ANNUAL REPORT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE E-REPORTING STANDARDS

Paper by the Secretariat and SPC-OFP

Purpose

1.   This paper reviews the background of the WCPFC E-reporting standards development and provides an update on the level of voluntary uptake by CCMs in their data submissions to WCPFC to date.

Background

2.   This paper responds to the task to the Secretariat under paragraph 7(c) of the E-reporting SSPs to "report annually on the performance of the Electronic reporting standards and their application, and as necessary, make recommendation for improvements or modifications."

3.   Over the several years the Commission has been considering the application of E-reporting and E-monitoring technologies for fisheries monitoring. In 2014, the WCPFC held an E-Monitoring and E-reporting workshop at FFA Headquarters (Honiara, Solomon Islands) from 31 March – 1 April 2014 to discuss the potential for electronic reporting and electronic monitoring in the WCPO and to consider next steps for progressing these initiatives. The workshop noted that a key risk for the Commission is the lack of documented policies and standards for these technologies. The benefits of standardised reporting formats for data exchange were articulated in the consultant's paper, **WCPFC10-2013-16_rev1**. Potential benefits identified at the time included but were not limited to:

   a. timely and enhanced data management;

   b. facilitating data exchange between the Secretariat, CCMs, and regional bodies;

   c. efficiently managing the increasing amounts of data received by the Secretariat; and

   d. giving effect to t-RFMO recommendations on data harmonisation.

The potential risks of not having agreed WCPFC data standards included poor data coordination, increased data storage and transmission complexities, higher data security risk and increased long-term costs to the Commission and CCMs.

4. At WCPFC11 (December 2014) the Commission agreed that a priority task should be the development of draft standards, specifications, and procedures for the use of electronic reporting and electronic monitoring technologies in WCPFC fisheries. To facilitate the development of these standards, specifications and procedures, the Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring Working Group (ERandEMWG) was established.

5. The first two meetings of the ERandEMWG prioritised the development and consideration of draft E-reporting standards, particularly for operational level catch and effort data and for observer data. The culmination of the past two ERandEMWG meetings was the adoption in December 2016 of *"The Standards, Specifications and Procedures for Electronic Reporting"* (E-reporting SSPs), which was adopted by the Commission in the form of a general decision to which other forms of E-reporting standards, once agreed would be included over time. The subsequent three meetings held in 2018, 2020 and 2022 have focused more on E-monitoring.[1]

6. In December 2016, the Commission adopted the standards, specifications and procedures for E-reporting which include *E-reporting standards for operational catch and effort data (*WCPFC13 Summary Report paragraph 584 and Attachment T). Additionally, in December 2017 the *E-reporting standards for observer data* (WCPFC14 Summary Report paragraph 401 and Attachment T) were agreed for inclusion in the E-reporting SSPs. The standards for *E-reporting of high seas transhipment declarations and transhipment notices* were adopted in December 2018 (WCPFC15 Summary Report Attachment S). A table that summarises the status of the WCPFC E-reporting standards is provided in **Table 1** below. Copies of the E-Reporting SSPs can be found on the WCPFC website at this link:= https://www.wcpfc.int/electronic-reporting

Table 1. Notes on the decisions by the Commission on the standards, specifications, and procedures for Electronic Reporting (E-reporting SSPs)

Version	WCPFC decision reference	Description of updates	Effective date *(Refer para 4)*
1.0	*WCPFC15 Summary Report, Attachment S*	*For adoption of ER for high seas transhipment notices and declarations*	*14 June 2019*
2.0	*WCPFC14 Summary Report, Attachment T*	*For adoption of ER for observer data*	*9 June 2018*
1.0	*WCPFC13 Summary Report, Attachment T*	*For adoption of ER SSPs, for operational level catch and effort data*	*9 June 2017*

7. In December 2018, the Commission also agreed that *"with respect to maintaining adopted standards, matters of substance (such as major changes or new proposals) shall be considered in a manner consistent with already established processes for new*

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[1] For links to the past meetings please see https://www.wcpfc.int/ERandEM-IWG

proposals. The Secretariat shall administer minor changes to the SSPs that reflect decisions of the Commission by circulating a draft to all CCMs advising that the change had been made and would come into effect on a date at least consistent with that in the SSPs. CCMs shall be provided the opportunity to raise concerns and if so, the change becomes a matter of substance and will be handled as such."

Comment on the voluntary uptake and/or performance of the E-reporting standards

8. At the time of preparing this paper, the WCPFC E-reporting SSPs related to the *E-reporting standards for operational catch and effort data* will have been in effect for a little more than five years. The WCPFC E-reporting SSPs as they relate to the *E-reporting standards for observer data* and the *E-reporting standards for high seas transhipment declarations and high seas transhipment notices* have been in effect for a little more than three years (refer Table 1).

9. Irrespective of the effective date, it should be noted that the various E-reporting standards are voluntary until such time the Commission decides to make them mandatory (*refer* E-reporting SSPs paragraph 3).

   Uptake of E-reporting Standards for operational level catch and effort data and observer data

10. Uptake of electronic reporting tools is continuing and developments over the past five years include:
    a) The Scientific Service Provider continues to receive E-Reported purse seine logsheet data from the PNA FIMS/iFIMS system that adhere to the WCPFC E-Reporting standards for operational catch/effort data, which is mandatory for all purse seine fleets licensed to fish in the PNA waters. The PNA FIMS/iFIMS accesses a web-based API developed by the Scientific Service Provider to undertake comprehensive data quality control to ensure a regional standard in the quality of their E-Reporting data. The coverage of the validated PNA iFIMS e-log data in the WCPFC databases continues to increase as procedures for dealing with errors are better established.

    b) The submission of operational data as reported through ARPt 1:

        i. for the Korean longline fleet since 2018 continues to be sourced from their E-Reporting system, although it does not adhere to the WCPFC E-Reporting standards at this stage;

        ii. for the Australian longline fleet "*as of 2021, all reporting in the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF) is done via electronic logbooks*", although it does not adhere to the WCPFC E-Reporting standards at this time; and

        iii. for the US Hawaii longline fleet "*electronic reporting of daily fishing logbooks began testing and implementation in 2019 and was mandated for use in the entire Hawaii longline fleet in 2021*", although it does not adhere to the WCPFC E-Reporting standards at this time.

c) E-Reporting implementation continues to expand throughout Pacific Islands countries that will result in an increase in coverage of LONGLINE operational data submissions adhering to the WCPFC E-Reporting standards in the future. For example, since 2019 French Polynesia has successfully implemented the E-Reporting *Onboard* system on 69 vessels. This system is also being used by vessels in Cook Islands (9 vessels), FSM (12 vessels), Fiji (5 vessels), New Caledonia (10 vessels), Tonga (5 vessels) and Samoa (2 vessels). There has also been a significant increase in the submission of LONGLINE operational data (which adhere to the WCPFC E-Reporting standards) from E-Reporting systems developed by respective fishing companies (for example, 29 foreign-flagged vessels in the Cook Islands and 67 vessels from the Vanuatu fleet).

d) There are several E-Monitoring initiatives currently underway throughout the region, and the current system used in Pacific Island countries (provided by the Technical Service Provider SATLINK) exports data that adheres to the WCPFC E-Reporting Observer Standards. For recent years, **longline E-Monitoring data comprising** 3,550 / 2,110 / 819 / 218 / 10 / 29 sets respectively for 2017 / 2018 / 2019 / 2020 / 2021 / 2022 have been generated from this E-Monitoring system (adhering to the WCPFC E-Reporting observer standards) and loaded into the SPC regional E-Monitoring database. Unfortunately, progress with trials and the implementation of E-Monitoring have been impacted due to COVID over the past 30 months, although several studies are underway to use the experiences from the trials to formulate draft standards, specifications, and procedures.

11. In terms of adherence to the adopted e-reporting standards, members are currently reporting as follows:

a) All Pacific Island member countries of the Pacific Community (SPC) require domestic and foreign fleets licensed to fish in their waters to submit logsheets, which are then entered or imported into the WCPFC operational catch/effort database (using the TUFMAN 2 system). This system stores data consistent with the WCPFC E-Reporting standards for operational data. The submissions of 2021 **operational purse seine data** that are aligned to the WCPFC E-reporting standards **represents 99% coverage** (the same as for 2020), and for **2021 operational longline data**, **represent coverage of 40%** (of all 2021 longline data submitted) (down from 44% in 2020).

b) All national observer programmes from Pacific Island member countries, the PNA-managed FSM Arrangement observer programme and the FFA-managed US Treaty Observer Programme have their observer data entered into the TUFMAN 2 system, which produces data for the WCPFC ROP database that is aligned to the WCPFC E-Reporting standards for observer data. The submissions of **2021 purse seine observer data** held in the WCPFC ROP database that are aligned to the WCPFC E-Reporting standards for observer data **represents 100% coverage**. As reported in past years, several CCMs continue to align their longline observer data submission to the WCPFC E-Reporting standards for observer data, including Chinese Taipei, Japan, Korea and USA. The submissions of **2021 longline observer data** held in the WCPFC ROP database that are aligned to the WCPFC E-Reporting standards for observer data

represents 75% coverage, which is a considerable improvement on 2017 when this coverage level was only 29%, although the longline observer coverage for 2020-21 was lower than in recent years, due to the impacts of COVID.

E-reporting Standards for high seas transhipment declarations and notices

12. The Secretariat system to support E-reporting[2] can receive E-reported data as per the WCPFC high seas transhipment declaration and notices E-reporting standards. An application developed by WCPFC to support CCMs implementation of the E-reporting Standards for high seas transhipment declarations and transhipment notices has now been operational for more than three years. It is available for Windows, Android and Apple iOS operating systems and is designed to operate at low bandwidth making it accessible for and cost effective for use by vessels as well as fisheries authorities. The user manual can be accessed from the WCPFC website at this link:= https://www.wcpfc.int/e-reporting/tser.

13. The Secretariat has been using the Windows version since November 2018 to enter high seas transhipment notifications and declarations submitted by email to WCPFC. Accordingly, **since November 2018 the data entry of high seas transhipment declarations and notices that align to the WCPFC E-reporting standards represent 100% coverage.**

14. In addition, the Republic of Korea and Chinese Taipei have been voluntarily using the WCPFC High Seas Transhipment E-reporting Application **(TSER)** since February 2020 and September 2019 respectively.

15. There has been a progressive increase in the proportion of high seas transhipment declarations and notices that were directly entered by CCMs into the WCPFC E-reporting system. In **2019, the proportion** was **12.6%** with the remainder being submitted by email and entered by the Secretariat into the WCPFC E-reporting system. As of 31 August 2020, **the proportion increased to 67%** and since **2021 has increased to more than 70%**.

16. A CCM wishing to use the e-reporting option must first contact the Secretariat for guidance on how to access the option. The Secretariat has provided TSER demonstrations to two other flag State CCMs in 2021 who are considering using this system to streamline their transhipment reporting process.

17. To support the implementation of the WCPFC High Seas Transhipment E-Reporting System, since April 2020, the Secretariat has provided Authorised Flag CCM users online access to their high seas transhipment notifications and high seas transhipment declarations as received by WCPFC as a tool to assist in their transhipment management and identification and resolution of issues. Authorised flag CCM users only have access to the submissions made by or on behalf of their vessels, and not those submitted by another

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[2] The work to date was supported by supplemental funds from New Zealand and the United States of America. The design of the high seas transhipment E-reporting system provides the WCPFC with a base infrastructure that could be easily modified to collect other types of E-reported data in the future

CCM. To date, the Secretariat has provided three demonstrations on the use of this system and will extend this later in 2022 and 2023. This system is available to members involved in high seas transhipments reported to WCPFC at this link https://www.wcpfc.int/ccm-transhipment.

18.   During 2022, the Secretariat has assisted one member with information that will assist them to develop an API that will allow them and their companies and operators to directly and in a timely manner, transfer data from their online system to WCPFC including transhipment data.

Update on progressing the development of E-monitoring and associated reporting standards by the ERandEM WG

19.   In response to the Commission task to establish a WCPFC regional electronic monitoring programme by 2023, a Fourth E-reporting and E-monitoring Working Group meeting was held virtually on 14 October 2020 to discuss a draft consultative proposal for a CMM for a Regional E-Monitoring Programme (EMP).

20.   A Fifth E-Reporing and E-Monitoring Working Group meeting to consider key unresolved framework and implementation issues underpinning the design and development of a Regional EMP, was held virtually on 19th and 20th July 2022. A copy of the Chairs Report from that meeting is posted as TCC18-2022-19 and an update will be provided under *TCC18 Agenda 7.5*. The work through the ERandEM WG recognises e-monitoring programmes including associated data standards being developed by several CCMs as well as work in this area by FFA, SPC and PNAO, through the FFA/SPC Data Collection Committee. A draft E-Monitoring CMM is scheduled to be prepared in 2023 and will necessarily require associated reporting standards.

Update on the CEFACT/FLUX standard

21.   In response to the task from WCPFC15, the Secretariat completed and reported to TCC16 its work based on the CEAFACT/FLUX documentation provided by the European Union technicians, of a proof-of-concept enhancement to the WCPFC high seas transhipment e-reporting data receipt module (**TCC16-2020-RP10**). Based on the findings from investigations that reviewed the FLUX protocol, the FLUX transport layer, and developed a proof of concept, the Secretariat recommended to TCC16 that WCPFC could not at that time, provide FLUX support into the WCPFC managed high seas transhipment E-reporting system.

22.   At TCC16, the EU confirmed their preference that WCPFC continue to work on the standard, although not specifically on high seas transhipment, and to leave open the possibility for future adoption of the FLUX standard for other reporting. The Secretariat undertook to work with the EU intersessionally to review the outcomes from the proof of concept with a view to better understand the options for further consideration of FLUX and to provide updates to TCC and the ERandEMWG as appropriate.

23.   In late 2020, the Secretariat and representatives from the European Union held virtual discussions to consider potential options in WCPFC for CEFACT/FLUX. In response to a query from the European Union, the Secretariat indicated potential interest in receiving development capacity to support the implementation of a FLUX node at the Secretariat, possibly to support a Record of Fishing Vessels (RFV) update process and the related fished/not fished information provided each year by CCMs.

24.   By way of update, with the release of the new Compliance Case File System on 23 March 2022, the Secretariat has begun work on the upgrade of the RFV as tasked for 2022/23 with an associated API and further consideration of the integration with the FLUX protocol[3].

Recommendation

25.   TCC18 is invited to note the report in this paper.

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[3] o) Article 14(1)(c) Priority tasks with respects to implementation of cooperative MCS & E: TCC Work Plan 2022-2024 Attachment O WCPFC Summary Report Issued: 13 April 2022