

Vanuatu VMS Progress Report to the IATTC

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Submitted by: Vanuatu

Report Reference: Compliance with IATTC Resolution C-14-02 on Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS)

1. Introduction

Vanuatu as a flag state (therein referred to as the Flag State) is committed to complying with the IATTC Resolution C-14-02 regarding the implementation of Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) on commercial fishing vessels operating in the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO). This report outlines the status of Vanuatu's compliance with the resolution and highlights relevant provisions in the Vanuatu Fisheries Act No. 10 of 2014, including amendments from the Fisheries (Amendment) Act No. 38 of 2019.

2. Compliance with IATTC Resolution C-14-02

Requirement 1: Installation of VMS by 1 January 2016

The Flag State has ensured that all commercial fishing vessels registered under the Vanuatu Shipping Registry regardless of length, operating in any RFMO that Vanuatu is a party to and engaging in fishing and fishing related activities, are equipped with a satellite-based VMS. This is in accordance with the Fisheries Act No. 10 of 2014, which mandates the installation, maintenance, and operation of approved mobile transceiver units (MTU) on all fishing vessels licensed or authorized to fish under the Act.

Since 2009, the Flag State utilizes the satellite tracking and monitoring services of the French Company Collecte Localisation Satellites (CLS) based in Toulouse, France.

Requirement 2: VMS Operational Details

Vanuatu has aligned its VMS requirements with the specifics outlined in Resolution C-14-02:

- **Vessel Identification and Positioning:** The VMS provides real-time data including vessel identification, geographical position with an error of less than 100 meters at a confidence level of 98%, date and time of position fixing, vessel speed, and course.
- **Frequency of Data Collection:** The Vanuatu Fisheries Act mandates that VMS data is reported automatically to the Vanuatu Fisheries Monitoring Center (FMC) every one hour for vessels other than purse seiners, and every 30 minutes for purse seiners, which then can be configured to be forwarded automatically to respective RFMOs which the Flag State is a party to.
- **VMS Equipment Standards:** An addition to utilizing the satellite tracking and monitoring services of CLS, as of 2021 all MTUs installed on flag state fishing vessels are from CLS mainly CLS LEO MTUs and CLS Triton Advanced MTUs. All VMS equipment installed on vessels is tamper-evident, fully automated for regular position data reporting, operational under all environmental conditions and has Bluetooth capabilities for manual and e-log data reports when practical.

Requirement 3: Technical Failures and Non-Operation Protocols

In the event of a technical failure of the VMS:

- The Fisheries Act requires that the transceiver unit must be repaired or replaced within 30 days. Vessels are not authorized to commence fishing trips with a defective VMS unit.
- For fishing trips lasting longer than 30 days, repairs or replacements must be carried out as soon as the vessel enters a port.
- Manual reporting is required when the VMS fails, with position reports submitted every hour as per the 2019 amendment.

Requirement 4: Data Transmission Capabilities

Where practicable, Vanuatu's VMS equipment can transmit additional data required under relevant IATTC resolutions, including C-03-04 and C-03-05.

Requirement 5: Encouragement of Non-Member Participation

Vanuatu supports the Commission's efforts to encourage non-Members whose flag vessels fish in the EPO to participate in the VMS program. Vanuatu remains open to coordinating with IATTC to engage these non-Member states.

3. Additional Compliance Measures Under Vanuatu Fisheries Legislation**Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance:**

The Fisheries Act No. 10 of 2014 includes provisions for the continuous operation of VMS equipment under various conditions, including fishing beyond Vanuatu waters and during repairs in ports or shipyards. Tampering, interference, or unauthorized disconnection of VMS equipment is strictly prohibited, with severe penalties for non-compliance, including fines of up to VT500,000,000 and cancellation of licenses or authorizations.

Data Ownership and Confidentiality:

All VMS data generated by MTUs is owned by the State and classified as confidential. Unauthorized disclosure of this data is punishable under the Act, ensuring data integrity and security.

4. Conclusion

Vanuatu remains dedicated to fulfilling its obligations under IATTC Resolution C-14-02 and continuously improves its VMS protocols to enhance compliance and support the Commission's conservation and management objectives. Future updates will be provided as Vanuatu progresses towards developing a comprehensive, stand-alone VMS scheme in alignment with the Commission's ongoing discussions.

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This report reflects Vanuatu's commitment to implementing and maintaining robust vessel monitoring systems in compliance with IATTC Resolution C-14-02, contributing to the sustainable management of tuna and tuna-like species in the EPO.