 and into 2026.

Discussion

322. Korea noted that because of travel issues they were unable to fully participate in the FADMO-IWG that met immediately prior to the start of TCC21, and reserved the ability to express positions and provide input intersessionally on all aspects of the outcomes document.

323. The EU commented regarding the outcome on satellite buoy data transmissions (para.21), in particular part (c), which was related to event-based reporting. They stated their recollection of the discussion was that there was no clarity about the best place to have this element reflected, but there was agreement that this was important information that needed to be captured. The EU stated it appeared the conclusion in para. 21 was that this should be simply removed from the document, which was not what was agreed, and suggested revisiting the issue to better reflect the discussion.

324. In response to the EU, the FADMO-IWG Chair stated that the report would be revised to reflect that information could be reported separately outside the FAD logbook.

325. Chinese Taipei stated that they were unable to participate in the first in-person FADMO-IWG meeting that met immediately prior to TCC21, and reserved their comments regarding biodegradable FADs and FAD recovery strategies.

326. French Polynesia thanked the FADMO-IWG for their efforts to strengthen FAD management, stating they strongly supported the emphasis SC21 placed on real time buoy data reporting, which was crucial to enhance FAD recovery operation at sea. They also welcomed the practical approach recommended by SC21 to remove event-based fields that buoys cannot generate, while ensuring operators remained responsible for providing relevant information. They considered the proposal to explore direct data transmission from buoy manufacturers to the Secretariat was also an important step toward greater transparency and efficiency. French Polynesia indicated that the most important factor was the ability to keep buoy signals active for purposes of retrieval, and drew TCC's attention to the adoption in September 2025 by IATTC members of a measure requiring buoy signals to remain active, and shared in specific areas for recovery purposes, independently of the maximum number of buoys allowed for fishing operations. This was further reinforced by the creation of a dedicated EPO retrieval fund by the purse seine industry, with participation by the USA. They stated that these developments would significantly improve the sustainability of purse seine operations on drifting FADs, and that they hoped to see similar progress and harmonized measures within the WCPFC.

327. New Caledonia supported the statement by French Polynesia with a view to supporting and facilitating FAD retrieval efforts and enhancing the efficiency of such initiatives.

328. The EU supported the comments by French Polynesia.

329. Tuvalu, on behalf of FFA members, acknowledged the work of the Chair and FADMO-IWG and reiterated their commitment to working with CCMs to make progress on the remaining FADMO-IWG workplan tasks.

330. TCC21 thanked the Chair of the FADMO-IWG for the summary report of the intersessional work of the FADMO-IWG (TCC21-2025-16B_rev1), and encouraged further intersessional work prior to WCPFC22 for consideration at WCPFC22.

7.5 Improving monitoring and verification of fishing activities, particularly in the high seas

Papers: TCC21-2025-15 (part 3), WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP01, WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP11

331. The WCPFC Deputy Compliance Manager provided an overview of TCC21-2025-15 (part 3) and explained that the adopted Audit Points guided dCMR evaluations of obligations and reporting requirements related to high seas transhipment, RFV and VMS, observer coverage, scientific data submissions, and daily catch and effort reporting for 2023–2025. Annex 3 of TCC21-2025-15 highlighted that the Secretariat's ability to verify compliance depended on the availability of supporting data, the extent to which CCMs were using WCPFC/SSP online reporting tools and/or submitting data that met WCPFC E-reporting standards, and the development status of analytical tools. Where possible, the Secretariat drew on multiple internal and external data sources to strengthen evaluations. Cross-checking across datasets provided a more complete and more reliable picture of vessel activity, improving confirmation of which vessels fished in a given reporting year. For example, the evaluation of VMS reporting (CMM 2014-02 9a) was supported by analyses that enabled the Secretariat to verify CCM self-reported information against multiple data sources. The Secretariat's capacity to robustly verify fishing activities was expected to improve in the near term, given new compliance processes and analytical tools now being implemented. "Fished" and "Did not Fish" reporting, and implementation of VMS reporting requirements, were verified using data from multiple sources. Longline and purse seine observer coverage and scientific data submissions were verified based on advice of the SSP. At-sea transhipment observer coverage, most daily catch and effort reporting obligations in CMM 2022-06, vessel authorization requirements, and vessel and gear-marking and technical specifications were evaluated based on self-reported information. There was currently a reliance on CCM self-reported AR Pt2 information for many obligations. Current analytical and data limitations in the Secretariat prevented full verification of high seas transhipment reporting, and the Secretariat was unable to independently verify observer presence and coverage for at-sea transhipments.

Discussion

332. Korea indicated that it would seek to work with interested CCMs to come up with a mechanism whereby the Secretariat can verify observer coverage of at-sea transhipment by receiving observer data from the carrier vessels, noting that their longline vessels had their transhipment activities fully monitored by onboard observers on the carrier vessels.

333. Regarding the quarterly reconciliation tool, China stated that outstanding data they provided in the previous quarter still appeared as outstanding in the next quarter, so China resubmitted it. China suggested a means by which to verify whether outstanding transhipment data had been entered in the database.

334. Chinese Taipei welcomed the intervention from Korea and expressed willingness to work with Korea on the issue.

335. New Zealand acknowledged the Secretariat for development of the new tools in the intersessional period, such as the VRST and transhipment reporting tools, and noted that these greatly reduced the workload on the Secretariat. New Zealand encouraged CCMs to make use of the tools.

336. Japan thanked Korea for their contribution to enhance the verification of at sea transhipment, and expressed interest in participating in a discussion with Korea.

Operation Nasse

337. The USA presented WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP01 *Report to WCPFC TCC on Operation Nasse* 2025, and expressed its privilege to host Operation Nasse for the first time. The USA welcomed questions and comments.

338. New Zealand thanked the USA for the paper, and expressed their appreciation for the USA, in particular the USCG for the excellent hosting of this year's Operation Nasse Joint Coordination Center in their Honolulu headquarters. They stated Operation Nasse continued to show that collaborative MCS efforts by WCPFC CCMs was effective in carrying out independent compliance monitoring across large areas of the high seas, noting the discussions at TCC21 and the relatively low 5% observer coverage rate in the southern albacore fishery. New Zealand considered that HSBI was an important way to provide independent monitoring of compliance against binding CMMs, and that a key compliance theme was significant levels of high seas non-reporting to the WCPFC VMS. They noted this was a persistent issue and that TCC would be holding further discussions on steps to improve reporting to the system. New Zealand acknowledged and thanked long-standing partners Australia and France in running Operation Nasse and extended thanks to FFA members (Cook Islands, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu) who also participated and were instrumental in providing their deep understanding of the operational aspects of the WCPO tuna fisheries. New Zealand also acknowledged the WCPFC Secretariat in supporting the operations through provision of non-public domain data, which enabled effective deployment of expensive patrol assets.

339. Solomon Islands also thanked the USA and all partners for the successful coordination of Operation Nasse 2025, which Solomon Islands participated in for the first time. They acknowledged the critical role the operation played in detecting and inspecting vessels to ensure compliance within the WCPFC Convention Area and remained committed to engaging in the future.

340. The EU joined other CCMs in acknowledging the service that the CCMs involved in the operation offered to WCPFC and for their essential contribution in improving the capacity of the Commission to combat IUU activities in the WCPFC Convention Area.

341. Australia expressed their appreciation to the USA and USCG for hosting Operation Nasse Joint Coordination Center and noted the continued progress and evolution of Operation Nasse, which addressed some key objectives of the Commission as it strengthened the wider HSBI program. Australia also noted it was becoming a more inclusive operation with strong support from Pacific Island countries. Australia stated that the operation identified some potential compliance issues with regard to seabird mitigation and emphasized that it was important and critical that all seabird mitigation measures were closely followed.

342. Tonga acknowledged and thanked the USA and others involved in Operation Nasse, noting that with ongoing support and cooperation Tonga had significantly strengthened their national efforts in fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance, stating that the partnership has enhanced Tonga’s capacity to detect IUU fishing activities in its waters.

343. France thanked the USA for the paper and all members of Operation Nasse. They stated that the fight against IUU fishing was a priority for France as demonstrated by their participation in Operation Nasse for several years, stating that continued regional cooperation and information sharing were essential to combat the phenomenon.

Operation Pacific North Guard

344. Canada introduced WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP11 *Summary of Collaborative High Seas Boarding and Inspection (HSBI) and Aerial Surveillance Activities Conducted by Canada During "Operation North Pacific Guard" in 2024*, describing Operation North Pacific Guard, an annual multinational fisheries surveillance and inspection campaign conducted with partner nations in the region. During May to October 2024, Canada carried out both aerial fisheries surveillance and HSBI activities within the high sea's waters of the WCPFC Convention Area. The fisheries monitoring operations were supported by space-based maritime surveillance coverage of the North Pacific, delivered through Canada's Dark Vessel Detection platform. Canada's activities, directed at combatting IUU fishing in the North Pacific and verifying compliance among both North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) and WCPFC high seas fishing fleets, resulted in the boarding and inspection of a combined total of 15 high seas fishing vessels, including 6 WCPFC-registered vessels, and the aerial observation of over 400 fishing vessels (including both NPFC/WCPFC-registered vessels) present within the high seas of the WCPFC Convention Area. A total of 24 potential WCPFC contraventions were observed as a result of Canada's monitoring activities. Of particular note, Canada documented concerning potential infringements of the Commission's Shark CMM, which entailed documentation of shark finning practices and the disposal of unutilized carcasses at sea, the possession of shark fins without corresponding carcasses, and processing activities that did not properly ensure effective matching of corresponding fins and carcasses. Canadian inspectors also documented at least two cases of intentional dolphin killing conducted during the course of WCPFC fishing activities, as well as multiple instances where vessels failed to properly display (without obstruction) their WCPFC identification numbers (WIN). Canada also detected suspected marine pollution contraventions associated with the discarding of plastic pollution. Canada expressed its sincere appreciation to the Secretariat and to CCMs that cooperated with and facilitated Canada's inspection activities during Operation North Pacific Guard, particularly Japan, USA, and Korea.

345. Korea commended Canada for its leadership in operation North Pacific Guard and its commitment to safeguarding marine ecosystems. Korea stated that Canada's collaborative efforts with Korea, Japan and the USA in high seas inspection and surveillance were invaluable in combating IUU fishing and ensuring compliance with WCPFC measures. They expressed special appreciation for the use of advanced technologies such as the Dark Vessel Detection platform, and the comprehensive follow up on potential contraventions including shark conservation, cetacean protection, and VMS compliance. Korea supported continued regional cooperation and looked forward to further strengthening collective efforts to promote sustainable fisheries management.

346. Japan joined the Korean delegation in its comments on the collaboration involving Canada, the USA, Korea, and Japan and looked forward to working with all CCMs to enhance monitoring of the high seas.

347. The USA thanked Canada for their leadership in Operation North Pacific Guard, stating it was a vital MCS operation that worked to counter IUU fishing in the region, and that the USA valued participating in the operation with its partners.

348. The EU extended appreciation to Canada and other members involved in the operation.

349. TCC21 expressed appreciation to the Secretariat for its ongoing work in seeking to resolve challenges in fully verifying high seas transhipment data, including in the overlap area and through strengthening RMFO data exchange in accordance with the WCPFC Data Rules. TCC21 noted the broad

range of interconnected work which has the objective of improving the quality of high seas transhipment data. TCC21 noted the offer from some CCMs to work on a mechanism to progress this work in the intersessional period.

350. TCC21 expressed appreciation to the United States for hosting of Operation Nasse (TCC21-2025-DP01) and to Canada for conducting Operation North Pacific Guard (TCC21-2025-DP11). TCC21 commended the collaborative efforts of both the United States and Canada as well as other CCMs engaged in these operations and highlighted the importance of regional collaboration in high seas boarding and inspection activities.

7.5.1 Use of ROP data in the CMS

Paper: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-17

351. The TCC Chair noted WCPFC-TCC21-2025-17 *Update on ROP-IWG taskings*, WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP02 (discussed under Agenda Item 5.8), and various annual reports as relevant to the discussion.

352. The ROP-IWG Chair reviewed proposed recommendations that emerged from the ROP-IWG05 and ROP-IWG06 meetings and the SWG meeting during TCC21.

Discussion

353. Niue, on behalf of FFA members, supported the work undertaken and noted the hard work from the ROP-IWG Chair, and looked forward to continuing the intersessional discussions.

354. Marshall Islands, on behalf of PNA+, extended appreciation to the ROP-IWG Chair and supported the efforts to refine the recommendations prior to WCPFC22.

355. Sharks Pacific supported previous comments by CCMs on the ROP-IWG. They also recalled the fisheries observers that lost their lives in the course of duty 10 years prior to TCC21, which brought observer safety and security to the forefront of WCPFC's work. They noted the continuing importance of strong protections and accountability in WCPFC fisheries, and that despite advances in communications and safety protocols in observer programs, observer obstruction and safety incidents persisted, with (in 2024) 13 cases of obstruction or intimidation (RSA violations), 11 cases where observers were pressured not to report events (RSB violations), and 9 cases of inadequate accommodations or facility (RSD violation). Sharks Pacific recalled that since 2015, there had been 108 RSA cases, 142 RSB cases, and 112 RSD cases, but most investigations resulted in "no infraction" findings rather than meaningful sanctions. They stated that since 2017 there had been 6 serious incidents (including deaths, injuries and threats to observer safety) requiring activation of CMM 2017-03 protocols. Sharks Pacific stated that a threat to any observer was a chilling threat to all observers, and weak enforcement and failure to impose sanctions undermined the foundation of the WCPFC CMS. Sharks Pacific also highlighted inadequate observer coverage and requested that TCC recommit to observer coverage standards across all fleets and fisheries, including a phased transition to 100% observer coverage in the longline fleet, particularly on the high seas, given technological advancements. Sharks Pacific stressed the need to ensure that audit of compliance with CMM 2017-03 and CMN 2024-04 was substantively backed by evidence and not just self-reporting, stating that observers remained at risk and the response remained inadequate.

356. The EU expressed appreciation to the ROP-IWG Chair and supported the proposed recommendations, while suggesting the exact text and paper references be clarified.

357. TCC21 thanked the Chair of the ROP-IWG for the update on progress (TCC21-2025-17B) to improve the process for the flow of data to the CCFS, propose updates to monitoring data to support compliance case files creation, and potential new data fields to support monitoring of non-catch transfers at-sea and the removal of data fields from the MSDF.

358. TCC21 noted the updated working draft of the *proposed Commission CCFS Process Flow* (TCC21-2025-17B_rev1), which incorporates informal discussions among ROP-IWG participants during TCC21 regarding potential amendments to the pre-notification process adopted at WCPFC12.

359. TCC21 noted the working draft paper (TCC21-2025-17C_rev1) proposing updates to the *ROP Minimum Standard Data Fields (MSDF)* to add or revise fields for better monitoring of CMMs and improving ROP data integration into the WCPFC Compliance Case File System (CCFS).

360. TCC21 recommended that WCPFC22 agree that the list of *ROP Minimum Standard Data Fields* in the following table (TCC21-2025-17E) as amended by SC21 discussions are removed from the list of ROP Minimum Standard Data Fields (**Attachment C**).

361. TCC21 noted the proposal, (TCC21-2025-17D) and ongoing work through the ROP-IWG, on the non-catch transfer data fields for further discussions intersessionally.

362. TCC21 noted the ROP-IWG 2026 workplan for consideration by WCPFC22.

363. TCC21 encouraged CCMs to provide further feedback and views on the working draft to the ROP-IWG Chair by October 10, 2025, to support ongoing refinements and for consideration of final recommendations at WCPFC22.

7.5.2 Monitoring and verification of transhipment activities

Papers: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-18, TCC21-2025-DP12, WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP15

364. The WCPFC Deputy Compliance Manager introduced WCPFC-TCC21-2025-18 *Review of Data Exchange Arrangements*, which provided an update on the Secretariat's work towards establishing data exchange arrangements with selected RFMOs for transhipment-related data and information. The paper should be read alongside WCPFC-TCC21-2025-15, which identified data gaps and areas where verification could be strengthened. The paper identified two next steps: (i) In the last quarter of 2025, the WCPFC Secretariat will actively engage with CCSBT and IATTC secretariats to develop joint workplans that would detail and progress the technical and database work needed to prepare data and establish the preparation, transfer, and receipt of data over the next 12 months; and (ii) the Secretariat will maintain communications with other participating RFMOs (IOTC, SPRFMO, and NPFC) to ensure broad awareness of the process being established. An update on progress would be provided to TCC22.

Discussion

365. Tokelau, on behalf of FFA members, underscored the importance of reciprocity in data exchanges, as affirmed at WCPFC21, and the need to ensure all exchanges were conducted and maintained in line with the Commission's Data Rules. They supported exploring approaches that reduce additional workload on the Secretariat and allowed this initiative to be progressed within existing resources

366. Korea welcomed work to improve transhipment data exchanges. Regarding the overall improvement of the quality of transhipment data — and linked with Korea's previous intervention regarding a mechanism through which transhipment observer data can be verified — Korea suggested requiring flag States of carrier vessels to provide data that can verify transhipment observations to the flag State of longline vessels and the Secretariat so the coverage could be verified. Korea looked forward to further engagement on this.

367. The TCC Chair noted the relevance of TCC21-2025-DP12, which RMI introduced under Agenda Item 3.

368. Korea introduced WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP15 *Consultation Paper on Longline At-Sea Transhipment*. Korea noted that the purpose of the paper was to consult with TCC participants, in particular SIDS and territories, on the management of longline at-sea transhipment in the WCPFC. Korea recognized this was a complex issue with different perspectives and valued an open and constructive dialogue. In response to DP12 submitted by RMI, Korea emphasized that longline at-sea transhipment and IUU fishing were not inherently connected, emphasizing that the real drivers of IUU fishing were deliberate non-compliance and inadequate flag state control, not the method of transhipment itself. Korea stated that when conducted in line with WCPFC rules and properly monitored, longline at-sea transhipment was a legitimate and internationally accepted practice. Korea stated that this was reflected across multiple RFMOs and international fisheries organizations — including ICCAT, IOTC, IATTC and CCMLAR — all of which permitted longline at-sea transhipment under regulation. The FAO voluntary guidelines adopted in 2022 also recognized the practice as responsible when appropriately safeguarded. Korea stated that longline and purse seine fisheries operated very differently, and their fisheries impacts were also significantly different. Korea noted longliners spent extended periods at sea, covered wide areas, and often lacked regular port access, and that forcing all transhipments to port regardless of the nature of fisheries would undermine the operational viability of many longline vessels, particularly smaller operators already under economic strain. Such a requirement would increase fuel consumption, raise emissions, and contradict global sustainability efforts while failing to directly address the real cause of IUU fishing. Korea noted that the WCPFC Convention did not require in-port transhipment. A blanket ban on the activity, which was currently well regulated, monitored and controlled, would move beyond the Convention's intent, create inconsistency with other global frameworks, and complicate operations for vessels working across multiple RFMOs. Rather than prohibiting at sea transhipment, Korea supported retaining the practice with strengthened safeguards including prior authorization from the flag State, monitoring through existing tools such as VMS and ER, use of authorized carrier vessels, timely reporting, and periodic review by the Commission. Korea stated that these were proportionate practical measures that already existed, and the focus should be on consistent implementation, not elimination. Korea stated that longline at-sea transhipment was a necessary and manageable part of modern fisheries operations, and that prohibition would bring significant unintended consequences without solving the real problem of IUU activity.

369. Australia commented that while there was obviously an obligation for all transhipment to be subject to 100% monitoring, challenges could still occur. For example, with such low levels of mandatory monitoring on the longline fishery, and low observer coverage, there was a chance that a longline vessel could tranship to a vessel that was not authorized to receive that product (it could be a dark vessel or another vessel where product could be removed). Without that additional monitoring on the longline vessel itself, there was a risk that a transhipment could occur that was not subject to monitoring. The inverse of that was true from the carrier's perspective as well. Less than 100% monitoring of all carrier operations ran the risk that a dark vessel that didn't have any monitoring or that might not be registered could transfer catch or product to a carrier that, at that time, was also not subject to monitoring. Australia noted the need to strengthen monitoring through the use of tools such as EM and the case for having much wider adoption of EM on the longline fleet to enable close scrutiny of all operations.

370. Korea acknowledged Australia's comment and stated that all transhipment activities by Korean fishing vessels outside the jurisdiction of Korea were subject to prior authorization, regardless of RFMO regulations. Korea's Fisheries Monitoring Center (FMC) conducted 24/7 monitoring through its VMS. When patterns appeared that looked like transhipment, the FMC cross checked the prior authorization information with the VMS pattern and verified that transhipment was occurring under the applicable regulations. Korean fishing vessels only transhipped with carrier vessels on the RFV of relevant RFMOs. Korea stated that it did not tranship with dark vessels. Korea looked forward to further discussion on this point with Australia and other CCMs to assure them that flag States were controlling the activities of transhipment at sea.

371. Chinese Taipei appreciated Korea's proposal that highlighted the operational challenges facing longline vessels and the need for at-sea transhipment and looked forward to constructive engagement further on the approach.

372. Japan supported the initiative proposed by Korea to enhance the monitoring of high seas transhipment.

373. The EU also thanked Korea for its paper and noted the reference to other RFMOs that have authorized transhipments at sea, but stated that there were challenges with those transhipments, and that many members of those RFMOs were seeking to move away from this practice, or to strengthen monitoring as proposed by Korea. The EU stated that the proposed safeguards were largely included in the current CMM, and as was noted by Korea, this was simply a question of implementation. The EU stated it appeared that these measures had not been implemented since adoption of the CMM in 2009, and that it was unsure how that will change, and advocated for adopting more oversight than proposed.

374. China stated that transhipment was very important and fully supported Korea's proposal.

375. RMI thanked Korea and those supporting Korea's delegation paper for demonstrating that the increasing longline observer coverage could be achieved with the right incentives through the tropical tuna measure, noting this gave them confidence that their call to increase longline observer coverage to a minimum of 10% was pragmatic, practicable, and achievable. RMI stated it had sought for 16 years to address the challenges posed by high seas transhipment. They expressed their appreciation for the engagement on the issue and reaffirmed their position that high seas transhipment must be banned for longline vessels. They emphasised global experience showed that transhipment at sea and IUU fishing were linked, and that high seas transhipment, especially in poorly monitored spaces, remained one of the most exploited loopholes for concealing IUU fishing. The impracticability exemption was intended as an

exception but had become the rule, routinely used, rarely scrutinized, and impossible to enforce meaningfully. RMI stated that this de facto self-certification regime served to undermine the Commission's authority and objectives. As a Pacific SIDS, RMI sustained the direct consequences of these regulatory weaknesses in the form of depleted stocks, lost revenues, and compromised sovereignty over resources that originated in RMI's waters but were transhipped out of reach. RMI stated it had demonstrated that port-based transhipment works; it was operational in purse seine fisheries and with planning and support it could be expanded to longliners. The RMI stated it had hosted hundreds of transhipments as had other Pacific SIDS, with full observer coverage, inspection, and verification. RMI cautioned against appeals to global consistency as a reason to maintain weak standards, stating that the WCPFC had the opportunity and responsibility to lead. They rejected that economic viability should rest on loopholes, stating that sustainability began with accountability. RMI also noted that coastal states had made sacrifices, and that flag states should contribute to a more transparent and fair system, stating that ending high seas transhipment was a long overdue correction; one that prioritized transparency, equity, and the long-term health of the WCPFC's fisheries.

376. Solomon Islands, on behalf of PNA+, thanked Korea and other CCMs for providing comments to the RMI delegation paper. PNA members agreed that the key driver to address longline IUU fishing in the high seas was demonstratable and verifiable flag state controls, and stated that they were not members of the other RFMOs, rendering the comparison unimportant. They stated that WCPFC CCMs involved in high seas longline transhipment had demonstrated poor flag state control over this activity with a lack of verifiable information that IUU fishing was not occurring and that illegal catch was not entering into the value chain. PNA members thanked Korea for their comments on potential safeguards but noted that the proposal provided insufficient disincentive for IUU fishing vs. the proposal from RMI. In the view of PNA+ members, conducting transhipments in port increased the monitoring and control of the longline fishery and allowed for the proper documentation of catches and transfers of catch share. They stated that demonstratable and verifiable control on key enablers such as carrier vessels was also needed, and PNA+ members had sought the development of carrier log sheets that would enable better monitoring for this key enabler of potential IUU activity.

377. New Zealand stated that CCMs that did not support RMI's proposal should consider what they would do if vessels fished in their EEZs, went into the high seas and transhipped, and then returned to the EEZ, stressing that that was the situation many Pacific Island countries faced.

378. Sharks Pacific stated it appreciated the papers from RMI and Korea, and referenced the Secretariat's detailed report on transhipment activities in WCPFC-TCC21-2025-RP03 *Annual Report on WCPFC Transhipment Reporting*, noting that the data underscored that what was supposed to be a diminishing exception had instead become the rule. Sharks Pacific observed that in 2009 the Commission found transhipment should be restricted and a diminishing practice, unless impracticability or historic operation necessitated the practice. They noted that in 2024 alone, nearly a quarter of albacore, a third of bigeye and more than a third of yellowfin catches were confirmed to have been transhipped on the high seas, but that observer coverage on these operations remained inconsistent, and in too many cases observer reports depended on vessel logbooks rather than independent verification. They noted the concerning reports of observers acting in dual roles on some vessels, raising obvious questions about independence and data integrity. They stated that at-sea transhipment not only posed some of the highest risks of IUU fishing and misreporting, but also allowed vulnerable bycatch species such as sharks and fins to be laundered into supply chains without adequate scrutiny, noting RP03 showed blue sharks were still being transhipped in significant volumes, often in gutted or tailed form, making it even more difficult to verify species and legality. Sharks Pacific welcomed the development of new analytical tools such as

proximity alerts and quarterly reconciliations but stated that enforcement remained weak: of 24 transhipment-related cases entered in the CCFS since 2016, for almost half the result was no infraction. They also observed that analyses of vessel tracks indicated they deliberately avoided port and travel hundreds of additional miles to tranship. Sharks Pacific agreed with RMI regarding the banning of transhipment.

379. PNG thanked Korea and RMI for their delegation papers, and stated their support for the position expressed by RMI. PNG stated its national legislation prohibited all activities, including transhipment, in the high seas for all the vessels they license, including foreign flag vessels. PNG noted that under the CMM the Secretariat gives authorization for transhipment, so there was a conflict between PNG's national policies and the current CMM. PNG stated it lacked access to information or data on activities that were happening in the high seas that posed a challenge for PNG, especially for catches taken within PNG waters and transited out to the high seas. PNG supported RMI's proposed ban on high seas transhipment.

380. FSM supported RMI's position on transhipment, and stated that RP03 mentioned the Secretariat cannot fully verify at-sea transhipments, including observer coverage and other operational activities in the high seas. Given that, and local laws that require that transhipment occur in port, FSM supported conducting transhipment in designated ports with monitoring programs where quality data can be collected.

381. The USA recalled past difficulty in reaching agreement on this issue, but also noted that previously there was less enthusiasm for strengthening monitoring. The USA welcomed increased attempts at monitoring transhipment on the high seas, and suggested CCMs focus on that for the forthcoming meeting. The USA noted RP03, and thanked the Secretariat for presenting new data covering recent years and making that data more accessible for members to understand the scope of transhipment and in particular the species being transhipped, and by whom. The USA observed that the other high-priority issues at WCPFC22 would be South Pacific albacore, and noted the significant high seas transhipment by China of albacore in the South Pacific, and stated that the reliance of certain CCMs on the use of a certain fishery for this activity raised questions about perhaps bringing monitoring regimes into the albacore CMM. The USA indicated that if that was an option for discussion, it would appreciate the opportunity to incorporate transhipment monitoring into the implementation of the South Pacific albacore MP.

382. China mentioned that in 2015 or 2016 they considered transhipment management, and at that time refused to ban transhipment on albacore vessels. China noted that a lot of albacore was caught in the EPO, including the overlap area and areas far from the western part of the WCPO, by vessels fishing far from ports. China contrasted the situation faced by longline vessels in the high seas, distant from WCPO ports, using frozen storage methods, with the situation facing small locally based vessels.

383. TCC21 expressed appreciation for the delegation papers submitted by the Republic of the Marshall Islands (TCC21-2025-DP12) and Korea (TCC21-2025-DP15). TCC21 noted that both papers were seeking to address the same issue of the effective monitoring and verification of transshipment activities, although CCMs had divergent views on how this was best achieved.

7.5.3 Review CMM 2017-02 on Port State Minimum Standards

Papers: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-19, WCPFC-TCC21-2025-19A

384. Fiji, on behalf of the Chair of the Port State Measures WG Chair, reviewed key outcomes from the IWG meeting and stated that the meeting highlighted the need to balance alignment with global port state measures and unique circumstances of the WCPFC region. Key outcomes included recognition of the persistent challenges faced by SIDS, the importance of improved data access and timely information exchange and support for development of exchange mechanisms, developing clearer inspection standards and integrated reporting tools. Members agreed that structure, capacity building, stronger data sharing arrangements and coherence with the other CMMs will be central in strengthening the effectiveness of the PSM, with the Secretariat tasked to reflect these inputs in a revised working paper. Fiji stated that the IWG looked forward to working with members in the lead up to WCPFC22 and streamlining priorities and reporting back at WCPFC22.

385. TCC21 noted the update provided by the Chair of the Port State Measures IWG and the intent to progress work intersessionally and encouraged further discussion prior to WCPFC22.

7.5.4 Improving data quality for Commission VMS and RFV

Paper: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-20

386. The Deputy Compliance Manager introduced WCPFC-TCC21-2025-20 *Secretariat paper proposed updates to VMS SOPs*, which recommended routine updates to WCPFC's VMS Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Discussion

387. New Zealand on behalf of FFA members thanked the Secretariat for making available various online mechanisms for CCMs to use when they submit the relevant data and information that was required to address any gaps. FFA members supported the proposed changes to the VMS SOPs and the recommendation in TCC21-2025-20, noting this would further improve the relevant data submissions from CCMs as well as the Secretariat responding to the relevant notifications received. FFA members noted that WCPFC-TCC21-2025-RP01 *Annual Report on the Commission VMS* showed 2,094 vessels were reported to be fishing beyond their national jurisdiction in 2024, 36% of which had not had a mobile transceiver unit (MTU) Audit Report submitted to WCPFC since 2011. Successive CMRs highlighted persistent VMS reporting challenges, pointing to the need for practical mitigation measures to address this issue. FFA members stated they believed that this could be facilitated by ensuring that vessels undergo regular audits of their MTU. Within the VMS Reporting Status tool (VRST), the "Non-Reporting Vessels" tab was a subset of the flagged CCM Vessels tab list, providing a list of vessels that were not reporting. The VRST system could use this list to check when the last MTU audit was conducted for each of the listed vessels and generate the required alert notification. This change could be reflected in the VMS SOPs that were being updated in TCC21-2025-20. FFA members proposed including the following sentence in Section 4.4 where the Secretariat was proposing an email alert.

> *Since June 2025, an email alert to all flag CCM users with VMS Editor access permissions lists all their flagged vessels that show "STOP" status for their attention and action to re-establish normal reporting as soon as possible. The email alert will also indicate the date of the last MTU audit*

conducted for each vessel, with the aim of encouraging flag CCMs to conduct audits for vessels that have not been audited for an extended period.

They suggested additional text to be included in the email alert would highlight the list of flagged CCMs vessels that show "STOP" status for VMS Reporting and the last MTU audit carried out for each of the vessels, which should prompt the flag State to undertake an MTU audit for those that haven't been audited for some time.

388. Japan inquired about the VRST and VMS reconciliation process that related to its delegation paper TCC21-2025-DP08. According to the explanation from the Secretariat, during 2025 the Secretariat would begin the transition to providing monthly VMS reporting gaps to CCMs. Japan inquired about the details of this process or what kind of process CCMs were expected to undertake. Japan also inquired whether a CCM could provide status of, for example "in port" for a specific period, and whether a CCM could use the monthly report to reconcile the VMS reporting gaps?

389. The Secretariat stated that in 2025, a change was made to the use of a manual upload facility, with the data now put directly into the upload facility. The same process would apply if transitioning to the monthly process. The Secretariat stated that in the monthly report, CCMs are able to address the issue within the period of visibility on VRST, as status updates can be made directly into the VRST. It was designed to be close to real-time tracking.

390. Korea offered five comments in relation to the proposed updates in the Secretariat paper:

(i) The VRST Position Reception Status shows the number of position receptions by vessel and by date, but does so without distinguishing between automatic and manual positions. Typically, when there is a WCPFC MTU reception failure, the manual position is linked to the recovery of the automated position. Once the automated position is restored, the manual position should be discontinued. However, the displayed figure combines both automated and manual position reception counts, making it difficult to determine whether the WCPFC MTU has actually been restored. Korea stated it would therefore be useful to improve the system so that the number of receptions on the VRST can be distinguishable between automated and manual reporting.

(ii) Regarding restoring the email-based manual reporting process, in the past, when the Secretariat requested the initiation of manual reporting, the vessel owner or the vessel would complete details such as vessel name, date, coordinates and activities, etc., and submit manual reports to the Secretariat every 4 or 6 hours. However, when the WCPFC Secretariat changed the VMS SOPs to require the submission of manual reports in North Atlantic Format (NAF), confusion arose within the industry. NAF is used for transmitting position data between systems and as it must be electronically generated (manually completing this format can lead to significant sequencing errors). To accommodate this, the Korean FMC developed a feature that allows position data to be converted into NAF using domestic VMS terminals, which would then be automatically sent to the WCPSC Secretariat via email. However, the Secretariat has again changed the process, requesting that member countries drop manual report data into the VRST. So without prior notice, the Secretariat also removed the manual report email without updating the VMS SOPs, causing the automated transmission of manual reports through VMS to fail. For a certain period when manual reporting is required through VRST monitoring personnel must manually copy and paste the NAF data generated by VMS every 4 to 6 hours according to manual reporting standards, which creates additional work burdens. Because the automated transmission of manual reports

through VMS was already set up, Korea stated its hope that the Secretariat can restore the email-based manual reporting process.

(iii) Regarding clarification of manual reporting initiation criteria, the VMS SOP specifies that if there are two failures to receive location data the Secretariat should take all reasonable measures to resume location transmission and inform the flag state and the vessel captain. However, there is practical ambiguity regarding whether the automated VRST no receipt message should be considered as the initiation of manual reporting or whether a separate email notification from the Secretariat should serve as the initiation criterion. Korea's FMC interprets that the automated VRST non-receipt message cannot be considered as the Secretariat having taken all reasonable measures and we hope that when manual reporting is needed, the Secretariat clearly communicates the initiation of the manual reporting process to the flag state and vessel in accordance with the existing procedures.

(iv) Regarding timely verification and approval or denial of VRST MTU activation when updating the MTU device VTAF information: a request for MTU activation is made in the RFV, but it takes a long time to process, usually 2-3 working days. Korea stated it would be much appreciated if more timely verification, approval, or denial can be possible.

(v) Some vessels have experienced a system error when the vessel has taken actions such as the repair of empty units and manual reporting as a response to an automated message alert, and then receive the same alert despite all the actions taken to address the situation that triggered the alert.

391. Chinese Taipei echoed the comments made by Korea, especially point (iii) on the definition of manual reporting. Chinese Taipei stated it also had 24/7 monitoring of its vessels, and continuously received the VMS data. However, the Commission VMS sometimes did not, and Chinese Taipei stated it was unsure about the cause, but apparently the MTU was active and the transmission was intact. Chinese Taipei also sought to confirm their understanding that the SOP updates concerned the WCPFC VMS SOPs, not the SOPs of the SSP. With regards to the comment by New Zealand, Chinese Taipei wondered whether this function was already in place.

392. The Secretariat noted Chinese Taipei's comments (i) regarding the Commission VMS not receiving information from the vessel's VMS when that information was being received by their own monitoring centre, and the associated issue raised by Korea on process, contacts, and communication; and (ii) the MTU audits. The Secretariat also noted New Zealand's comment about the ability to be assured that there are vessels that routinely receive their MTU audit, with MTU units checked and calibrated, and the email alert as a mechanism to achieve that. The Secretariat had been developing a tool (not yet applied) to identify vessels with no (or no recent) MTU audits. How that information could be made available to members had not yet been determined, but it could possibly be through the VRST.

393. The USA stated its appreciation for the input from other CCMs, and was particularly interested in the points made by Korea, in particular point (iv), which it suggested was a priority. The USA thanked the Secretariat for the effort in proposing updates to the WCPFC VMS SOPs, and comments from other CCMs on updating the VRST. The USA stated that it routinely detected, either by AIS or an MCS operation, vessels on the high seas not reporting on the WCPFC VMS. The prevalence of this issue was highlighted during recent Operation Nasse (discussed under Agenda Item 7.5). The USA indicated several instances of RFV-listed vessels arriving at port in American Samoa and not reporting to WCPFC VMS, with the vessel stating they were reporting to their CCM VMS system, and that the issue would need to be taken up with the CCM. The United States voiced its concern and stated this hindered the ability of CCMs to monitor vessel activity within 100 nautical miles of their EEZs, and to support the greater WCPFC mandate. The USA

assessed that the detected non-reporting could be due to numerous reasons, including VMS architecture data flow, troubleshooting, and processes between WCPFC and individual CCMs. The USA recommended that WCPFC and other interested CCMs meet to identify issues related to high seas VMS non-reporting to the WCPFC, and undertake an informal review of the prevalence of the issue in 2026 with the objective of identifying how best to move forward with improving compliance with VMS reporting within the Commission. The USA indicated it was willing to take on a leadership role in that informal work if desired. The USA also stated it had provided a $20,000 voluntary contribution to WCPFC in 2025 to develop a mobile application designed to assist CCMs with manual VMS reporting in a standard format. The USA indicated its intention to work with the Secretariat to provide more details on this mobile application ahead of WCPFC22, specifically to seek members' feedback in its development.

394. PNG commended the Secretariat on the continuous improvement of the online tools for reporting by CCMs. PNG stated they were pleased with the development of the VRST which enabled closing of VMS reporting gaps well in advance of the deadlines and enabled checking vessel status of “fishing” and “did not fish”. It also assisted in correcting “fish/did not fish” reports, especially for vessels that stopped fishing mid-year. PNG supported FFA’s position regarding email alerts.

395. China thanked the Secretariat for its continued progress in enhancing the VRST of the Commission’s vessel position system, including the automated position-report query function and the manual reporting tools. China stated it had consistently cooperated with the Secretariat on this work and had put forward a series of suggestions, and thanked the Secretariat for its long-standing openness to CCM’s views. China proposed that the monthly retrospective gap-reporting tool incorporated a verification function at the time of data upload, to confirm whether position reports had been successfully ingested by the system. This would prevent recurring appearances of the same reports on subsequent “missing positions” spreadsheets. China stated that the tool should also support the upload of relevant status information. This capability was essential, as prolonged reporting gaps may simply reflect situations such as a vessel’s return to China, in port stays for repairs, or movement to another ocean area (e.g., the EPO). China looked forward to the Secretariat’s development of prototype tools to address reporting gaps, and having the outstanding gap records flow directly and smoothly into the WCPFC VMS database through these tools.

396. Japan addressed WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP08, which it first introduced under Agenda Item 3. Japan proposed the following functional changes to the VRST for 2026, which would enable its continued effective operation:

(i) Once a vessel’s status is set to “In Port,” it will remain so unless location data outside the flag CCM’s EEZ is received from the vessel.
(ii) Flag CCMs will be able to review the VMS reporting status history for up to 1 year instead of 1 month.
(iii) Flag CCMs will be able to change the vessel’s status in batches over a period of up to 1 year.

397. Vanuatu, on behalf of FFA members, welcomed improvements to the online systems that further assisted CCMs in their relevant data and information submissions. With regard to Japan’s proposal (i), they sought clarification from the Secretariat on the circumstances where the VMS Reporting Status automatically changed to “***Pending***” and whether the current system could accommodate this proposed change. With regard to proposal (ii), they sought clarification from Japan on whether the intention was to view the daily reporting status of each of their flag vessels (count of the daily position reports received by WCPFC VMS) for the past 1-year period. They also requested further clarification from the Secretariat on

whether the current system could accommodate this proposed change. With regard to proposal (iii), they sought further clarification from Japan to ensure that they were not seeking a 1-year period within which to provide an update on the VMS Non-Reporting 'status' for its vessels that showed a "**STOP**" in the VRST.

398. Japan provided the following responses to Vanuatu. Regarding (ii), they stated the intent was to view the daily reporting status, that is the number of daily position reports received by the Commission VMS for each CCM's flag vessel for the past 1-year period. Regarding (iii), Japan stated its view that status updates should generally be provided in near-real time by flag CCMs for vessels showing a Stop status in the VRST. However, because investigating the cause of a Stop status in the VRST can sometimes take time, Japan stated it would like to be able to retrospectively update the status of vessels that have shown a Stop in the VRST over the past 1-year period. However, Japan noted some CCMs expressed concern about (iii), and suggested the Secretariat could provide information for other questions from Vanuatu.

399. Korea stated that the changes would address chronic inconveniences that the vessels have been experiencing, and pending some requested clarifications, strongly supported the changes.

400. The USA supported the efforts to improve VRST overall and stated it would engage directly with Japan for technical follow-up.

401. The TCC Chair noted further consideration was needed in how the proposed amendments would be achieved and the program of work, and that the Secretariat was unable to provide specific advice at TCC21 on "we would do it this way" or "it will cost this much", but if CCMs supported the proposals the Secretariat could prepare advice on how it could be implemented.

402. During further discussion, Chinese Taipei voiced support for Japan's proposal (ii) and (iii). Niue stated that a 1-year period for finding reasons for MTU failures was excessive, while China noted that there was a monthly verification process and that a year-end review of VMS position gaps was important because sometimes failure to upload positions or other technical issues could appear. Japan stated it preferred 1 year but was flexible, suggesting a 3-month period might be more acceptable. Japan suggested continuing discussions on its proposal (iii), while proceeding with proposals (i) and (ii). Japan's suggestion was supported by Niue.

403. TCC21 noted the presentation from the Secretariat of TCC21-2025-20 on proposed updates to the VMS SOPs. Some CCMs suggested various improvements that could be made to ensure that the VMS reporting system, including VMS manual reporting, operates efficiently. TCC21 requested CCMs to provide feedback to the Secretariat on problems encountered in the operation of the VMS system in order to assist the Secretariat in continuously improving the efficacy of the VMS system.

404. TCC21 recommended that WCPFC22 adopt the updated VMS Standard Operating Procedures (TCC21-2025-20_rev1 contained in **Attachment D**).

405. TCC21 encouraged the Secretariat to develop additional resources that would enhance CCM's awareness of key processes and online systems relating to the Commission VMS.

406. TCC21 thanked Japan for its proposals on the VMS Reporting Status Tool (VRST) (TCC21-2025-DP08) and recommended to WCPFC22 the following functional changes to the VMS Reporting Status Tool (VRST) for 2026:

1) Once a vessel's status is set to "In Port," it will remain so unless location data outside the flag CCM's EEZ is received from the vessel.

2) Flag CCMs will be able to review the VMS reporting status history for up to one year instead of one month.

3) Ongoing discussions were required to progress the proposal (3) Flag CCMs will be able to change the vessel's status in batches over a period of up to one year.

4) TCC21 tasked the Secretariat to work with Japan to further specify the approach to implement the proposed changes and to provide advice on feasibility and potential costs to WCPFC22 for their adoption.

7.5.5 Electronic Monitoring

Papers: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-21, WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP06

407. The interim chair of the ERandEM IWG offered a few observations following informal consultations during TCC21 with a number of CCMs. First, there was widespread acceptance that EM was a very promising tool for data collection, monitoring, and verification, and a sense of urgency in terms of implementing EM, and second, EM supported the recommendations from SC19 and TCC19 for the Commission to explore options to expand monitoring in the WCPO to enhance the accuracy of bycatch estimates and support implementation of harvest strategies. The interim Chair noted CCMs were at very different stages in their experience with EM; many had conducted small-scale trials or pilot programs, but few had established regulated EM programs. In parallel, some EM vendors remained hesitant to invest until EM was fully implemented within the WCPFC, which would create clear opportunities for scaling. Some CCMs had suggested that proposed interim standards, specifications and procedures (SSPs) for onboard EM systems be revisited and further refined, which was consistent with the outcome at WCPFC21. That recommendation stemmed from a shared interest and ensuring that the SSPs provided a robust framework to support the integrity, reliability, and credibility of EM data across all programs. Based on the work plan adopted at WCPFC21, the interim Chair proposed as a priority, the development of an assurance audit process for EM standards for longline based on the ROP audit model and reviewing and developing templates — for example, the Vessel Monitoring Plan (VMP) for Part 1 EM program reporting — where standards reporting would be of value to CCMs. She requested feedback on a draft audit and assurance document, and information on existing VMPs currently in use prior to a IWG virtual meeting on 23 October. She noted other priorities, including a review of EM data requirements focused on relevant CMM provisions not already covered under the ROP Minimum Data fields, addressing outstanding EM data requirements that have yet to be discussed, revisiting and refining the SSPs for onboard EM systems and data fields, and ensuring their alignment and harmonization with standards adopted by other RFMOs. She stated that the ERandEM-WG would begin by revisiting the outcomes of Project 93, which identified data gaps and established standardized data fields for EM, which would serve as the foundation for the WG's next phase of work. The WG would also focus on development of EM standards for carrier vessels engaged in transhipment activities involving longline vessels. She stated that given the strong interconnections between EM and observer program activities, close collaboration with the ROP-IWG would be essential and she looked forward to combining expertise to develop effective, harmonized monitoring solutions.

Discussion

408. FSM, on behalf of FFA members, welcomed the interim Chair of the ERandEM WG, and expressed their eagerness to see progress on the work identified in the adopted ERandEM Workplan for 2025, in particular the development of a proposed assurance/audit process based on the ROP audit model and the initiation of work on EM standards for carrier vessels. The former was especially important where a CCM intended to use EM data to meet increased coverage requirements associated with higher longline bigeye catch. FFA members noted that Table 3 of WCPFC-TCC21-2025-RP09 *Annual Report on the performance of the E-reporting Standards and their application* indicated that the submission of longline EM data by national EM programmes from 2015–2024 had come primarily from FFA Members, and inquired whether other CCMs intended to begin submitting EM data in the near future.

409. The EU supported the workplan as outlined, but noted the need for scheduling work on an implementing CMM that would be needed to operationalize the standards.

410. Korea supported the workplan as outlined and expressed interest in further discussions regarding CCM EM system audits so that all members applying EM were held to the same standards, and highlighted the need for the Commission to develop a mechanism through which EM coverage can be incorporated in monitoring coverage to produce a fairly stable observation and monitoring system that combined human observers and EM.

411. RMI suggested the need for an assessment regarding CCMs' progress to date (individually or sub-regionally) in implementing EM. RMI also noted significant progress by industry.

412. FSM noted inadequate observer coverage of longline fisheries and stated the EM work should not serve as an excuse to delay meeting obligations in terms of physical observers on longliners.

413. The USA introduced WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP06 *Proposal for the Development of a Comprehensive WCPFC Monitoring Program through Establishment of an Overarching CMM*, encouraging the Commission to consider the development of a comprehensive monitoring program that would include both the ROP and EM. They noted this was discussed previously within the ERandEM WG, and received support among members. The USA advocated reconsideration of the approach to ensure that EM worked in concert with existing CMMs and monitoring tools. The USA recognized significant progress by the ROP-IWG, and anticipated the same from the ERandEM WG. The USA stated work towards the goal would not add to or detract from the current IWG taskings, but would complement the efforts and help ensure the taskings of the two groups were closely aligned and geared towards the same overall objective. The USA requested feedback from TCC21 on its delegation paper to support further discussion, noting it would provide an update to WCPFC22, to potentially be considered for decision by WCPFC23.

414. Cook Islands, on behalf of FFA members, reiterated the points they raised at SC21 when the proposal was first tabled. They noted the concept was also proposed by a previous ERandEM WG chair, and acknowledged the good progress made by the ROP-IWG current work on the Minimum Standards Data Fields and the ERandEM WG on the SSPs adopted last year. They stated that although they see merit in development of a comprehensive WCPFC monitoring program through establishment of an overarching CMM, they did not wish to divert focus or disrupt the momentum of the work of either IWG, and therefore considered it important that both the ERandEM IWG and ROP-IWG complete the work under their existing workplans before new arrangements were pursued.

415. Korea generally supported the direction of the proposal given that various monitoring mechanisms were interlinked. Korea also noted, as Cook Islands mentioned, that some elements needed to be completed in the ERandEM and ROP components, and a combination and overarching CMM should subsequently be considered that comprehensively addresses WCPFC monitoring programs. Korea supported the concept in principle and looked forward to working on it with the USA and other interested members.

416. Australia recognised the benefits and challenges of developing a single comprehensive monitoring CMM, the importance of harmonising data, and potential efficiencies. They supported the proposal as a longer-term goal, noting the importance of completing the ROP IWG and ERandEM WG work plans to strengthen longline monitoring, as outlined by the FFA members. They also acknowledged the need to improve monitoring in the longline fishery as an urgent and imperative priority. In that regard, Australia noted its long-standing vision for EM was to achieve 100% installed EM coverage across the high seas longline fleet, recognising this as a complementary tool to the use of observers, and noting it supported the valuable and important role of the ROP observers in supporting the Commission's data needs. Australia stated that strengthening EM coverage across the high seas longline fishery as outlined would help address the imbalance in the tropical tuna measure, ensure more equivalent levels of monitoring between purse seine and longline fisheries, and hold all vessels to equivalent standards.

417. The EU supported the proposal from the USA and emphasised that EM standards should be implemented as soon as possible.

418. The TCC Chair encouraged CCMs to continue to work with the USA on its proposal prior to WCPFC22 and noted the work of the ERandEM WG as critical to progressing that.

419. TCC21 welcomed the update from the Interim Chair of the ERandEM IWG (TCC21-2025-25) on the work of the IWG and noted the importance of ER and EM to improve transparency and the information available in WCPFC fishery, particularly as EM will play a fundamental role in improvements in managing the fishery in future. TCC21 noted the intention of the Interim ERandEM IWG Chair to hold an intersessional ERandEM IWG meeting in November 2025, with a date to be advised.

420. TCC21 thanked the United States for its delegation paper on a Proposal for the Development of a Comprehensive WCPFC Monitoring Programme (TCC21-2025-DP06) and expressed strong in principle support for this work. However, TCC21 expressed concern that the development of a comprehensive monitoring programme through the establishment of a CMM not detract from or slow down the urgent need for implementation of EM. TCC21 supported the continuation of discussions on a pathway to addressing this issue but noted that imminent focus needs to be on progressing work on the adopted work plans of the ROP IWG and ERandEM IWG.

7.6 Support CCMs with Monitoring, Evaluation, and Implementation of Cooperative MCS tools

***Paper:** WCPFC-TCC21-2025-22*

421. The Deputy Compliance Manager and Fisheries Management and Compliance Adviser jointly introduced WCPFC-TCC21-2025-22 *Supporting CCMs with Technical and Compliance Matters,* which updated TCC21 on the Secretariat's outreach efforts and support activities to CCMs during 2024 and the first three quarters of 2025. The paper also outlined ongoing implementation efforts and future priorities

to strengthen CCM capacity in relation to technical and compliance matters. The restructuring of the Secretariat Compliance Team was also covered.

Discussion

422. Solomon Islands, on behalf of FFA members, thanked the Secretariat for the update provided in the paper and the work undertaken in 2025, and acknowledged the Secretariat's proactive engagement with and assistance provided to CCMs, especially FFA members. Regarding the Secretariat's attachment program, Solomon Islands stated the value of the program to FFA members and recognized the option of refresher training and possible in-country delivery, mindful of any extra budgetary implication. FFA members also acknowledged and thanked Canada for the voluntary funding contribution towards the development of enhanced monitoring and evaluation tools and resources.

423. Canada also expressed appreciation for the update, stating it was happy to have had the opportunity to fund recent activities with the Secretariat to support CCMs through its Indo-Pacific Shared Ocean Fund Program, and looked forward to seeing the rollout of the dashboard work within the coming year.

424. RMI extended appreciation to the Secretariat and Canada and noted interest in participating in capacity building in 2026.

425. The USA stated that the Secretariat's assistance was exceptional, and expressed appreciation for the Help Desk resources, which the USA used frequently. The USA also recognised the value in the attachment program and the training options provided by the Secretariat and looked forward to seeing those continue to grow. The USA also welcomed collaboration between CCMs and the Secretariat on outreach tools and support materials as technology evolved, noting the exceptional technological advances by the Secretariat in the compliance process over the prior 3 years, and looked forward to further progress.

426. The EU joined other CCMs in expressing appreciation to the Secretariat for the support that it provided and supported continuation of the work.

427. The TCC Chair welcomed the strong support and acknowledgement of the Secretariat for its compliance work, noting that TCC21 recognised its ongoing priority, and appreciated the additional funding that was provided by Canada. The Chair recognised the Secretariat's stellar efforts to support members, and stated that the benefits had been raised by a number of members over the last few TCC meetings.

428. TCC21 thanked the Secretariat for the presentation of TCC21-2025-22 on the Secretariat's outreach efforts and support activities to CCMs during 2024 and in the first three quarters of 2025.

429. TCC21 welcomed and strongly supported the Secretariat's ongoing work to provide guidance and assistance to CCMs. In particular, TCC21 acknowledged the stellar efforts of the Secretariat to support CCMs, particularly through the Helpdesk, attachment programmes and options for refresher training and possible in-country delivery.

430. TCC21 acknowledged and thanked Canada for its voluntary funding contribution for enhanced monitoring and evaluation tool and resources and encouraged continued collaboration between CCMs and the Secretariat in shaping outreach, training tools, and online support materials.

7.6.1 Develop Voluntary Regional Guides for HSBI

Papers: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-24, WCPFC-TCC21-2025-24, A through E

431. David Power (Australia), HSBI WG Chair, introduced WCPFC-TCC21-2025-24 *Update on the Intersessional Process to Develop Voluntary Regional HSBI Guides*. He thanked the participants for their constructive engagement and input through the course of three virtual meetings and a fourth meeting held in the margins of TCC21. He noted five complete guides had been prepared (WCPFC-TCC21-2025-24, A through E).

Discussion

432. Cook Islands, on behalf of FFA members, thanked the Chair and the WG for developing the draft HSBI Guides, and supported the work, considering it was heading in the right direction and that the guides would complement CMM 2006-08 and assist authorized CCMs engaged in HSBI. FFA members considered that the draft HSBI guides were easy to read and follow, and outlined consistent, practical, transparent evidentiary procedures for inspectors to follow during at sea inspections. For example, for the HSBI DNA Sampling Guide, the process to collect samples had to be documented using photos or videos and with the presence of the authorized inspector, master, crew and boarding party.

433. Japan stated it had engaged in all the HSBI Guide intersessional working group meetings and generally supported the results. It raised a question in the bycatch mitigation guide regarding the need for set duration given that start and end times are included as information to record.

434. The WG Chair stated that would be in keeping with other changes made to simplify the guides, and recommended the change by Japan be adopted.

435. Korea stated it supported endorsement of the five guides, noting that because these were guides rather than regulations, they should not create obligations outside the current CMMs, and that inspectors may ask other questions or conduct other protocols outside the guides as long as they were consistent with the Convention and current WCPFC CMMs. They looked forward to continuing the work intersessionally and during WCPFC22.

436. Canada considered that the work was valuable in improving the consistency and application of the MCS procedures used by inspectors during the course of HSBI activities. Canada supported the endorsement of the five draft guides pending the continued work among members to finalize text with a view to adoption and full endorsement at WCPFC22.

437. New Zealand acknowledged the significant effort by Australia in leading the work, and referenced comments made about the Article 25(2) case file management system and significant referrals that resulted in non-sanction or non-infraction, which they agreed was appropriate. New Zealand observed that the guides would help inspectors more generally increase the quality of evidence collection, which would ultimately help flag States investigate infractions and hopefully lead to positive results. New Zealand also supported Japan's comments regarding removal of duration, and Korea's comments.

438. The HSBI WG Chair described the update of the multi-language questionnaire as developed by the working group (WCPFC-TCC21-2025-24F).

439. China referenced problems boarding officers have communicating with the vessel captain, particularly using VHF, because of language barriers, noting accents may pose problems even for translators or interpreters. China suggested the pre-boarding questions be simplified, and based on information from the RFV whenever possible. In response to a query from the HSBI WG Chair, China stated it would request its boarding officer to review the pre-boarding questions and consult further with the HSBI WG Chair.

440. TCC21, while noting that CCMs may continue to provide suggestions and inputs into the draft voluntary guides in the lead up to WCPFC22, endorsed the following five draft voluntary guides for HSBI and recommended them to the Commission for adoption:

i. HSBI DNA Sampling Guide | TCC21-2025-24A_rev2

ii. HSBI Catch Quantification Guide | TCC21-2025-24B_rev3

iii. HSBI Measuring Tool Calibration Guide | TCC21-2025-24C_rev2

iv. HSBI Bycatch Mitigation Measuring Guide | TCC21-2025-24D_rev2

v. HSBI Collection and Dissemination of Photographic and Video Evidence Guide | TCC21-2025-24E_rev1

441. TCC21 noted the update from the HSBI WG Chair on the progress to develop draft revisions to the Standardized Multilanguage Questionnaire (TCC21-2025-24F_rev3). TCC21 encouraged CCMs to continue to work with the Australia to finalise draft revisions to the HSBI Standardized Multilanguage Questionnaire for consideration and adoption at WCPFC22.

7.7 Review information and provide technical advice and recommendations related to CMM 2024-05 on Sharks

Papers: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-23_SECURE, WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP03

442. The TCC Chair noted a number of specific issues to be discussed at TCC21 in relation to CMM 2024-05, including consideration of what information was necessary to include in the Part 2 Report to determine the effectiveness of the alternative methods, and recommend to the Commission changes to Annex 2 of CMM 2024-05, as well as a review and discussion of the 2025 CCM reports submitted in response to CMM 2024-05 paras. 10 and 11. The Chair noted a secure working paper, available only to CCMs: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-23_SECURE *Responses in 2025 Annual Report Part 2 on paragraphs 10 and 11 of CMM 2024-05* that related to the 2025 Part 2 responses. The Chair also noted Japan's delegation paper WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP03.

Discussion

443. Sharks Pacific thanked Japan for its report on CMM 2024-05, but noted the report indicated most Japanese longline vessels already employed the fins naturally attached standard, which the Commission

had recognized as the most effective and verifiable method to prevent shark finning. They noted that Japan's domestic legislation under Article 62 also favoured vessels landing sharks with fins naturally attached, but that a handful of vessels continued to apply the “alternative measures” under paragraph 9. Sharks Pacific noted this involved greater time and effort for fishing vessels while creating a greater burden on observers and HSBI officers tasked with monitoring complex compliance. Sharks Pacific stated that fins naturally attached should be reaffirmed as the only credible enforceable approach with the alternative methods treated strictly as a transitional arrangement towards fins naturally attached. Sharks Pacific also inquired with Japan whether Japan considered that the continued use of alternative measures created an unnecessary administrative and enforcement burden, and what timeline Japan envisioned for phasing out their use.

444. FFA members thanked Japan for the report in DP03 and welcomed more information on any operational challenges faced by inspectors when conducting HSBIs on vessels related to paragraph 9 and 10, stating this was of particular interest as other CCMs previously reported significant difficulties when assessing these obligations due to poor implementation.

445. French Polynesia stated that as the world’s largest shark sanctuary, it attached great importance to the efficiency of the shark CMM. They noted with concern the findings reported under the Operation North Pacific Guard about suspected cases of finning, suggesting that such practices may unfortunately persist despite regulation and inspection efforts. In this context, French Polynesia believed that maintaining alternatives to the “fins naturally attached” rule undermined compliance with the rule by making control operations more complex. Eliminating these alternatives would streamline inspections both at sea and on landings: if fins were naturally attached, the vessel is compliant; if not, it is non-compliant. Such clarity would strengthen enforcement, close opportunities for finning, and send a clear and unified message that this practice has no place in the WCPFC area. French Polynesia stated its support for moving toward the removal of an alternative to the fin-naturally-attached requirement.

446. The USA inquired about the potential of holding a closed session to enable discussion of matters in working paper 23.

447. The EU thanked Japan for its paper and stated this was a long-standing discussion among CCMs, with most expressing discomfort with the application and the lack of information regarding so-called alternative methods. It noted that despite broad support for fins naturally attached, some delegations continued implementing the alternative methods, although as noted in DP03, very few of Japan’s vessels implemented the alternative. The EU stated DP03 did not demonstrate the specific circumstances of the vessels that required application of the “alternative methods and measures”, but welcomed the sharing of information by Japan. The EU noted the mention of challenges in monitoring implementation, but no explanation of what these were, and stated the CMM required that such challenges be clarified, and suggested this be included in future submissions. The EU also indicated it was unable to access information in the WP23 secure document, and with that in mind, requested that the Secretariat compile specific information that responded to the requirements under paragraph 10 as provided by those members that applied the measure and make that available in the secure section of the website.

448. Canada stated that the details provided in Japan's report were very helpful to support preparations for the review of this measure in 2027. Canada supported the future introduction of a strict “fins naturally attached” requirement, recognizing the inherent risks associated with the exemptions to facilitate shark finning and the difficulties posed to inspectors when trying to conduct compliance verification under these paragraph 9 exemptions. Canada noted that Japan identified some areas for

improvement specifically relating to tagging and labelling. Canada stated its inspectors also continued to face compliance verification challenges arising from their HSBI activities relating to tagging and labelling. Canada stated it would welcome consideration by CCMs of practical solutions that may help address the issue and facilitate more robust future storage, monitoring, and inspection processes. Canada sought clarification regarding areas where inspectors encountered uncertainties during HSBI and contacted flag CCMs for information.

449. New Caledonia thanked Japan for its paper, noting New Caledonia maintained a long-standing position on shark conservation, having designated its entire EEZ as a sanctuary where fishing for sharks was forbidden, and boarding or landing shark bycatch was strictly prohibited. As highlighted in DP03, an important majority of Japanese vessels were implementing the fins naturally attached measure, meaning all vessels should have the same ability. New Caledonia stated it could not support the continued application of the alternative options permitted under paragraph 9 of CMM 2024-05, and that allowing these alternatives posed an unacceptable risk of supporting ongoing shark finning, thereby undermining the efficacy of the core obligation stipulated in paragraph 7 of CMM 2024-05. New Caledonia joined other speakers in seeking more information regarding the challenges encountered during inspections.

450. France noted that some shark species were highly vulnerable and the obligation to keep fins naturally attached was intended to protect them by facilitating inspection work. France supported removing the alternative to naturally attached fins.

451. The USA stated that despite submission of DP03, the USA remained concerned that the alternative measures essentially made enforcement and compliance more difficult, particularly for inspectors during HSBI as it required locating, counting, and matching fins within a specified time period, as demonstrated by the pictures in DP03. Further, recent MCS operations such as Operation North Pacific Guard indicated that finning was still occurring. The USA stated that the most effective way to ensure the full utilization of sharks was to require sharks to be landed with their fins naturally attached and not allowing alternative measures.

452. Japan thanked CCMs for their comments, and stated its intention through DP03 was to discuss the issue transparently. Regarding the number of vessels using the alternative measure, Japan stated that the Japan's fresh distant-water longline vessels, which make up the majority in the WCPO, landed sharks with fins naturally attached. The longline vessels landing fish with fins not attached were freezing their catch. The purpose of the fin related measure was to ensure the full utilization of sharks and to prevent their brutal treatment. The alternative measure was fully consistent with this objective, while also addressing the practical challenges faced by large longline vessels. Japan wished to continue using the alternative measure as long as its fishermen needed the practicality. Japan stated there were no enforcement challenges for HSBI and suggested the most appropriate approach for inspectors to check the measure was through landing inspections rather than HSBI, because the inspector can scrutinize the fish hold. Japan suggested that finding isolated fins on the fishing vessel — which was needed to detect finning activities — would be equally difficult under either approach (naturally attached vs alternative measure). Japan supported the suggestion by the EU for the Secretariat to compile information about implementation, and Japan stated it would like to continue the discussion, including regarding paragraph 10 (on AR Pt2 reporting).

453. Chinese Taipei stated it had different fisheries and fleet operation patterns, and struggled with the need for flexibility, and thus supported the need for alternative measures. They stated that they have tried to implement a fins naturally attached policy for longliners that fished for sharks, but that this would

lower the value of the shark, and for some markets there was a need to separate the fin and the carcass. In addition, the frozen fin may pose a hazard to vessel crew. For those reasons retaining the flexible alternative measure was very important for the operation of longliners. Chinese Taipei stated its understanding that shark was also a very important income source for longline operations, and thus this policy was important to the survival of the longline industry.

454. Canada stated there was agreement that the core objective of the CMM was to ensure full utilization and that finning was not occurring. Canada suggested it would be helpful to discuss paras. 10 and 11 (enforcement issues) briefly in closed session to improve CCMs' understanding. If time did not permit, recognizing that the review of the measure was scheduled for 2027 and in the interests of time, Canada suggested doing this at TCC22. In relation to the Commission tasking to TCC21 to consider what information was necessary to include in AR Pt2 to determine the effectiveness of the alternatives and recommend to the Commission changes to Annex 2, it proposed an addition that CCMs describe any instances of non-compliance observed with respect to paras. 7, 8 and 9. This would support a better understanding of the compliance levels with respect to fully utilizing sharks that were retained and with respect to the finning prohibition, which was the core objective of the measure. Canada stated its hope that any description of non-compliance would help CCMs better understand the operational challenges that may exist and help find the most practical solution for everyone when the measure was up for review in 2027. As previously mentioned under Agenda Item 5.7, the TCC tasking prompted an internal analysis on the overall shark reporting framework and Canada recognized that information was now sought via the audit points, the annex, and operational paragraphs within the measure. In an effort to streamline this, Canada stated it would propose amendments to the shark audit points, stating it would pursue those intersessionally, and seek to streamline reporting within the CMM as appropriate leading up to 2027.

455. China noted the practical challenge and fully supported the points raised by Japan. They stated that frozen fins required careful handling to protect the quality, while fins attached to frozen carcasses increased offload safety risks, and storing a carcass and fins separately used hold space more efficiently. When implementation of a measure proved challenging, alternative measures should be permitted, thus China considered the para. 9 alternatives feasible and consistent with the CMM.

456. Sharks Pacific supported Canada's intervention and proposal. Regarding Chinese Taipei's comment and with respect to full utilization of sharks, full utilization would be best facilitated by simply having the whole shark with all the parts attached, ensuring that all the parts ultimately get landed. Sharks Pacific stated they were unaware how full utilization could be effectively supported by the alternative measures. They also noted claims over the years that leaving fins naturally attached diminished their value, but there had been no comprehensive analysis on how the practice of removing the fins from the shark actually changed the value of those fins in comparison to leaving fins naturally attached. There was also no medical evidence of frozen shark fins causing injuries.

457. Canada introduced TCC21-2025-SharkCMM comprising two recommendations related to CMM 2024-05. CCMs discussed whether actual quantities of sharks harvested under the alternative should be reported, and if that would duplicate information already provided to the Commission. The issue of whether a specific reference to obligations under CMM 2013-06 should be included was also raised.

458. Pending receipt of a complete CMM 2013-06 assessment, TCC21 recommended that WCPFC22 consider the following addition to Annex 2 of CMM 2024-05 to support CCMs in determining the effectiveness of the alternative measures set out in paragraph 9: "CCMs describe any instances of non-

compliance observed with respect to paragraphs 7, 8 and 9; and describe the quantity of sharks caught where the CCM applied the alternative measures and the total quantity of sharks taken."

459. Per paragraph 12 of CMM 2024-05, TCC21 recommended that the Commission direct the Secretariat to compile the information provided by CCMs separately for those CCMs implementing the alternative measures and those CCMs who are implementing a "fins naturally attached" policy with respect to paragraphs 10 and 11, including the information outlined in the previous paragraph.

460. TCC21 encouraged CCMs to work with Canada in the lead up to WCPFC22 on the proposed amendments to Annex 2 of CMM 2024-05.

461. TCC21 tasked the TCC Chair in consultation with the Secretariat to provide a paper to the Commission on how the review of the AR Part 2 information related to CCMs implementation of alternative measures set out in paragraph 9 can be completed at future TCC meetings during plenary sessions. The paper would provide advice on the feasibility of different options, for the Commissions consideration.

7.8 Review information and provide technical advice and recommendations related to CMMs to mitigate impacts of fishing

462. The Chair noted that WCPFC-TCC21-2025-27 *Reference Paper for SC21 outcomes related to TCC21 Agenda Item 7.8* was taken as read, and TCC21-2025-15 was also applicable in this discussion.

Seabirds

Papers: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP09_Rev01, WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP04_Rev01

463. New Zealand noted WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP09_Rev01 *Update from New Zealand on review of CMM 2018-03 (Seabirds)_Rev01* and reviewed the three recommendations:

(i) That in the area 25° to 30° S require the combined use of two measures from the following: tori lines, branch line weighting, and night setting. Or use hook shielding devices as a standalone option (the current CMM that's in place at the moment requires only one measure)
(ii) in the area south of 30°S require the combined use of three measures: tori lines, branch line weighting, and night setting, or use hoop shielding devices as a standalone option (the current CMM requires two measures).
(iii) Require branch line weighting specifications for the Southern hemisphere as follows:
- ≥40 g within 0.5 m of the hook
- ≥60 g within 1 m of the hook
- ≥80 g within 2 m of the hook, and
- Specify that all branch lines must be weighted when applying this method.

General discussion

464. Japan stated their understanding that the proposed mitigation measures were not explicitly endorsed at SC21, and from that perspective, Japan was not in a position to support them, but was willing to engage in a discussion on their practicality.

465. China stated its understanding that SC21 advice for TCC21 was to discuss the practicalities of implementing two measures from 25°S to 30°S and three methods in the area south of 30°S, and that it make detailed comments during the discussion.

466. ACAP supported New Zealand's phased approach to revising CMM 2018-03 as contained in DP09, and noted New Zealand's proposed recommendations would align the requirements from 25°S to 30°S with the measures currently required south of 30°S. This change would substantially improve bycatch mitigation for seabirds at risk in this area, particularly the endangered Antipodean Albatross and Gibson's Albatross, and improve consistency of operations for vessels fishing south of 30° degrees south. Vessels fishing in the area 25° to 30° S typically also fished further south, where combined use of two mitigation measures was currently required. Therefore, there were no practical issues for extending this requirement to the area from 25°S to 30°S. In fact, most vessels operating in this area were already reported using two or three mitigation measures as presented in DP09.

467. French Polynesia stated that only a small portion of its EEZ was south of 25°S, and it represented a very minimal share of their fishing effort, but their national regulations have required the use of two mitigation measures south of 25°S since 2022, and they encouraged other parties to adopt such measures, both as a matter of compliance and a shared commitment to seabird conservation. French Polynesia stated it also encouraged their vessels to apply mitigation measures north of 25°S, and reported data showed that some nationally protected species, such as the Taiti petrel (*Pseudobulweria rostrata*), were incidentally captured further north. They encouraged others to follow this approach, and supported New Zealand's proposal.

468. RMI stated that given the negative impact of operations on seabirds, all CCMs shared a responsibility to make corrective actions. They supported New Zealand's proposal.

469. Niue on behalf of FFA members commended New Zealand for their commitment and extensive work on this review, stating it set a high standard in terms of process for such efforts. They also thanked other CCMs for their collaborative efforts to develop a fit-for-purpose seabird mitigation CMM that is both effective for protecting endangered species and practical for fleets. They fully supported progress achieved and recognised the need to strengthen seabird mitigation measures and improve monitoring in the longline fishery. They supported the adoption of the strengthened mitigation measures at WCPFC22.

Comments on mitigation from 25°S to 30°S

470. China stated it had consulted with its industry and had several practical difficulties. The weighted branch may be dangerous to crew, resulting in injury when crew are holding the line with a big fish, if the line suddenly breaks and the weighted lead bounces. They also stated that the weighted branch line reduced the catch rate by over 50% compared with an unweighted branch line. After some fishing vessels use weighted branch line at 25°S to 30°S for several years they all reported they were unwilling to keep using this method above 30°S, but do so because they have no choice but to comply with the existing requirements.

471. Japan emphasized that fishermen themselves wish to avoid seabird bycatch because bait taken by seabird represents an economic loss. In this respect, fishermen and the seabird conservationists share a common interest. Japan stated that for that reason it submitted a proposal (in DP04) to ensure practicality for fishermen while keeping the effectiveness of the seabed mitigation measure. Regarding New Zealand's recommendation (i), Japan stated it was unclear why night-setting had been excluded from the list of options noting that the mitigation effectiveness of night setting was widely recognized and

introduced in the area south of 30°S, and Japan stated it should have been included as a mitigation option in the current CMM. Japan also stated some fleets operating in the area may have different operational patterns compared to southern longline vessels that are familiar with the mitigation measure applicable to the area south of 30ºS.

472. BirdLife International clarified that the proposed changes for 25°S to 30°S were requesting that two out of three measures were used. With regards to China's comment about line weighting not being the preferred option for some vessels, BirdLife stated they were not required to use line weighting, and could use night setting and tori lines. If a vessel chose not to use line weighting then there were other options available. South of 30° S vessels were likely already using 2 out of 3 measures.

473. Australia recognised the concerns and impacts of longline fishing on seabirds and stated they shared the goal of New Zealand in strengthening seabird mitigation measures and ensuring that they were effective across all areas in the WCPFC Convention. Regarding recommendation (i), Australia supported the proposal.

474. ACAP noted that from the practicability point of view, extending the implementation of two or three of three mitigation measures in the region 25°S to 30°S involved no practicality issues because these mitigation measures were already applied south of 30°S. Thus, no practicability issues were expected to arise from shifting the operation area by 5°S, especially considering that most of the vessels fishing between 25°S and 30°S also fished south of 30°S, where combining two mitigation measures was already required.

Comments on mitigation south of 30°S

475. Chinese Taipei extended appreciation to New Zealand for reaching out early in the year to consult on the proposal. Chinese Taipei stated it still had some concern with the EEZ exemption, but was very pleased that French Polynesia had adopted a 2 out of 3 approach as a high seas requirement and encouraged all CCMs to take this approach. Chinese Taipei stated they would detail their concerns on the EEZ exemption at WCPFC22.

476. China noted the practical challenges posed by hook shields, stating they were expensive and sometimes performance was unstable. When deployed at sea, some failed to open at the fixed depth, and the cost from lost hook shields was approximately US$150 per day, which fishing vessels could not afford. China stated that hook shields also significantly reduced the catch rate, and after several trials and pilot projects, fishing vessels refused to buy more hook shields. China stated that its industry also objected to night setting because it took additional time, and night sighting with low deck lighting increased injury risk. Night setting changed the operational mode of the entire tuna fleet, and China stated it could not support this method. China also stated it could not support the changes to the current measure because of the remaining practical challenges. China recommended conducting research on seabed mitigation methods that did not disrupt longline setting, stating that laser bird scaring devices were already used with high-speed rail, in airports, and around electrical substations, and have been proven to efficiently scare birds. China suggested that if this method was deployed at sea, it would have minimal impact on the line-setting process, and stated that these methods have been shown on ACAP's website. China strongly suggested scientists research this method to protect seabirds and settle the practice challenges faced by its industry.

477. Japan explained the operational challenges involved in the proposal. They noted that the duration of nighttime varies by season and the start time of operations also changed depending on the sea

conditions, and that it was operationally unrealistic to complete longline setting entirely during nighttime. Currently Japanese vessels operating south of 30°S begin setting lines before dawn and switch to weighted branch lines as sunrise approaches. In practice, they implement either night setting or weighted branch lines in addition to the use of tori lines. Therefore, it was not feasible to implement all three options simultaneously. Regarding hook-shielding devices, this was a standalone option, but very challenging for fishermen to implement because of cost and availability. It also covered only the point of the hook, but not the bait, which was perfect for seabirds, which can freely steal bait with no risk. In practice if fishermen use hook shielding devices, they also need to simultaneously use tori lines to prevent seabirds from attacking the bait.

478. Chinese Taipei echoed the comments from China and Japan and noted data from IATTC regarding the loss of Hookpod shielding devices, which it stated would be the only feasible option south of 30°S, because it was not possible to use three mitigation measures simultaneously. Chinese Taipei stated that the IATTC data showed an unacceptably high Hookpod replacement rate, and for that reason could not presently support the New Zealand proposal.

479. ACAP noted the comments from China on the utilization of lasers as an option of mitigation measures or protecting seabirds from being caught in longlines. ACAP had reviewed the efficiency and risks of high energy lasers as mitigation measures and in the latest ACAP best practice advice, based on the review of current information, available evidence showed that high-energy lasers were ineffective at deterrence from danger areas around fishing vessels. There was no evidence that lasers can prevent seabirds from being hooked during fishing activities. Furthermore, the laser likely damaged seabird visual systems with negative effects on the foraging behaviour of laser-exposed birds. Because of that, ACAP did not recommend lasers as an option for mitigating seabird bycatch.

480. China stated that their science research vessel Song Hang had researched tori lines, weighted branch lines, and ultrasound, and stated better ways were needed to mitigate seabird bycatch. China agreed with Japan that no fishermen want to catch seabirds, and all were searching for a method with the least impact on the catch rate of the target species.

481. Australia commented regarding recommendation (ii) and the differing views from several CCMs that stressed concerns with implementing three out of three mitigation measures. Australia proposed an alternative that might strengthen both the monitoring and the mitigation standards for vessels that operate south of 30°S: that the requirement to use three out of three mitigation measures south of 30°S apply only for vessels without an operational EM system installed or an observer on board. That would mean that vessels with an operational EM system or an onboard observer would be able to continue to use the two out of three mitigation measures as currently proposed.

482. Japan stated it explained the difficulty of using the three out of the three measures, and in that sense linking implementation with monitoring did not make sense.

483. ACAP commented on the hook shielding device, and specifically on the hook points, noting that hook shielding devices may not be suitable for all fishing fleets and systems, but represented an extra option for vessels that would like to use this measure. ACAP also stated there was no scientific evidence to support any impact of hook shielding devices on the catch rate of target species. ACAP also recognized that implementing three of three mitigation measures was challenging for most areas and most fleets.

Comments on branch line weighting specifications

484. China indicated that it had received a lot of feedback from their industry, which agreed that 40 grams with 0.5 meters is okay, and they were also flexible with 50 grams with integrated hooks to be used, but objected regarding the 1-meter and 2-meter leader proposal.

485. Japan reiterated the challenges of implementing all three measures south of 30°S. Japan also stated regarding heavier weight to be used in weighted branch line, as mentioned by China, Japan had concerns about the safety of crew members. When a fish hooked on the line was brought alongside the vessel, if the hook comes off the fish, the weight could be flung back at the crew. This may be based on ACAP recommendations, and ACAP probably considers this risk, but specification of branch lines varied by vessel, fleet and country. Japan stated that the weight specifications must be carefully discussed in SC, and that at this stage it cannot accept the proposal.

486. New Zealand acknowledged China, Chinese Taipei, and Japan's concerns around the challenges of implementing all three measures south of 30°S. They also noted the suggestions from Australia and French Polynesia in terms of recommendation one and acknowledged that it was a realistic place to start. New Zealand stated it would bring a revised proposal to the Commission and welcomed comments.

487. Japan referenced WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP04_Rev01, which it introduced under Agenda Item 3. Japan noted the paper was discussed at SC to address specifications for tori lines that currently included highly detailed technical requirements. However, these specifications had not undergone thorough review to date. In light of seabird mitigation measures adopted by ICCAT and IOTC, Japan proposed categorizing the technical specifications into two distinct groups. Measures that significantly affected the effectiveness and operational practicality of tori lines should be designed as a legally binding minimum standard. Other elements should be classified as technical guidelines. This approach would clarify for fishermen which specifications are most critical for maximizing the effectiveness of tori lines while also supporting more efficient inspections by enforcement officers. The two-tiered classification method was endorsed by SC21. Japan welcomed feedback from CCMs regarding adoption of the proposal at WCPFC22.

488. China agreed with Japan's proposal that where a tori line breaks for example because of excessive operational tension, such a breakage should not be treated as a violation during at-sea inspections, explaining that the tori lines in use were overly long (over 200 meters) and frequently broke in rough seas.

489. Chinese Taipei stated it was happy to learn that SC endorsed Japan’s proposed concept which it considered to be a very useful approach to improve the effectiveness of tori lines. Chinese Taipei noted a technical question about the swivels and inquired if they could further discuss the swivel specification with the Japanese delegation to improve the document.

490. New Zealand stated that as discussed at SC21, they considered it important to maintain the tori line attachment height as amendment standards and appreciated Japan's accommodation of this.

491. ACAP commended Japan for the work reviewing tori line specification for large vessels and supported Japan’s suggestion regarding minimum standards and technical guidelines as contained in DP04 rev1.

492. The EU noted the importance for TCC to ensure that under the minimum standards there was some measurable metric, noting that the actual length of a tori line could probably be inspected and measured whereas the actual aerial extent (which is proposed as a minimum standard) was a rather

subjective assessment, especially when deployed at sea. The EU suggested further reflecting on this before finalizing the standards.

493. Japan asked CCMs to provide written comments. They noted the comment by the EU and agreed that was important, but noted that what was the most important for seabird mitigation was substantially maintaining the 100 meters of aerial coverage of tori lines. The 200-meter requirement was not included in the mitigation measures of other RFMOs. For example, IATTC specifies 100 meters with towing device. Neither ICCAT nor IOTC have a 200-meter standard for length of tori line. Japan suggested that this should be treated as a guideline rather than a mandatory requirement. This proposal provided an option to ensure the 100-meter aerial extent instead of 200 meters. Japan stated that according to their fishermen, 200-meter tori lines with two types of streamers were generally very heavy and sometimes there was a risk that tori pole or edge of the deck of the vessel could be broken due to too much tension from the tori line with many streamers. Japan suggested the technical specification should be further improved, but at this stage Japan's proposal gave a certain level of flexibility to fishermen while keeping the substantial content of the current mitigation measures. Japan recognized the question of how the 100-meter aerial extent could be enforced and suggested continuing the discussion with other interested CCMs.

494. Australia agreed that increased clarity was needed in the measure and stated it wanted to ensure that the obligations such as the tori line length were not moved to the technical guidelines. They supported Chinese Taipei's suggestion to work with the Japanese delegation on the proposal.

495. The TCC Chair encouraged interested CCMs to work with Japan prior to WCPFC22 and noted the broader work being undertaken to review the seabird CMM, as discussed previously.

Sea Turtles

Paper: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP07

496. The USA referenced WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP07 *Proposed process to review current reporting requirements and mitigation measures in CMM 2018-04 (Sea Turtles)*, and recalled that at WCPFC21, the Commission agreed to review and revise CMM 2018-04 for sea turtles in 2026, to ensure that the reporting requirements were clearly defined and to consider expanding the scope of the measure to include mitigation measures for deep set longline fisheries for consideration by SC22, TCC22, and WCPFC23. The USA indicated it was prepared to lead work to review CMM 2018-04 to ensure that the reporting requirements were clearly defined and consistently implemented, and to ensure that the current measure was based upon the best available science and its efforts to minimize the impacts of longline fishing on vulnerable sea turtle populations in the WCPFC Convention Area. Following a similar process to that led by New Zealand in the review of CMM 2018-03 for seabirds, the USA was proposing the establishment of an informal IWG to evaluate scientific research on sea turtle interactions and provide advice to SC22, TCC22, and WCPFC23 regarding potential revisions to CMM 2018-04. The USA looked forward to hearing feedback from members on this proposal to inform a delegation paper to be submitted by the USA to WCPFC22. The USA provided draft recommendation language in DP07 for TCC21's consideration.

497. Japan supported the formation of a working group, and noted a similar discussion conducted in the margins of IATTC.

498. Tonga, on behalf of FFA members, reiterated their support for the establishment an informal IWG to support the 2026 review of the sea turtle measure. They reiterated issues they saw as important in the work of the IWG: the importance of a risk-based, evidence-informed approach to any proposed expansion

of the CMM; and an analysis of the implementation burden and potential costs of any new mitigation requirements for deep-set fisheries on SIDS. They looked forward to the work of the IWG.

499. Korea, joined by Chinese Taipei, New Caledonia, the EU, and French Polynesia supported the proposal by the USA.

Marine Pollution

Paper: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP05

500. Canada presented WCPFC-TCC21-2025-DP05, noting that in light of the proposal Canada submitted to the Commission in 2024 to amend CMM 2017-04 (WCPFC21-2024-DP04), WCPFC21 requested interested CCMs to work on marine pollution in 2025 and 2026, with a view to adopting a measure at WCPFC23. Canada initiated the review by seeking written feedback on WCPFC-2024-DP04 and in June 2025, circulated the feedback received and identified key themes of the review. This input was collated in the annex of TCC21-2025-DP05 and included Canada's comments on key elements as well. Canada stated its intention to provide interested CCMs and observers with two additional opportunities to provide input on the draft text via correspondence, and welcomed input from CCMs.

501. Australia, on behalf of FFA members, thanked Canada for their leadership and the progress achieved to date, and noted the draft schedule for 2026, and looked forward to engaging with all CMMs in 2026 on this work.

502. Chinese Taipei, the USA, Korea, and the EU thanked Canada for their proposal and looked forward to working with Canada and other CCMs on the issue.

503. Sharks Pacific commended Canada for its continued leadership in drawing attention to the issue of marine pollution and ghost gear, noting this was a serious concern, as abandoned, lost and discarded fishing gear, along with drifting FADs, were persistent sources of mortality for sharks, turtles, seabirds, and other vulnerable species, and degrade marine ecosystems supporting fisheries managed by the Commission. Sharks Pacific indicated that despite some progress, such as requirements for FAD design and disposal, data compliance and enforcement gaps remained significant, and WCPFC lacked a systematic approach to tracking and preventing gear loss, ensuring retrieval, and holding fleets accountable when fishing gear became marine debris. They strongly supported enhancing and expanding WCPFC's existing CMMs, particularly strengthening observer protocols so that data on abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear and marine pollution were consistently captured, reported, and integrated into the CCFS and compliance monitoring; exploring alignment with other RFMOs on best practices and gear marking, retrieval, and retrieval programs, and biodegradable gear requirements; and closing enforcement gaps by ensuring marine pollution provisions were actively monitored and enforced through the CMR process. Sharks Pacific urged TCC21 to recommend that the Commission further develop and enhance the marine pollution CMM.

504. TCC21 thanked New Zealand for continuing to lead the review of the seabird measure (CMM 2018-03) as tasked by WCPFC21 (para 552 (a)) and for the delegation paper (TCC21-2025-DP09_Rev01).

505. TCC21 noted a range of views on these recommendations and noted that New Zealand will engage further with CCMs on the strengthening of seabird mitigations, with a view to WCPFC22 considering improvements to the seabird measure.

506. TCC21 thanked Japan for its delegation paper on revised tori-line specifications for large longline vessels in the South Pacific under CMM 2018-03 (TCC21-2025-DP04_Rev01) and encouraged CCMs to continue discussions with Japan on its proposal prior to WCPFC22 for consideration at WCPFC22.

507. TCC21 thanked the United States for its delegation paper on a proposed process to review current reporting requirements and mitigation measures contained in CMM 2018-04 (Sea Turtles) (TCC21-2025-DP07).

508. TCC21 endorsed the formation of an informal intersessional process led by the United States to review CMM 2018-04 for sea turtles, noting that an examination of sea turtle data reporting requirements could be undertaken as part of this review. TCC21 recommended WCPC22 task this informal intersessional working group on sea turtles to report back to SC22 and TCC22 on the outputs of its discussions.

509. TCC21 thanked Canada for the update on the Review of CMM 2017-04 (TCC21-2025-DP05) and for its proposed approach to completing the review of the Marine Pollution CMM.

7.9 Review information about scientific data provision and refine data reporting requirements

Paper: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-25_rev1

510. The SSP Scientific Data Manager referenced WCPFC-TCC21-2025-25_rev1, which was introduced under Agenda Item 3, and discussed the Commission's data standardization efforts. The SSP invited CCMs to review the proposed submission templates and raise any potential implementation issues.

Discussion

511. Japan thanked the SSP for the proposal to standardize data submission, stating that they were still in the process of reviewing the procedures, and looked forward to consulting with SPC about the proposal.

512. New Caledonia recognized the challenges faced by the SSP and the Secretariat in preparing and disseminating information to the Commission and its subsidiaries bodies in a timely manner, which directly impeded the preparation of delegations, particularly for small delegations with limited capacity. They stated that the time required to process and disseminate data for the Commission's work needed to be reduced, and endorsed the SSP's proposed approach and adoption of standardized data submission templates. They encouraged all CCMs to collaborate with SPC to resolve any implementation challenges.

513. Chinese Taipei stated their general support for the approach of streamlining data provision but that their scientists were still reviewing it, and looked forward to consulting further with SPC.

514. Samoa, on behalf of FFA members, strongly supported the completion of the work to improve the efficiency of producing the scientific advice, and acknowledged progress since SC21. They looked forward to a reduction in the number of late paper submittals to SC and TCC as a result of increased efficiency.

515. The USA noted that SC21 supported standardized science data templates and requested CCMs to collaborate with the SSP. The USA recommended that the first recommendation in TCC21-2025-25_rev1 — Support the adoption of standardized data submission templates for SciData submissions — be drafted as a TCC21 recommendation. The USA also thanked the SSP for their use of the GitHub repository with guidelines, formats, and reference tables, noting this was a very useful tool towards standardization.

516. French Polynesia appreciated that the paper provided several standardized data submission options to adapt to each CCM's constraints. They stated that since 2001, only French Polynesia's own vessels were authorized to fish in their EEZ, but several recent reporting documents declared that fishing operations from foreign fleets were conducted in their EEZ. Following verification, French Polynesia found this resulted from reporting errors, mainly because of imprecise GPS positions and fishing activity declaration mistakes. As these documents were in the public domain, this may create the risk of false IUU acquisition. Standardizing data submission would help reduce these errors and allow staff to focus on real IUU cases instead of unnecessary checks. For this reason, French Polynesia stated its support for the SPC proposal.

517. In response to a query from Korea regarding the three options for data submission standardization (JSON, ER, or CSV files), the SSP clarified its intent was to accept data in any of these formats, not to require the use of each format.

518. Japan inquired whether SC needed to review the details of the proposal prior to adoption by the Commission.

519. The SSP stated that the paper was presented during SC21 (as SC21-ST-WP-03) and the content in the version submitted to TCC21 was largely unchanged, other than the addition of the information on SPC's GitHub repository, which indicated the formats to use for each data field. The GitHub repository was expected to be updated as necessary, and the SSP welcomed requests for additional information and guidance on the use of the templates.

520. RMI reviewed the long history many CCMs have in submitting data to SPC, and encouraged CCMs to support the work of the SSP by supporting a recommendation to the Commission that they adopt standardized data submission templates for SciData submissions.

521. Cook Islands supported the proposal to standardize data submissions to WCPFC. They acknowledged SPC's effort in developing templates, guidance, and technical support to assist CCMs in meeting the requirements, and noted the immediate benefits through efficiency gains while laying the foundation for future innovations such as automated validation and web-based submissions. They encouraged members to support the adoption of the proposed templates and to raise any implementation challenges early so the collective solutions can be developed.

522. Chinese Taipei noted they were not against standardization of data provision but lacked opportunity to consult with their scientists because of the date of submission of the paper, and could not commit to supporting the proposal until those consultations were complete.

523. The USA noted that SC21 supported standardized scientific data templates and requested CCMs to collaborate with the SSP; although not an outcome, it was captured in the meeting report. Building on the intervention by the Cook Islands and RMI, the USA offered draft recommendation language specifying that any of the three data standards proposed by SPC (ER, JSON, and CSV) were acceptable standardized

data forms in the templates recommended by the SSP via the GitHub repository, with guidelines and formats and other reference tables.

524. Japan stated its position was not to block adoption of the proposal, and that because SPC stated some parts of the standardization method for some fisheries were lacking, there was a need to recognize this as a living document. Japan reiterated its intention to collaborate with SPC to discuss the contents of the standardization method.

525. China considered that the paper was very informative with many technical terms and regulations, and stated its hope that SC could have a deep dialogue on this, noting China's technician and data manager would attend.

526. TCC21 thanked the SSP (SPC-OFP) for the paper on data standardization to improve the efficiency of the provision of WCPFC data (TCC21-2025-25_rev1), considering that the addition of standardized submission is expected to improve the timeliness of scientific data availability and for the SC and TCC papers that rely on this data.

527. TCC21 recommended that WCPFC22 standardize SciData submissions.

528. TCC21 encouraged CCMs to work with the SSP including through TCC21-2025-25_rev1 on options to standardize Scidata submissions in the lead-up to WCPFC22 to support the Commission's consideration of this matter.

8 — ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

8.1 WCPFC Information and Network Security Framework

Paper: WCPFC-TCC21-2025-26

529. Tim Jones (WCPFC IT Manager) provided an overview of WCPFC-TCC21-2025-26 *Update from Secretariat on WCPFC Information and Network Security Governance Framework*.

530. Indonesia noted the work of the Secretariat's IT team on IT security and appreciated the progress being made.

531. Tuvalu on behalf of FFA members thanked the Secretariat for their continued effort to strengthen the security of WCPFC's information management system and its broader network infrastructure.

532. New Zealand acknowledged that data systems are under constant threat from malicious actors and that the data held within the Secretariat were very sensitive. They noted WCPFC's well-developed rules and policies, and stated these had to be backed and implemented by strong data and IT infrastructure work, and commended the Secretariat for its work.

533. TCC21 welcomed the Report from the Secretariat on the WCPFC Information and Network Security (TCC21-2025-26) and supported the Secretariat's planned work related to the WCPFC Information and Network Security Governance Framework.

8.2 Required resources

534. The TCC Chair noted that following TCC21, the TCC Chair and the Vice Chair would look at the TCC workplan and consider whether any outcomes from TCC21 would affect the current draft of the workplan, and advise the Commission accordingly.

535. TCC21 noted that the issue of required resources for the Secretariat to undertake compliance related activities would be considered further at FAC and WCPFC22.

8.3 Election of Officers

536. TCC21 recommended that WCPFC22 appoint Ilkang Na from Korea as the next TCC Chair. TCC21 noted that the appointment of the TCC Vice Chair would be considered at WCPFC22.

8.4 Next meeting

537. TCC21 recommended TCC22 be held on Wednesday 23rd September – Tuesday 29th September 2026, and to confirm the venue is in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia.

9 — OTHER MATTERS FOR TCC ADVICE FROM THE TCC21 ODF

538. No comments were made in the TCC21 Online Discussion Forum.

10 — CLEARANCE OF TCC21 RECOMMENDATIONS

539. The TCC21 recommendations were cleared (TCC21-2025-outcomes). The TCC Chair confirmed that the Summary Report would be cleared intersessionally.

11 — CLOSE OF MEETING

540. The Executive Director congratulated the TCC Chair on his 5-year tenure as chair and moving TCC through very important work. She noted that the last year had required particularly heavy engagement

and recognized the efforts of all delegations to continue to ensure that the data and monitoring framework and foundation of the Commission was robust and contributed to the WCPFC's current positive sustainability outcomes. She expressed appreciation for working with the TCC Chair over the prior few years, and commended his hard work and effort. She acknowledged FSM for continuing to welcome TCC to Pohnpei through FSM's hosting of WCPFC headquarters and expressed appreciation to NORMA staff in particular for their support to the meeting, particularly related to IT. She wished all participants a safe return home.

541. The USA also thanked FSM for hosting the meeting and expressed their gratitude for the TCC Chair's mentorship and leadership over the preceding 5 years, which they considered had been extraordinary.

542. Niue, on behalf of FFA members, echoed the sentiments from the Executive Director and the USA and joined in congratulating the TCC Chair for his hard work and leadership over the prior 5 years, noting the difficulty in finding consensus around all the key issues at TCC. They also thanked the ED and her team for their work.

543. FSM extended their sincere appreciation to the TCC Chair for his leadership and stated TCC had evolved into a cordial forum where CCMs could engage openly and communicate constructively as a collective body, and praised the Chair's skill in moderating the discussions on difficult issues within an already complex fisheries regime, noting that wisdom paired with steady leadership can turn even the toughest challenges into opportunities for cooperation and progress. FSM also welcomed the nomination of the TCC Vice-Chair to be TCC Chair in 2026, and looked forward to collaborating with him to progress the work ahead.

544. China expressed sincere gratitude for the Chair's clear guidance, stating he had raised the quality of TCC's work, and offered sincere thanks for his service.

545. RMI echoed sentiments expressed by previous speakers and speaking as a former TCC Chair, the RMI delegate offered sincere thanks and appreciation to the TCC Chair for his outstanding leadership, noting that patience, preparation, and diplomacy were needed to chair TCC. RMI also acknowledged the Executive Director and Secretariat team.

546. The TCC Chair expressed sincere thanks to all CCMs and stated his tenure as Chair has been an honour, and one that he enjoyed. He stated he did not expect to be in the role and certainly didn't expect to do it so long. He expressed pride in what TCC achieved, noting it made unexpected progress on a number of issues. He considered that momentum was building in the Commission on a range of issues that were built on the hard work of TCC, which would continue to make WCPFC a leading organization. He thanked CCMs for their ongoing support, stamina, technical expertise, and efforts to lead bodies of work even though it was difficult at times. He noted that the TCC's work is built on the efforts of many people, and observed that he had said on a number of occasions that should anyone chair a committee in any organisation, do it in WCPFC, because of the unbelievable support from the Secretariat. He observed that in the time he had been TCC Chair, a fundamental shift had occurred in the way the Secretariat delivered its support, and that the Compliance Team had restructured and expanded its capacity while also delivering results, noting this contributed uniquely to the Commission's sustainability and ensured continuing success. He also thanked FSM for their ongoing support for the Commission. He looked forward to supporting the incoming TCC Chair and to seeing everyone at WCPFC22.

547. The Chair declared TCC21 closed at 7.46pm.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A	List of Attendees
Attachment B	Skipjack Monitoring Strategy
Attachment C	Attachment B: List of ROP Minimum Standard Data Fields recommended for removal from the list of ROP Minimum Standard Data Fields
Attachment D	Commission VMS Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) Revised

Attachment A – List of Attendees

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Attachment B: Skipjack Monitoring Strategy

1. Review of MP performance
a. Comparison of predicted MP performance against latest stock assessment outcomes
TCC

Regularly review/check the performance and outputs of the MP, including the indicators set out in Table 3, Annex III of CMM 2022-01 and provide advice to the Commission on:

a) Catch and effort levels for all fisheries subject to the MP relative to maximum levels specified under the most recent output of the MP.
b) Identify quality of information and gaps in available data that would affect ability to monitor the implementation of the MP relative to the MP outputs.

TCC20: Additional information on relevant catch and effort for the fisheries subject to the MPs will be needed by TCC.

TCC21: TCC21 reviewed information prepared by the Scientific Services Provider presenting information about the performance and outputs of the MP, compared to the 2024 levels for three fishery components: Purse seine (incl AW) effort, Pole and line effort, Domestic AW catch (ref: TCC21-2025-IP04_rev1 Table 16). TCC21 noted that the information indicated that in 2024 the catch or effort in the fisheries subject to the SKJ MP were below the levels specified by the MP for 2024-2026.
Additional information on the trends between effort and catch in the PS fishery, including effort creep will be needed by TCC.

b. Data availability to run the MP

TCC

Check availability, quantity and quality of data necessary to run the MP (e.g. the estimation method)

TCC20: No new information
TCC21: No new information

c. Other sources of data to monitor performance

TCC

Identify any other data, as available, that might not be included in the MSE framework, that can inform on performance indicators (economic, social, ecosystem, etc.)

TCC20: No new information
TCC21 No new information

d. Performance of the estimation method (EM)

TCC

No input anticipated.

2. Review of the MP design
a. Management objectives
TCC
No input anticipated.
b. Scope of the management procedure
TCC
Confirm the fisheries controlled by the MP, and the method of control, remains appropriate TCC20 No new information TCC21: No new information
c. Exceptional circumstances
TCC
Provide technical advice to identify exceptional circumstances (see CMM 2022-01 Annex IV) and recommend remedial action where necessary. TCC20: No new information TCC21: No new information
3. Review of MSE
a. Operating model grid
TCC
No input anticipated.
b. Calculation of performance indicators
TCC
No input anticipated.
c. Modelling assumptions
TCC
No input anticipated.

d. Data availability to support the MSE framework
TCC
No input anticipated.

Attachment C: List of ROP Minimum Standard Data Fields recommended for removal from the list of ROP Minimum Standard Data Fields

Excerpt from ROP-IWG06 Chair's Summary Report: Attachment 3: List of Data Fields Recommended for Removal from the MSDFs
At ROP_IWG06 meeting, participants preliminarily agreed to recommend that the attached list of data fields are removed from the list of WCPFC ROP Minimum Standard Data Fields.

WCPFC CURRENT FIELD	WCPFC AGREED NOTES	*COMMENT ON HOW COLLECTED ***	*COMMENT ON ANY SUGGESTED CHANGES*	*ALTERNATIVE OR SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS*	Row # from WP2[1]
VESSEL IDENTIFICATION					
Flag State Registration Number	This number will be sourced from the vessel papers. You can normally get this information during the briefing.	*Observer asks to check vessel documentation.*	*Field that could be collected by other means and so suggest removal.*	*This information is available and collected in the RFV - could be removed.*	**2**
Vessel Owner/Company	Name and contact if possible, of the owner of the vessel, if owned by a company, then use the company name.	*Observer asks to check vessel documentation*	*Field that could be collected by other means and so suggest removal.*	*This information is available and collected in the RFV - could be removed.*	**4**

[1] ROP-IWG5 Working Paper 02

WCPFC CURRENT FIELD	WCPFC AGREED NOTES	*COMMENT ON HOW COLLECTED ***	*COMMENT ON ANY SUGGESTED CHANGES*	*ALTERNATIVE OR SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS*	Row # from WP2[1]
VESSEL ATTRIBUTES					
Vessel fish hold capacity	The total maximum amounts in metric Tons (mT.) that the vessel freezers, wells and other fish storage areas on a vessel can hold.	*Observers have been collecting information in metric tonnes since 1994.*	*2024 PNA Comment: Could be also considered for removal, because this information is also available on the RFV, although we note that the units for this field in the RFV are volume or weight, whereas the units for the MSDF are weight.*	*RFV records Cubic Metres and can be accessed if needed* Japan supports removing this field since the information is available from the RFV. *USA supports Removal of this field*	**30**
Length (specify unit)	The "LOA" Length Over All can be taken from the vessel plans or from other paper work that indicates the LOA.	*Observer asks to check vessel documentation or the vessel plan. Observer cannot verify if length is correct.*	*Field suggested for removal, as it is available in the RFV and no longer required to be collected by observers.*	*This information is available and collected in the RFV - could be removed.*	**32**
Tonnage (specify unit)	The vessel may be registered using Gross Tonnage (GT) or in (GRT) this will be indicated on the vessel registration papers.	*Observer asks to check vessel documentation or the vessel plan. Observer cannot verify if tonnage is correct*	*Field suggested for removal, as it is available in the RFV and no longer required to be collected by observers.*	*This information is available and collected in the RFV - could be removed.*	**33**
Engine power (Specify unit)	The engine power and the power units used on board can usually be found in the vessel plans or from other paper work of the vessel. If not sure where to look, ask the engineer.	*Observer can get this in several ways, can get it from engine model number info online if available. Most observers ask the engineer who will tell them the HP.*	*Field suggested for removal, as it is available in the RFV and no longer required to be collected by observers.*	*This information is available and collected in the RFV - could be removed.*	**34**

WCPFC CURRENT FIELD	WCPFC AGREED NOTES	*COMMENT ON HOW COLLECTED ***	*COMMENT ON ANY SUGGESTED CHANGES*	*ALTERNATIVE OR SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS*	Row # from WP2[1]
VESSEL ELECTRONICS					
Radars	Indicate Yes if on board No if not sighted	*Observer collects information on make and Model*	*Field suggested for removal, as it is available in the RFV and no longer required to be collected by observers.*		**35**
Global Positioning System (GPS) (Yes/ No)	Indicate Yes if on board No if not sighted	*Observer collects information if on board (yes no)*	*Field suggested for removal, as it is no longer required to be collected by observers.*		**37**
Track Plotter	Indicate Yes if on board No if not sighted	*Observer collects information if on board (yes no)*	*Field suggested for removal, as it is no longer required to be collected by observers*		**38**
Weather Facsimile	Indicate Yes if on board No if not sighted	*Observer collects information if on board (yes no)*	*Field suggested for removal, as it is no longer required to be collected by observers.*		**39**
Sea Surface Temperature (SST) gauge	Indicate Yes if on board No if not sighted	*Observer collects information if on board (yes no)*	*Field suggested for removal, as it is no longer required to be collected by observers*		**40**

WCPFC CURRENT FIELD	WCPFC AGREED NOTES	*COMMENT ON HOW COLLECTED ***	*COMMENT ON ANY SUGGESTED CHANGES*	*ALTERNATIVE OR SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS*	Row # from WP2[1]
Vessel Monitoring System	Indicate the type of systems used on a vessel- The most popular and widely used system is the INMARSAT system, however some vessels may use the ARGOS system- some vessels may have both. There are also other systems if these are being used please record	*Observers are asked to identify the system used and the make and model of the units on board*	*Field that could be collected by other means.*	***USA comment:*** *(as above for crew attributes and supports Removal of this field)*	**47**
GENERAL GEAR ATTRIBUTES					
Mainline length	What is the total length of the mainline when it is fully set usually recorded in miles or kilometer's (make sure the unit is clearly indicated)	*Observer collects information from Captain or Deck Boss*	*There may be technological approaches that could streamline the estimation of mainline length by observers.*	*Eg Using a known Lat and long for start and end of set on a GPS/VMS tracks could be used to estimate the distances travelled and the shape of the set* ***USA Supports*** *Removal of this Field*	**50**
Mainline hauler	Indicate Y or No - Most longline vessels will have an instrument that hauls the lines in after it has been set- some very small vessels may haul line by hand.	*Observer collects Yes, No information*	*Field suggested for removal, as it is no longer required to be collected by observers.*		**54**

WCPFC CURRENT FIELD	WCPFC AGREED NOTES	*COMMENT ON HOW COLLECTED ***	*COMMENT ON ANY SUGGESTED CHANGES*	*ALTERNATIVE OR SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS*	Row # from WP2[1]
Branch line hauler	Indicate Y or No - Some long line vessels may use special haulers to coil the branch lines	*Observer collects Yes, No information*	*Field suggested for removal, as it is no longer required to be collected by observers.*		**55**
***PURSE SEINE* - INFORMATION ON DAILY ACTIVITIES**					
Numbers of schools sighted per day	How many free or associated schools of fish were sighted during the day? The vessel may not set on these because of size or amount in school	*Observer is asked to record every free school or floating object sighted during the day when searching, also record all activities involved with free schools and floating objects. For this to be accurate the observer would need to be on constant watch from 0430 to 1930 every day 15/16 hrs. a day*	*No change suggested*	*Difficulties in collecting this info as observer would need to be on watch all day to record accurately. As it is, observers generally only indicate what the vessel investigates* ***Japan supports removing** this field*	**118**
OBSERVER TRIP MONITORING SUMMARY					
Vessel certificate of registration:	Flag State Registration Number as in 'General Attributes'	*Observer asks to check vessel documentation.*	*Field that could be collected by other means – suggest removal.*	*This information is available and collected in the RFV – could be removed.*	**197**

WCPFC CURRENT FIELD	WCPFC AGREED NOTES	*COMMENT ON HOW COLLECTED ***	*COMMENT ON ANY SUGGESTED CHANGES*	*ALTERNATIVE OR SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS*	Row # from WP2[1]
WCPFC Authorisation:	WIN number if supplied	*Observer asks to check vessel documentation.*	*Field that could be collected by other means– suggest removal.*	*This information is available and collected in the RFV = could be removed.*	**199**

Attachment D: VMS SOPs revised

Commission VMS Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

1. Version notes

Version	WCPFC decision reference	Description of updates	Effective date
1.0	*WCPFC6*	*Approved by the Commission, as per requirement of VMS SSPs section 6.9*	*Feb 19 2010*
2.0	*WCPFC15*	*Updates made to include versioning and to streamline and improve the focus of the SOPs and better reflect current Secretariat practices including reference to the present VMS service provider/s*	*Feb 13 2019*
3.0	*WCPFC18*	*Updates made to provide details on recent and ongoing Secretariat software upgrades to improve capacity to monitor manual reports and monitor / address MTU non-reporting. Also clarifies procedures for activating MTUs and specific gateways, and current procedures for MTU testing (including new MTU testing checklist) prior to Commission decisions on approval or de-listing.*	*Feb 08 2022*
4.0	*WCPFC21*	*Updates to reflect technological updates, processes and enhancements to address current VMS data gaps or procedural issues. Also includes edits to Annex B agreed at TCC20 and adopted at WCPFC21.*	*Feb 01 2025*
5.0	**Draft recommended to TCC21**	**Updates to reflect process updates and enhancements to address current VMS data gaps or procedural issues.**	**Proposed Feb 2026**

2. Overview

The WCPFC operates a Vessel Monitoring System (Commission VMS) to assist in the management and conservation of highly migratory fish stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean.

In December 2008, a Service Level Agreement (SLA) was formalised with FFA for the provision of the WCPFC VMS services. The contracted system that provides VMS information to the FFA VMS and the WCPFC VMS systems is referred to as the "Pacific VMS". The WCPFC VMS came into operation on April 1, 2009.

The approved structure of the WCPFC VMS allows vessels to report to the WCPFC through two ways: i) directly to the WCPFC VMS, or ii) to the WCPFC through the FFA VMS. In respect of the latter, it is recognized that there may be additional requirements for VMS reporting which arise from FFA requirements and national VMS requirements that are relevant.

The WCPFC currently has more than 3,000 WCPFC vessels on the Record of Fishing Vessels (RFV)[2] that report to the WCPFC VMS through the Pacific VMS. In addition, the WCPFC VMS receives, through the SLA with FFA, high seas VMS information relating to FFA-registered vessels.

The Commission VMS requires the use of Mobile Transceiver Units (MTUs)/Automatic Location Communicators (ALCs) that are on the Commission's approved list of MTU/ALC[3]. This list is based on the Secretariat's assessments of ALCs against minimum standards for the Commission VMS. These standards are set out in Annex 1 of CMM 2014-02 (or its successor measure) and WCPFC SSPs. In particular, the Secretariat provides a recommendation about whether the make and model of an ALC has the capability to successfully report to the Commission VMS.

2.1 Purpose of these Standard Operating Procedures

These standard operating procedures (SOPs) have been developed to provide uniform guidance for Commission personnel in the management and operation of the Commission VMS.

2.2 Specific Commission Decisions and Guidelines governing the Commission VMS and access to VMS data

a) Rules and Procedures for the Protection, Access to, and Dissemination of Data Compiled by the Commission (2007 Data RaP) – December 2007;

b) Service Level Agreement (SLA) with FFA for the provision of the WCPFC VMS services – December 2008 (WCPFC VMS came into operation on April 1, 2009);

c) Rules and Procedures for the Protection, Access to, and Dissemination of High Seas Non-Public Domain Data and Information Compiled by the Commission for the Purpose of Monitoring, Control or Surveillance (MCS) Activities and the Access to and Dissemination of High Seas VMS Data for Scientific Purposes. (Rules and Procedures for Protection Access to and Dissemination of High Seas Non-Public Domain Data 2009) – December 2009;

d) WCPFC Standards Specifications and procedures (VMS SSPs) for the fishing vessel monitoring system (VMS) of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) – December 2021 (or its update);

[2] **The Record of Fishing Vessels (RFV) is hosted at https://vessels.wcpfc.int/**

[3] The terms "ALC", "MTU", "ALC/MTU", and "MTU/ALC" are used interchangeably in this document.

e) WCPFC Agreed Statement describing Purpose and Principles of the WCPFC VMS – December 2011 (suppl_CMM 2014-02-1);

f) WCPFC9 decision regarding application of Commission VMS to national waters of Members (WCPFC9 Summary Report paragraph 238) – December 2012 (suppl_CMM 2014-02-3);

g) Conservation and Management Measure for the Commission VMS – CMM 2014-02 (or its replacement CMM) – December 2014;

h) WCPFC VMS Reporting Requirement Guidelines – May 2018 (or its update) (VMS Reporting Requirements Guidelines); and

i) The last update of the list of approved MTU/ALCs (MTU/ALC Type Approval List - 6 Feb 2024).

2.3 General Information Security Policy and Administrative Procedures for the Secretariat

The WCPFC Secretariat's Information Security Policies and Guidelines, as well as Administrative Procedures apply to the administration of and access to the Commission VMS.

2.4 Update of these SOPs

VMS SSPs 6.9 states: "*A set of Standard Operating Procedures, elaborated by the Secretariat, and subject to approval by the Commission on the recommendation of the TCC, will be developed to deal with all operational anomalies of the VMS, such as interruption of position reports, downloading of DNIDs and their equivalent and responding to reports providing incoherent data (e.g. vessel on land, excessive speed, etc.).*"

3. VMS Software Applications

3.1 Trackwell

The Trackwell VMS user interface is implemented as a suite of web modules selectable from the main menu.

The main modules are:

a) Monitoring – Secretariat and CCM VMS operator's main view;

b) Vessel – the vessel registry database synchronized with the Record of Fishing Vessels (RFV)

c) Events and Actions – used to define the events to be monitored and the actions to be taken when an event occurs;

d) Reports – provide a list of pre-programmed reports for Secretariat and CCM VMS operators eg. A count of position reports per day by area per month or a date range;

e) Live Map – An interactive map display showing vessels' position and zones in near real-time; and

f) Map history - this module contains tools to display historical trails of one or more vessels in a graphical map interface. The user can then define a date and time range to see the trail history of the selected vessels.

The Monitoring View is the operator's main view. All important events and alerts handled by the system are listed in this view as issues. An operator can select an "Issue" to work on or record actions taken in relation to the selected issue until it is closed.

3.2 Software to Automate Integration of Manual Position Reports into the Commission VMS

Vessels are expected to report their positions automatically. The Secretariat had set up a mailbox arrangement with TrackWell to facilitate automatic integration of VMS manual reports based on the common North Atlantic Format (NAF). **This mailbox has been phased out since April 2025 and is no longer available.** VMS manual reports **are now** submitted by CCMs **by direct upload** to the Commission VMS. Correctly formatted data received are automatically integrated into the Commission VMS. These positions are clearly identifiable as manually generated reports (e-MAN) and can be distinguished from non-manually generated VMS positions.[4] **If a CCM encounters problems using the manual upload facility, the CCM should contact the Secretariat and provide any supporting information that could help to identify and resolve the issue including any advice on interim solutions.**

3.3 VMS Reporting Status Tool (VRST)

Since 2020, through the development of the VMS Reporting Status Tool (VRST), the Secretariat provides a fully automated report for each CCM to review, in more detail, the reporting status for all their vessels. The reporting status provides a daily snapshot of whether[5] each vessel on the RFV is meeting its Commission VMS requirements, including whether each vessel is reporting directly to WCPFC VMS. These requirements are met by direct reporting to the Commission VMS or through reporting via the FFA VMS (based on FFA Good Standing List). For any vessel not reporting, the daily snapshot should assist to indicate whether WCPFC has completed the necessary steps to activate its MTU to report to the Commission VMS, and if so, the VRST provides a generic current vessel status (e.g., "OK" or "STOP") for each of their vessels and a daily VMS-reporting status (how many position reports are transmitted by each vessel each day for the past 31 days)[6]. The data can be exported to a file in CSV format for each report.

The VRST was enhanced in 2021 giving flag CCMs the ability to update VRST data to inform the status for their non-reporting vessels. **An additional enhancement in 2025 allows VMS manual reports to be submitted online by CCMs using the Upload Manual Positions facility in the VRST.**

3.4 Software for online registration of MTUs and reporting of MTU/ALC Audits

Since 2023, through the development of the upgraded Record of Fishing Vessels (RFV) online system, the Secretariat has provided CCMs with an online facility that facilitates the submission of necessary vessel tracking data for each fishing vessel required to report directly to the Commission VMS. The RFV allows each flag CCM to update their registration of MTUs, track progress of their MTU Activations/Deactivations, and provides an alert when MTU Activation has failed. This same web portal **is also used for CCM** data entry, review, and reporting of MTU Audit Inspection results.

[4] See further details in section **3.3 and** 4.5 below.
[5] Based on available data and information.
[6] That VRST's display of CCMs' most recent month's vessel-level VMS-reporting status does not impose any additional monitoring obligations on flag CCMs or the Secretariat.

4. Operational Procedures

This section contains ten (10) subsections:

a) Access to WCPFC VMS Tools

b) Vessel Tracking Data to be submitted by CCMs;

c) MTU/ALC Activation Procedure for WCPFC VMS;

d) VMS Reporting Status Tool (VRST);

e) Manual Position Reporting;

f) Routine Reports from the Secretariat on VMS reporting anomalies and WCPFC VMS;

g) Secretariat processes to identify and follow-up on VMS reporting issues;

h) Proposals for Inclusion of Additional ALC makes and models on the Approved MLC/ALC List;

i) Removal of ALC/MTU from the Approved ALC/MTU List; and

j) Commission VMS Helpdesk.

4.1 Access to WCPFC VMS Tools

Since late 2023, the Secretariat has provided a Single-Sign-On (SSO) facility to WCPFC's online systems, which includes WCPFC's Trackwell VMS. Access to WCPFC VMS related systems is visible and managed by Party Administrators who may grant permissions to users through assigning one of the following roles: VMS Viewer or VMS Editor. More information on managing roles can be found in the Party Administrator Guide on the WCPFC Support Helpdesk.

4.2 Vessel Tracking Data to be submitted by CCMs

The flag CCM **submits** all necessary data to complete its data file in WCPFC's database, in respect of all vessels authorized to operate in the WCPFC Convention area. In accordance with the VMS SSPs, this data will include the name of the vessel, unique vessel identification number (UVI) [* if and when adopted by the Commission], radio call sign, length, gross registered tonnage, power of engine expressed in kilowatts/horsepower, types of fishing gear(s) used as well as the make, model, unique network identifier (user ID) and equipment identifier (manufacturer's serial number) of the ALC that vessel will be using to fulfil its Commission VMS reporting requirements.

To facilitate the submission of necessary vessel tracking data for each fishing vessel required to report directly to the Commission, the Secretariat has introduced online registration of MTUs through the upgraded RFV. Vessel tracking data for vessels already reporting to FFA VMS will not be activated and may not need to be provided but if submitted, can be filed in case the vessel needs to have the ALC activated to report to WCPFC VMS system (should the vessel no longer report to the FFA VMS system).

When an MTU Update request has been submitted by a flag CCM, the Secretariat will proceed with activation/deactivation procedures in Section 4.3.

4.3 MTU/ALC Activation Procedure for WCPFC VMS

Vessels not listed on the FFA Good Standing List will be activated to report directly to WCPFC VMS once information required under Paragraph 2.9 of the Commission VMS SSPs is provided in full.

The online registration of MTUs through the RFV online system ensures that the following details are provided for all MTU activation requests:

1. Vessel Name
2. Reg No
3. IRCS
4. Vessel Type
5. Flag
6. Approved MTU Type
7. Equipment ID
8. Network ID

WCPFC VMS has gateways for the following services:

a) Faria Watchdog

b) Halios – CLS MTUs using the Iridium service

c) Inmarsat BGAN – for iFleetONE MTUs

d) Inmarsat C and D+

e) Iridium – for insight X2 EMTU (Nautic Alert)

f) Iridium (mini LEO) - for BB3 & BB5 MTUs (SASCO)

g) Iridium SBD – for iTrac II (MetOcean Telematics) and RomTrax Wifi (Rom Communications)

h) ORBCOMM – currently operational for Australian vessels using IDP-690

i) PTSOG Chinese Taipei

j) SkyMate

k) SRT VMS 100Si

The Secretariat will follow the activation procedure that is specific to the gateway for the MTU/ALC (see Notes on Secretariat Process for each Gateway in Annex A).

1. If activation was successful, the Secretariat will update the status of the MTU Update request in RFV online system to show that the MTU is Active. [7]

2. If a deactivation request was successful, the Secretariat will update the status of the MTU Update request in RFV online system to show that the MTU is Inactive.[8]

3. If activation was not successful, the Secretariat will update the status of the MTU Update request in RFV online system to show that Activation Failed. The Secretariat will also request the CCM official to check the vessel's MTU/ALC, rectify any anomalies with the MTU/ALC or VTAF data and to resubmit the MTU Update Request. If the MTU/ALC activation fails on the second attempt, the Secretariat will notify the CCM and draw to the CCM's attention that vessel position reports shall be provided by the vessel on a manual basis, as required by the Commission VMS SSPs.

4.4 VMS Reporting Status Tool (VRST)

The VRST provides the authorized CCM contact with a daily snapshot of whether each CCM vessel on the RFV is meeting its Commission VMS requirements. The VRST is updated each day at 1am UTC. CCMs are also able to download a copy of the relevant report in CSV format. There are currently five parts to the VRST:

- The "Information" tab provides explanatory information about the VRST.
- The "All Vessels" tab is in response to the WCPFC12 task and provides the latest WCPFC VMS reporting status for every vessel on the Record of Fishing Vessels (RFV).
- The "CCM Vessels" tab lists only RFV vessels flagged to the CCM, viewable only by the CCM's authorized contact. It provides CCMs with a daily snapshot of information whether each of their vessels on the RFV is meeting its Commission VMS requirements. If a vessel is not on the FFA Good Standing List, the VRST provides an indication of whether WCPFC has completed the necessary steps to activate the vessels MTU to report to the Commission VMS; if so, the VRST provides a generic current vessel status (e.g., 'OK' or 'STOP') for each of their vessels, and a daily VMS-reporting status (how many position reports are transmitted by each vessel each day for the preceding 31 days). **Since June 2025, an email alert to all flag CCM users with VMS Editor access permissions lists all their flagged vessels that show "STOP" status for their attention and action to re-establish normal reporting as soon as possible.** For vessels that are not on FFA Good Standing List, the VRST will display the following status to the vessels based on reporting and CCMs advice.

a) 'ACTR' – VTAF info received and in the process of activation by the Secretariat.

b) 'In Port' – based on advice from CMMs that the vessel is in port and MTU is powered down.

c) 'OK' – the vessel's MTU is reporting correctly to WCPFC VMS. No action required.

[5] The success of their vessels' MTU/ALC activations will also be evident in the VRST to CCMs.
[5] The success of their vessels' MTU/ALC activations will also be evident in the VRST to CCMs.

d) 'Outside the WCPFC Convention Area' – based on advice from flag CCM, the vessel is operating outside of the Convention area and is not reporting to WCPFC VMS.

e) 'Within flag CCM EEZ' – based on advice from flag CCM, the vessel is within the flag CCM's EEZ and is not reporting to WCPFC VMS.

f) 'STOP' – The vessel has stopped reporting. Secretariat staff to work with Flag CCM to resolve the non-reporting issue.

- The "Non-Reporting Vessels" tab is a subset of the CCM Vessels tab list, providing a list of vessels from which the expected VMS data are not being received. For each vessel that is not reporting to the WCPFC VMS, authorized CCM users are able to update the status to 'In Port' or 'Outside the Convention Area' or 'Within flag CCM EEZ', and the date the status took effect. When VMS data are received by the WCPFC VMS, the status is automatically reset to 'OK'.

- The "Manual Reports" tab provides a report on the number of manual reports by vessel submitted and processed by VMS.

4.5 Manual Position Reporting

Since 1 March 2013, the Commission has agreed reporting timeframes for manual reporting in the event of ALC malfunction and a standard reporting format for these manual reports (see WCPFC SSPs – December 2021 (or its update) (VMS SSPs).

From April 2025, CCMs upload their manual reports in the NAF format, using the "Upload Manual Positions" facility in the VRST. NAF strings are copied into the facility and automatically validated against system rules. Any sections of the NAF format with errors are highlighted. Once validation confirms the correctly formatted data, the system will allow the upload to Trackwell where it is integrated into the Commission VMS. These positions are clearly identifiable on the WCPFC Trackwell map as manually generated reports **(e-MAN)** and they can be distinguished from non-manually generated VMS positions.

See **Annex B** for NAF format message for a manual report.

CCM vessels that fail to report to the Commission VMS must commence manual reporting not later than the time specified in the SSPs unless the CCM contact point has provided an appropriate and accurate update of the MTU status (via the VRST directly, or by email to the Secretariat VMS staff).

The vessel may re-commence fishing on the high seas only when the MTU/ALC has been confirmed as operational by the WCPFC Secretariat following the flag CCM informing the Secretariat that the vessel's automatic reporting complies with the regulations established in the Commission VMS Standards, Specifications and Procedures (SSPs).

4.6 Routine Reports from the Secretariat on VMS reporting anomalies and WCPFC VMS

As was explained in Section 4.4, the VRST tool, which is accessible by authorized CCM users, provides CCMs with a daily snapshot of whether each of their vessels on the RFV is meeting Commission VMS requirements.

The following reports are provided to TCC annually:

- Annual Report on the Commission VMS;
- Annual Report on the administration of the data rules and procedures;
- WCPFC Information and Network Security Framework.

The Secretariat also provides periodic detailed reports to each flag CCM to support the draft Compliance Monitoring Report preparation and review process. **During 2025, the Secretariat will begin the transition to providing monthly VMS reporting gaps to CCMs. This will supplement the VRST daily snapshot and "STOP" email alerts, supporting CCM's earlier identification and resolution of reporting issues.**

Ad hoc reports may be generated on request and following necessary approvals in accordance with the data rules and administrative procedures.

4.7 Secretariat processes to identify and follow-up on VMS reporting issues

The Secretariat will routinely check on the VMS reporting status of vessels when there is a change to their listing on FFA Good Standing List and take appropriate action:

a) If a vessel that has its MTU activated to report directly to WCPFC VMS is subsequently listed on the FFA Good Standing List, WCPFC Secretariat VMS staff will take necessary steps to deactivate the MTU and update WCPFC records to show that the vessel is expected to be reporting to WCPFC VMS through the FFA VMS.

b) If a vessel that was on the FFA Good Standing List is de-listed, VMS staff will take necessary steps to activate the most recent VTAF received for direct reporting.

c) Flag CCMs may receive relevant updates through the VRST about whether their vessel is on the FFA Good Standing List and if a MTU is in the process of activation by the Secretariat (refer to Section 4.4).

The Secretariat routinely checks the following issues:

a) That a vessel is not showing as 'STOP' in VRST, when:

- a high seas transhipment notification is received by the Secretariat.
- a notification is received that a vessel will be or has been inspected through the High Seas Boarding and Inspection Scheme.
- a charter notification is received by the Secretariat.
- a notification in accordance with para. 3, Attachment 2 of CMM 2023-01 (or subsequent CMM) is received by the Secretariat.
- a notification is received that a vessel will be or has been inspected in Port.
- upon request by an authorized CCM contact.

b) For all vessels that have a vessel status 'STOP' in the VRST, a workflow process will document actions taken by the VMS staff to resolve non reporting.

c) Flag CCMs may receive relevant updates through the VRST about whether their vessel is on the FFA Good Standing List, if a MTU is in the process of activation by the Secretariat, if a vessel is In Port or outside the Convention Area, and if the vessel is reporting normally or has stopped reporting to the Commission VMS. (refer to Section 4.4).

The following procedures are to be followed by the Secretariat when a VMS non-reporting is identified:

1. Create a workflow record that the vessel has stopped reporting and proceed with the process of getting the MTU to resume reporting.
2. Check with the flag CCM to confirm that the MTU is switched on and reporting to the CCM's VMS. If so:
    a) Confirm with the flag CCM that the MTU Register information is accurate;
    b) For Inmarsat C MTUs, a re-download of DNID and polling might be required;
    c) For other MTU types, the Secretariat will contact the MCSP to verify the MTU's status, and VMS staff to follow up with Trackwell or MCSP where appropriate, to ensure the data is being received by the WCPFC VMS.
3. If the flag CCM indicates that the MTU has been replaced, remind the CCM contact of their responsibility to register MTU information with the Secretariat, and proceed with normal activation process (refer to Section 4.3 above).
4. Failure of the MTU to properly report requires the flag CCM to ensure that the vessel provides manual reports as per manual reporting requirements (refer Section 4.5 above).

4.8 Proposals for Inclusion of Additional ALC makes and models on the Approved MTU/ALC List

Commission VMS SSPs require that the Secretariat assess proposals for inclusion of additional ALC makes and models on this list from both CCMs and equipment manufacturers. VMS SSPs 2.7 states "*The Secretariat shall include the ALC/MTU make or model being proposed on this list, if no CCM objects in writing within 30 days of the Secretariat circulating notice of its intent to all CCMs, and, if in the Secretariat's assessment, the ALC/MTU make or model meets the minimum standards for the Commission VMS as set out in Annex 1 of CMM 2014-02 (or its successor measure), the WCPFC SSPs, as relevant, by determining that the ALC/MTU make and model has the ability to successfully report to the Commission VMS, and by using the methodology established by the FFA with expenses for type approval processing.*"

The Secretariat is to assess proposals for the inclusion of additional MTU/ALC units and their communication / satellite service provider / gateway, against the MTU/ALC type approval checklist (appended in **Annex C**). The following procedures are to be followed by the Secretariat when a proposal from MTU manufacturers, CCMs, and service providers is received seeking the inclusion of additional ALC makes and models on the Approved MTU/ALC List:

a) Application received with sufficient[9] supporting technical documentation.

b) Secretariat checks application information and verifies it against minimum standards in Annex 1 of the CMM 2014-02 (or its successor).

c) Submit request for testing to Trackwell. Trackwell will liaise with the ALC/MTU applicant to conduct physical[10] testing to ensure the gateway created is able to receive error-free position reports as per Annex 1 of CMM 2014-02 (or its successor).

d) Trackwell will provide a complete test report to the Secretariat for final assessment.

e) As part of the assessment, the Secretariat VMS staff shall detail how each step on the checklist was or was not satisfied for the ALC/MTU proposed for listing.

Where the Secretariat concludes in its assessment that a proposed ALC/MTU make or model does meet these requirements, the Secretariat will follow the existing approval process and timelines outlined above (from VMS SSPs 2.7). Additionally, the Secretariat shall provide CCMs with details on how each step on the checklist was satisfied for the ALC/MTU, along with any other documentation provided by the flag CCM or vendor, to better inform CCM's consideration.

Where the Secretariat concludes in its assessment that a proposed ALC/MTU make or model does not meet these requirements, or if a CCM objects in writing to the Secretariat's proposal to approve a new ALC/MTU make or model, the Secretariat shall make recommendations in the annual report to TCC regarding the proposed ALC/MTU make or model for TCC's consideration. The Secretariat shall provide CCMs with details on how each step on the checklist was satisfied for each unit, along with any other documentation provided by the flag CCM or vendor, to better inform CCM's consideration.

4.9 Removal of ALC/MTU from the Approved ALC/MTU List

The Secretariat will recommend to TCC as needed, the removal of units currently on the list of approved ALC/MTU makes and models that no longer meet the minimum standards set out in Annex 1 of CMM 2014-02 (or successor measure), or that do not have the ability to successfully report to the Commission VMS. As part of the assessment, the Secretariat VMS staff shall detail how each step on the checklist in **Annex C** was, or was not, satisfied for each MTU/ALC unit proposed for removal from the Approved ALC/MTU List.

4.10 Commission VMS Helpdesk Support

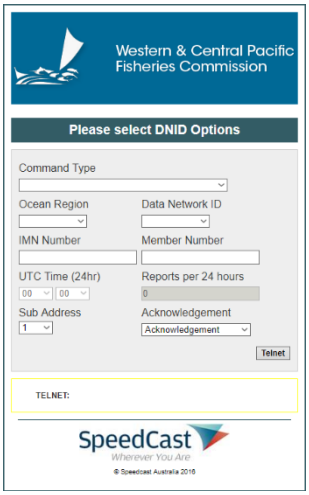
The Secretariat is committed to developing online self-service support options via the WCPFC Support Knowledgebase, and additional VMS help topics are in being developed.

Requests for support on the Commission VMS can be sent via email to VMS@wcpfc.int.

[9] For example, full technical specifications of all MTU/ALC hardware that will be installed on vessels, citations of any previous domestic or RFMO type approvals of the proposed MTU/ALC, data/results from previous domestic or other testing of the equipment, or images depicting the hardware components.

[10] Tests of successful position reporting to the Commission VMS by the relevant MTU hardware that is physically located within the Convention Area.

Notes on Secretariat's Activation Process for MTU/ALC by VMS Gateway as of December 2024

VMS Gateway	Notes on Secretariat's Activation Process
Faria Watchdog	Email sent to SpeedCast (support.mss.apac@speedcast.com) A request to provide Faria 4-digit unique MTU Id made on activation.
Halios – CLS MTUs *using the Iridium service*	Email sent to CLS-OCEANIA (hspencer@groupcls.com). MTU reporting status may also be verified through the CLS portal application - https://mydata.cls.fr/iwp/Main.do.
Inmarsat BGAN *for iFleetONE MTUs*	Email sent to Addvalue (weehong.ng@addvalue.com.sg).
Inmarsat C and D+	For Inmarsat C MTUs, activation is done at the Secretariat using a web application developed by SpeedCast. If activation was not successful, the Secretariat to advise CCM Official of why the activation was unsuccessful, which may include: a) Unknown mobile number b) Mobile logged out c) Mobile is not in the Ocean Region d) DNID sent to vessel, but vessel did not send acknowledgement to Commission VMS; e) Program sent to vessel but vessel did not send acknowledgement to Commission VMS; or f) Start Command sent to vessel but vessel did not send acknowledgement to Commission VMS 
Iridium *for insight X2 EMTU (Nautic Alert)*	Email sent to Nautic Alert (nfvelado@nauticalert.com)
Iridium (mini LEO) *for BB3 & BB5 MTUs (SASCO)*	Email sent to SASCO email: (chuck@sasco-inc.com)
Iridium SBD	Email sent to MetOcean Telematics (service@metocean.com).

VMS Gateway	Notes on Secretariat's Activation Process
for iTrac II (MetOcean Telematics)	
Iridium SBD *for RomTrax Wifi (Rom Communications)*	Email sent to Rom Communications (michael@romcomm.net).
ORBCOMM *currently operational for Australian vessels using IDP-690*	The flag CCM's mobile communications service provider (MCSP) for the MTUs establishes a reporting channel / account for the vessels that are required to report to the Commission VMS. If other CCMs authorize their vessels to use Orbcomm MTUs, consultation with WCPFC and TrackWell is necessary to establish communication channel arrangements between the CCM's Orbcomm service provider and WCPFC's VMS service provider (TrackWell), before the vessels can be activated to report to the WCPFC VMS.
PTSOG *currently operational for Chinese Taipei*	
SkyMate	Email sent to Skymate (williamricaurte@navcast.com).
SRT VMS 100Si	Email sent to SRT-UK office (support@srt-marinesystems.com) and cc to Dino Escano (based in PH) (dino.escano@srt-marine.com)

NAF format message for a manual report – as of Dec 2024

The following table specifies the elements of the NAF format message for a manual report.

Field-code	Data-element	Syntax	Contents	Examples
SR	Start record	No data	No data	//SR//

TM	Type of message	Char*3	POS
			Or
			MAN
				//TM/POS//
				Or
				
				//TM/MAN//

SQ	Sequence number	Num*6	1-999999	//SQ/001//
ID	Vessel ID	Num*7	WCPFC Vessel ID	//ID/12054/
NA*	Vessel Name	Char*50	Vessel Name	//NA/YUN RUN 7//
LT	Latitude (decimal)	Char*7	+(-)DD.ddd	//LT/45.544// or //LT/-23.743//
LG	Longitude (decimal)	Char*8	(-)DDD.ddd	//LG/-044.174// or //LG/+166.000//
DA	Date	Num*8	YYYYMMDD	//DA/20210825//
TI	Time	Num*4	HHMM	//TI/1555//
AD *(optional)*	Address destination	Char*	WCPFC	//AD/WCPFC//
ER	End record	No data	No data	//ER//

Sample strings:

//SR//TM/POS//SQ/1//ID/11285//LT/29.863//LG/122.506//DA/20221011//TI/0600//ER//

Or

//SR//TM/MAN//SQ/889//ID/11230//NA/JINXIANG12//LT/-13.812//LG/-171.753//DA/20240919//TI/0600//AD/WCPFC//ER//

Or

//SR//TM/POS//SQ/1//ID/11285//NA/YUN RUN 7//LT/29.863//LG/122.506//DA/20221011//TI/0600//AD/WCPFC//ER//

Annex C

Request for MTU/ALC type approval checklist

ALC/MTU testing checklist				
Item	**Description**	**Requirements**	**Evidence Provided (YES or NO)**	**Secretariat Assessment**
Documents to be provided on application				
1	Submit application	Letter of application.		
		Supporting technical reference documentation.		
		Provide proof of Type Approval received for the ALC/MTU.		
Assessment against Annex 1 of CMM 2014-02				
2	The ALC/MTU shall automatically and independently of any intervention on the vessel communicate.	ALC/MTU static unique identifier.		
		the current geographical position.		
		UTC date and time.		
3	Data shall be obtained from a satellite-based positioning system.	Indicate satellite service provider.		
4	ALC/MTU fitted to fishing vessel must be capable of transmitting data.	hourly intervals.		
5	The data shall be received by the Commission VMS under normal operating conditions.	within 90 minutes of being generated by the ALC/MTU.		
6	ALC/MTU fitted to fishing vessel must be protected.	Tamper proof.		
7	Storage of information within the ALC/MTU under normal conditions.	safe, secure and integrated.		
8	It must not be reasonably possible for anyone other than the monitoring authority to alter any of authority's data stored in the ALC/MTU.	Secure DNIDs and reporting parameters.		
9	Any features built into the ALC/MTU or terminal software to assist with servicing shall not allow unauthorised access to any areas of the ALC/MTU.	ALC/MTU software access should be password protected.		
10	The ALC/MTU shall be installed on the vessel in accordance with their manufacturer's specification and applicable standards.	The ALC/MTU shall be installed on the vessel in accordance with their manufacturer's specification and applicable WCPFC requirements.		
11	Under normal satellite navigation operating conditions, positions derived from the data forwarded must be accurate to within 100 square metres Distance Root Mean Square (DRMS).	98% of the positions must be within this range.		
12	The ALC/MTU and/or forwarding service provide must be capable to support the ability for data to be sent to multiple independent destinations.	capable for direct simultaneous reporting.		
13	The satellite navigation decoder and transmitter shall be fully integrated and housed in the same tamper-proof physical enclosure.	GPS and transmitter module be fully integrated and housed in the same tamper-proof physical enclosure.		
TrackWell testing				
14	Gateway / Communications channel.	Gateway / Channel setup and capable of receiving positions reports in either PUSH or PULL method.		
15	Position transmission.	Positions received without errors.		
16	Latency.	Positions received with 90 minutes of being generated by the ALC/MTU.		
17	Test report.	test completion report provided to the Secretariat		
The Secretariat has assessed the Application and deemed that the <<insert ALC/MTU type name>> has PASSED / FAILED the requirements to be included in the WCPFC Approved List of ALC / MTU				