

3rd Meeting of the SIOFA VMS Working Group (VMSWG-03)

Online, 8 April 2024

VMSWG-03-01

Report of the 2nd Meeting of the Working Group to Support the Establishment of the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement Vessel Monitoring System (VMSWG-02)

SIOFA Secretariat

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Abstract	
As agreed in the 2 nd Meeting of the Working Group to Support the Establishment of the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement Vessel Monitoring System (VMSWG-02), the VMS WG shall adopt the report of the VMSWG-02 at its third meeting.	

Recommendations (for proposals and working papers only)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the VMS WG03 reviews and adopts the Rev1 of the Draft report of the VMS WG02

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Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement
Accord relatif aux Pêches dans le Sud de l'Océan Indien

Report of the 2nd Meeting of
the Working Group to
Support the Establishment of the
Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement
Vessel Monitoring System
(VMSWG-02)

Virtual

27 February 2024

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Agenda item 1 – Opening of Session

1. The Chair, Ms Fiona Harford (European Union (EU)), opened the 2nd Meeting of the Working Group (WG) to Support the Establishment of the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement Vessel Monitoring System (SIOFA VMS; VMSWG-02) and welcomed the participants.
2. The list of meeting participants is included in Annex A.

Agenda item 2 – Administrative arrangements

i. Adoption of Agenda

3. The agenda was adopted (Annex B).

ii. Meeting Documents

4. The Compliance Officer outlined the list of meeting documents as presented in VMSWG-02-ADM-02 (Annex C).

iii. Appointment of rapporteurs

5. The VMS WG agreed to appoint Mr Alexander Meyer (Urban Connections, Tokyo) as rapporteur.

Agenda item 3 – Adoption of the Report of the 1st Working Group Meeting (VMSWG-01)

6. The VMS adopted the VMSWG-01 Report (VMSWG-02-01).

Agenda item 4 – Standards, Specifications and Procedures (SSPs) for the SIOFA VMS

i. Review of the second draft of the SSPs

7. The Compliance Officer presented the second draft of the Standards, Specifications and Procedures (SSPs) for the SIOFA VMS (VMSWG-02-02). The second draft was prepared by the Secretariat and included revisions to the first draft based on feedback provided by CCPs at VMSWG-01 and following that meeting, as well as a new section on data confidentiality and security.
8. The VMS WG reviewed the draft, made technical and editorial revisions, and provided substantive feedback that the Secretariat should consider when preparing the third draft.
9. The VMS WG agreed that the SSPs should be a technical document that sets out minimum binding requirements that all CCPs must follow and requested the Secretariat to revise the language in the draft to reflect that the requirements are binding to revise the draft accordingly.
10. The VMS WG agreed that paragraph 4 of section 2 (application), which concerns compliance, should be moved to CMM 16 (2023) (Vessel Monitoring System).
11. Regarding paragraph 6a of section 3 (general provisions), the VMS WG agreed that the ALC information should be provided to the Secretariat no later than 30 days before the entry into operation of the VMS. The VMS WG agreed to revisit this paragraph as appropriate based on future discussions, including the proposed potential amendments to CMM 07(2022) (Vessel Authorisation).
12. The VMS WG agreed to replace the term “Serial Number” with “ALC Unique Identifier” in paragraphs 7 and 8bis of section 3.
13. Regarding paragraph 8bis of section 3, the VMS WG considered a proposal to use the SIOFA unique vessel number as the Unique Vessel Identifier (UVI). The VMS WG agreed that “UVI” is a commonly used term that has a specific meaning in an international context and that the SIOFA unique vessel number, which is a number assigned for internal SIOFA

- purposes, would therefore not be an appropriate UVI.
14. One CCP noted that paragraph 7 of CMM 16(2023) requires that CCPs that choose to report VMS position reports to the Secretariat via their FMC must automatically forward VMS position reports (as defined in paragraph 1.f) of CMM 16(2023)) to the Secretariat, which implies that the VMS position reports received from vessels must be forwarded unmodified to the Secretariat. This CCP also noted, however, that VMS position reports might not include the International Radio Call Sign (ICRS) or the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Number, which are the UVIs required by paragraph 8bis a) of the SSPs (draft 2), and sought clarification on whether the addition of the ICRS or IMO Number would constitute a modification of the VMS position report and therefore non-compliance with paragraph 7 of CMM 16(2023). The VMS WG noted the practice in other regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) and agreed that the ICRS or IMO Number could be added to the VMS position reports and that this would not constitute a modification of the VMS position reports if the addition is done automatically as part of the automatic forwarding process. [The VMS WG agreed to include “ALC Unique Identifier” in paragraph 8bis a\) of the SSPs.](#)
 15. Regarding section 4 (methods to ensure ALCs comply with SIOFA standards), the VMS WG noted the usefulness of having a type approval process, but in view of the associated burden agreed to move forward without one, provided that there are clear provisions requiring CCPs to ensure that the ALCs on board vessels flying their flag meet SIOFA requirements, and requested the Secretariat to revise the section accordingly. The VMS WG agreed that failure by CCPs to ensure that ALCs meet SIOFA requirements would be considered non-compliance with the relevant obligations.
 16. The VMS WG agreed to delete section 5 (ALC inspection protocols) noting that these provisions either did not need to be included in the SSPs as they either overlapped with existing provisions in CMM 08 (2020) (Port Inspection) or CMM 14 (2021) (High Seas Boarding and Inspection Procedures), or would fit more appropriately in those CMMs.
 17. Regarding paragraph 24 of section 6 (rules for polling and programming for vessels reporting to the Secretariat in accordance with paragraph 6 b), the VMS WG considered the three options and agreed to move forward on the basis of the proposed text that had been submitted by Japan, while noting the need to have a more holistic discussion about costs in the future.
 18. The VMS WG agreed to delete paragraphs 25 and 26 of section 6, while noting the need to revisit the matter of entry/exit notification in the future.
 19. Regarding section 7 (obligations and roles of CCPs and the Secretariat), the VMS WG agreed that the core obligations for CCPs should be included in the relevant CMMs but that these could be specified in more detail in the SSPs if needed. The VMS WG noted that the obligations for the Secretariat relating to reporting to the Compliance Committee and the Meeting of the Parties are already covered by CMM 16(2023) and should be removed, and that the other obligations for the Secretariat could be considered as part of section 10 (data confidentiality and security provisions).
 20. The VMS WG reviewed section 8 (data format for data transmission), agreed to add the word “or” between subparagraphs a and b of paragraph 37, agreed the addition of email transmission under in paragraph 39, and agreed to move forward with the text as amended, while noting that CCPs could still provide written comments by the deadline agreed to under agenda item 6.
 21. The VMS WG agreed that section 9 (manual position reporting standard) duplicated the provisions in CMM 16(2023) and should be deleted.

ii. Review of the proposed Data Confidentiality and Security Provisions

22. The Compliance Officer explained that the Secretariat had prepared a paper, VMSWG-02-03, that outlined the key types of confidentiality and security provisions applied in other RFMOs and in the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) and sought the VMS WG's guidance on the appropriate modalities for implementing the data confidentiality and security provisions based on assumption that the SSPs would be non-binding. He further explained, however, that, following the clarification from the VMS WG that the SSPs should in fact be binding, this request for guidance is no longer relevant.
23. The Compliance Officer explained that the Secretariat had drafted section 10 (data confidentiality and security provisions) to cover needs that were not accounted for in either CMM 03(2016) (Data Confidentiality) or CMM 16(2023).
24. The VMS WG noted that paragraph 43 overlapped with CMM 16(2023) and that it and other provisions in section 10 that are relevant to this CMM should be considered as part of the discussions on potential amendments to the CMM.
25. The VMS WG agreed that paragraph 44 is a key part of the data confidentiality and security provisions and should be added to CMM 16(2023).
26. The VMS WG noted that section 10 used the terms "VMS position reports", "ALC details", and "VMS data" seemingly interchangeably, and that the concept of "VMS data" was undefined. The Compliance Officer explained that the Secretariat had taken "VMS data" from CMM 03(2016) and had used the term with the assumption that it included both "VMS position reports" and "ALC details". The VMS WG agreed on the need to define and review the use of these and other terms that describe various (sub)sets of VMS-related data throughout the SSPs and the CMMs to ensure that they are clear and consistent. [CCPs also proposed that VMS data be defined as the data that is provided from the VMS terminal (ALC), which are the position reports, date, time etc. and not the actual ALC details, to avoid the need for defining and reviewing terminology.]
27. The VMS WG noted that paragraph 45 contained several elements: the maintenance of a database of ALCs for vessels entered on the SIOFA RAV and the treatment of these ALC details as confidential information, a proposal from Australia for how the Secretariat may share ALC details to a requesting CCP when a vessel enters its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) or with the consent of the vessel's flag CCP, and a proposal from Mauritius for developing a list of approved personnel with whom ALC details could be provided based on a risk assessment. The VMS WG agreed that ALC details should be treated as confidential information and that the Secretariat should maintain a record of such data. The VMS WG noted that EEZs are outside the SIOFA Agreement Area and are therefore outside the scope of the SIOFA VMS. The VMS WG agreed not to implement a risk assessment, noting the views expressed by some CCPs that a risk assessment would incur costs and be burdensome, and that CMM 2016(2023) already restricts the personnel that would have access to VMS position [data report](#).
28. The VMS WG agreed that paragraph 46 should refer to "the VMS Point of Contact", which is the term used in CMM 2016(2023), rather than "a secure email address".
29. As regards paragraph 47, the VMS WG noted that CMM 2016(2023) sets out exhaustively the purposes for which VMS position reports could be requested and used, and requested the Secretariat to provide more details regarding potential criteria for data release.
30. The VMS WG agreed that paragraph 48 should be moved to CMM 16(2023) and that any obligation to destroy data should have a specified deadline for the destruction.
31. The VMS WG agreed that paragraph 50 should be fleshed out with further details and requested CCPs to provide their comments in writing to the Secretariat by the deadline agreed to under agenda item 6.

Agenda item 5 – Potential amendments to Conservation and Management Measures (CMM) to align with SIOFA VMS

i. Potential amendments to CMM 07 (2022) (Vessel Authorisation)

ii. Potential amendments to CMM 03 (2016) (Data Confidentiality)

32. Due to time constraints, the VMS WG did not consider agenda item 5. The VMS WG noted that the Secretariat had prepared two papers for this agenda item (VMSWG-02-04 and VMSWG-02-05) and requested CCPs to share their preliminary feedback with the Secretariat in writing by the deadline agreed to under agenda item 6.

Agenda item 6 – Revised work plan for the SIOFA VMSWG

33. The VMS WG agreed that CCPs could provide written comments on the second draft of the SSPs and the potential amendments to CMM 07(2022) and CMM 03(2016) by 12 March, that the Secretariat will circulate a revised draft based on the discussions at the VMSWG02 meeting and CCPs' written comments, and that the third meeting of the VMS WG will be held on 8 April.

34. The Chair tentatively suggested holding the fourth meeting of the VMS WG on 23 April and the VMS WG agreed to finalize the date at VMSWG-03.

Agenda item 7 – Other Business

35. There was no other business.

Agenda item 8 – Close of Meeting

36. The meeting was closed at 10:45 a.m. UTC, 27 February 2024.

37. [The report was adopted at the 3rd Meeting of the Working Group [to Support the Establishment of the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement Vessel Monitoring System](#) (VMSWG-03) on 8 April 2024.]

Annex A – List of meeting participants

Annex B – Agenda

Annex C – List of meeting documents