



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

COC_312/2018

ABNJ

COMMON OCEANS

Tuna Compliance Network

a partnership for sustainability



The Tuna Compliance Network

Supporting and strengthening the implementation of and compliance with tuna fishery conservation and management measures

The key to sustainable fisheries

The sustainability of fisheries can only be achieved through the adoption and effective implementation of Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs). This is, in particular, the case for straddling stocks and highly migratory species, where Members are required to implement internationally agreed CMMs adopted in the framework of Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs).

Tuna RFMO Members are supported by a Secretariat, and especially by its officers responsible for compliance, in the implementation of adopted CMMs, and the monitoring of compliance with these measures. Strict observance of all binding measures is essential for fair and effective management of these fisheries resources, and helps to reduce Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.

Among many other activities, officers responsible for compliance in tuna RFMOs collate and analyze data provided by Members to prepare reports and supporting material for the organization's decision-making processes, and assess compliance by Members and

the effectiveness of active CMMs. This is in general a vast task considering the number of Members in each RFMO, the large number of reporting requirements, and that the information is often processed manually.

Joining forces

In March 2017, the Tuna Compliance Network (TCN) was set up to facilitate communication and cooperation between officers responsible for compliance and experts in Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS). Its main objective is to share best practice compliance processes associated mainly with tuna RFMOs and, therefore contribute to combating IUU fishing in tuna fisheries. All RFMOs and their Members face similar challenges in the implementation of CMMs and the assessment of their compliance, and can benefit from each other's knowledge and experience. As an informal network, the TCN provides a unique opportunity for these exchanges to take place among tuna RFMOs, something that has not happened before in the context of compliance.

While focused on tuna fisheries, particularly through the five tuna RFMOs, the TCN also promotes the involvement of other experts in fisheries compliance and MCS, including other RFMOs and relevant international bodies.

The initiative

The TCN was established in cooperation with the International Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Network (IMCSN) and with support from the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project, which is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The TCN will be supported by the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project until June 2019, after which time other sources of funding will need to be identified to ensure its continuation.

A first workshop was held in Spain in March 2017, where officers responsible for compliance in each of the five tuna RFMOs, and other experts met and launched the TCN.

Core Group and other members

The TCN is organized around a Core Group composed of officers responsible for compliance in the five tuna RFMOs:

- Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT)
- Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)
- International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)
- Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)
- Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)

In addition, the TCN includes an Extended Group of experts in compliance and MCS, who participate in the exchange of information for specific projects.



Participants at the second TCN workshop in Honiara, Solomon Islands.



Goals and priorities

The main goals of the TCN involve:

- Facilitating communication and information exchange;
- Fostering joint efforts, including the development of common tools and procedures and best practice compliance methodologies;
- Enhancing opportunities for sharing technology and technology transfer;
- Improving awareness of new and existing measures, procedures and technologies within RFMOs;
- Identifying and coordinating capacity building and training opportunities.

During its first workshop, the TCN identified, as a priority, sharing best practice compliance processes regarding:

- Data management and reporting for effective implementation and control of RFMO measures;
- RFMOs' Compliance assessment and review procedures;
- Authorized vessel lists;
- IUU Vessel lists;
- Electronic monitoring and electronic reporting systems;
- Transshipment at sea, and
- Port State Measures.

Current and future activities

The TCN is providing inputs for other activities under the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project, i.e. the development of MCS Best Practices in tuna fisheries and a study on transshipment called for by the FAO Committee on Fisheries in 2016.

In February 2018 the TCN held its second Workshop in Honiara, Solomon Islands, at the FFA headquarters, focusing on data management and reporting for compliance. Participating experts explored the scope for cooperation and potential strategies to improve the effectiveness of current systems. Conclusions are available in the Workshop Report.

The Workplan for 2018-2019 includes, in addition to continued information exchange on compliance and MCS matters, exploring opportunities for greater collaboration in the review and development of compliance procedures. The TCN will convene a meeting with the Chairs of the Compliance Committees of the tuna RFMOs, and address this topic at the 3rd Workshop of the TCN, which will take place back-to-back with the 6th Global Fisheries Enforcement Training Workshop organized by the International MCS Network in Bangkok, Thailand, in February 2019.



The Tuna Compliance Network (TCN) is supported by the International MCS Network, the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project that is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), and other partners.

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