

Belize's VMS Progress Report pursuant to IATTC Res. C-23-11

18th March 2025

Belize implemented its Vessel Monitoring System in 2003, partnering with Polestar Space Applications Ltd, as service provider. Since then, Polestar has been dedicated to enhancing our system by addressing our unique monitoring requirements. Through a successful merger with Absolute Software Inc., Polestar has created an innovative platform that enables our system to:

1. Accurately capture vital information such as vessel identification, geographical coordinates (latitude and longitude) with a precision of less than 100 meters at a confidence level of 99%.
2. Additionally, the system records the date and time (UTC) of the vessel's position, its speed and course, as well as providing a photograph and detailed profile of the vessel, among other noteworthy features.
3. The system also allows us to define specific geographical zones, grouping vessels accordingly. It also incorporates points of interest, bathymetry, and weather mapping overlays. Furthermore, it includes an accumulative distance measurer, hourly vessel position reporting, and the ability to adjust the frequency of position reporting for vessels requiring additional monitoring or operational verification.
4. VMS equipment installed on our vessels are tamper evident and protected against input or output of false positions and the system cannot be over-ridden.

All Belize registered fishing vessels, and those involved in fishing-related activities regardless of dimensions are mandated to obtain and install the unit provided by Polestar Space Applications Ltd.

Since its establishment in January 2014, our Fisheries Monitoring Centre (FMC) has been committed to 24-hour monitoring of our vessels. All data retrieved from the unit adheres to the standards and regulations stipulated by the IATTC.

Pursuant to our Monitoring, Control and Surveillance regulation, if a unit malfunctions or experiences technical issues while the vessel is at sea, the operator is required to provide hourly manual position reports to our Fisheries Monitoring Center (FMC) while addressing the problem. If a unit remains faulty for a period of up to 48 hours, the vessel will receive instructions to terminate all fishing operations, secure its fishing gear, and return to port until the issue is resolved. This precaution ensures that any technical difficulties are promptly resolved, maintaining the integrity of our monitoring system. No vessel is allowed to leave a port or engage in fishing activities without an operational vessel monitoring equipment.

Belize's vessel monitoring efforts are further enhanced by utilizing additional platforms such as Global Fishing Watch, online monitoring platforms such as MarineTraffic and VesselFinder. These supplementary tools provide valuable support to our monitoring activities, enabling us to gather comprehensive data and insights into fishing activities. By leveraging multiple platforms, we strengthen our ability to effectively monitor and manage our marine resources, ensuring sustainable fishing practices in Belize.

Belize is also implementing Electronic Monitoring to compliment VMS and to aide in gathering scientific and catch data in place of human observers. The EMS project will be divided into three phases. The first phase will commence in early 2025 and will be fully implemented by 2026.

