

# IMCS Network Executive Committee and General Membership Meeting Report

2 August 2023

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada



## IMCS Network Executive Committee and General Membership Meeting Report

The Chair of the IMCS Network, Gary Orr (New Zealand) and the Executive Committee, convened a meeting of the General Membership on the margins of the 7<sup>th</sup> Global Fisheries Enforcement Training Workshop (GFETW) on 2 August 2023 in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. The two IMCS Network Vice Chairs, Thord Monsen (Norway) and Glen Joseph (Republic of the Marshall Islands), joined the meeting that included twenty members, three that joined virtually. The Chair highlighted that the Network now has 89 members and observers and took the opportunity to welcome the newest members including the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC), North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC), Samoa and the South Indian Ocean Fisheries Arrangement (SIOFA), noting that SEAFDEC, NPFC and Samoa were all present at the meeting. The Chair introduced the agenda (Appendix I) that was adopted by the General Membership.

The staff of the IMCS Network presented an overview of developments and work over the last twelve months and highlighted key areas of growth and strengthening including as they relate to communication, outreach, capacity development and partnerships to deliver joint work. Several members noted that the IMCS Network was delivering important results and adding value to the work of members.

The Executive Director, Mark Young, reiterated that the Network was undergoing a period of growth and strengthening and that work had been done to clarify *Who we are, What we do, What we value, What to expect from us, How we work* and *Why we exist*. It was noted that the Governing Framework still provides the basis for the Network and work has focused on ensuring that our messaging and approaches are clear and consistent.

Members considered the issue of ongoing funding that has been previously highlighted. Members were reminded that the Network does not mandate financial contributions from members or observers and has historically relied on financial support from one or two developed country members, notably the United States. Members acknowledged that the support from the United States over the last 20 years had been vital to ensuring the continuation of the Network and thanks the United States for this support. Members noted that the funding support from the United States was ending as of November 2023 and that it was time for other developed country members to contribute. Members noted that Network staff had been considering options to diversify the funding approach and to explore sustainable financing models. Members also noted that the Network has several income streams from donors to support specific initiatives or to deliver joint work but that there was a need to ensure a steady source of core funding income was established.

Members agreed that there is a need to explore sustainable financing options and annual contributions by developed country members. Members also discussed potential contributions from developing country members and that this could potentially be sourced from aid money. This reflects general support for some contribution from all members based on a sliding scale and capacity to pay. Members also noted the work to explore donor funding and agreed that it was important to explore diverse funding options. Members noted that funding proposals should include budgetary allocations to cover core operational costs including administrative overheads, travel, software and hardware and salaries. Members noted that the Network has established additional capacity to identify and secure a range of funding opportunities. Members asked Network staff to prepare a brief with funding options and associated costs for developed country members. It was noted that the Network is having real impact and there was a strong desire to ensure that the Network is fully resourced into the future.

Members noted that there may be benefit in exploring aid funding options including USAID, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and World Bank noting that this work had commenced. Members reiterated that all funding proposals should include allocations for core Network functions and overhead costs.

Norway noted their work with the IUU Action Alliance and potential opportunities for collaboration and funding. Norway noted that the IMCS Network could be an option for hosting and managing the IUU Action Alliance.

It was noted that a balanced approach to funding was needed and members needed to know a rough estimate of costs and that in many cases, these should be tied to activities and outputs that demonstrate impact.

Canada and the UK noted that they were considering options to fund the Joint Analytical Cell (JAC) which would include funding support directly for the Network and hoped to announce this support in the coming months. There was a request for Network staff to provide an estimate of contributions that may be required and it was noted that the sooner this could be provided, the more likely the funding could be made available. Australia noted that it was important that any requirements relating to member contributions not restrict participation in the Network and that there was a need to ensure developing member participation in Network events was adequately supported.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands and Fiji noted the importance of the Network in the Pacific and the desire to see the Network grow. The Republic of the Marshall Islands further noted their desire to see greater visibility of the Network staff, on the ground and to engage with the other regions represented.

Senior MCS Specialist, Damian Johnson, presented an overview of several key initiatives including:

- Work with TM-Tracking to produce a series of MCS Practitioner Guides.
- Continued development of work through the JAC, including direct support to several members. This work has facilitated increased intelligence provision to members through intelligence produced by the JAC partners. The JAC is one of the Network's core initiatives and aligns with several of the General Principles in the Governing Framework including to strengthen capacity building, enhance opportunities for sharing technology and technology transfer and promote new MCS tools.
- Work to develop the external resources facility on the Network website, with a view to this becoming a comprehensive resource for MCS practitioners to access publicly available data.
- The development and delivery of a range of capacity development and support initiatives including to support FFA, RMI, the Cook Islands and Fiji, in addition to helping support a regional Australian-led and funded MCS training in South East Asia.
- A project to strengthen MCS in the Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor (support to IMCS Network members Panama, Ecuador, Colombia and Costa Rica) as well as provide additional support to Panama to develop their capacity and strengthen their MCS processes related to the monitoring and analysis of fishing and fishing related activities. It was noted that both of these projects in South America are externally funded and do not place additional demands on existing Network funds.

Members also considered the update provided by Senior MCS Specialist, Sarah Lenel including:

- The facilitation of the Tuna Compliance Network (TCN) including the publication of a Comparative Review of Compliance Assessment in the Tuna RFMOs and support to the Pan-Pacific Tuna Compliance Network (PPFCN).
- Work to strengthen the Network's communication approach including the development of a new website and the revised LinkedIn page.
- Work to develop the Discourse Forum on the Network website.
- Strengthened partnership capability to support efforts to identify and secure funding and to support the TCN, PPFCN and joint work with observers and partners.

Members welcomed this update and noted that the Network was having real impact. Members requested a more detailed overview of these key initiatives.

Members noted that the Network is a member-driven organization and that there were ongoing efforts to identify member's priority needs including at the 7<sup>th</sup> GFETW. Senior MCS Specialist, Damian Johnson highlighted the need to continue efforts to identify needs and priorities after the Workshop and that a process would be established to progress this.

The meeting considered the need to develop an annual work plan (Appendix II) in the months following the Workshop as an interim measure while funding was sourced and the Strategic Plan was revised. There was agreement to the sequence of work proposed and a new annual work plan will be developed and circulated to members by the end of January 2024.

The Chair provided an overview of his considerations for the Executive Committee. The Chair highlighted that The Executive Committee is established by the Governing Framework and serves as an advisory body for the Chair. It must include at least four members, preferably from different world regions. The Chair noted his desire for the Executive Committee to be smaller than has been the case in the past and to make a more active contribution to the Network while also being representative of members. The Chair noted that it was also important to support the inclusion of new members. The Chair also detailed his consideration of the Vice Chair positions. He noted that Article 11 of the Governing Framework provides for the appointment of only one Vice Chair for a period of four years but that there had been a decision previously to have two, one initially serving two years with the other serving a four-year term. This was to ensure continuity in these roles and to avoid both the Chair and the Vice-Chairs all leaving office at the same time. The Chair noted his desire to revert to this approach which would require an amendment to the Governing Framework. The Chair also noted that more than two nominations for the Vice Chair roles had been received and there was a need to clarify how the appointments would be made. Norway noted that these shall be appointed by consensus and if there is no consensus, elect by simple majority as provided for in the Governing Framework. It was noted that there was a desire to try and seek consensus and avoid voting that could lead to factions. It was agreed that Network staff, in consultation with the Chair, would develop a more detailed brief on the issues and a proposal for an approach.

Members were reminded that in 2020, the Chair and Executive Committee, decided to move to a triennial GFETW. This means that the 8<sup>th</sup> GFETW would be held in 2026. Members were asked to start considering options for the next host country in the coming months. Members noted that Network staff would solicit feedback on the 7<sup>th</sup> GFETW from all attendees and the GFETW Steering Committee and that a process to evaluate hosting nominations would be developed following this work.

Members noted that one founding member, the European Union, was not present in the meeting, but were pleased to note that they did have a representative at the GFETW. The need to reengage with the European Union was raised as a matter of priority. It was noted that the EU Council Regulation that limited European Union engagement has now been amended and the EU is now able to work with third countries and partners.

IMCS Network Executive Committee and General Membership Meeting  
Wednesday, 2 August, 17:30 – 19:30, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada  
Agenda

**Overview:** The Chair of the IMCS Network, Gary Orr with the Executive Committee will convene a meeting of the General Membership on the margins of the 7<sup>th</sup> GFETW. The meeting is open to all members as represented by their nominated points of contact or an alternate. Advisers as required may also attend.

**Purpose:** The meeting is the first face-to-face meeting of the Executive Committee and the General Membership in over four years. The purpose of the meeting is to provide an overview of the work of the IMCS Network over the past year, consider key organizational issues and priorities and the direction of the planned work and activities of the Network for the upcoming year.

**Chair:** Gary Orr (New Zealand)

**Vice Chairs:** Thord Monsen (Norway) and Glen Joseph (Republic of the Marshall Islands)

**Executive Committee:** Todd Dubois (CCAMLR), Bjarne Schultz (Norway), Meli Raicebe (Fiji), Viv Fernandes (Australia) and Dion Browne (Canada)

**Advisors:** Sean Wheeler (Canada), Hrannar Mar Asgeirsson (NEAFC) and Frank Meere (CCSBT)

**Staff:** Mark Young, Damian Johnson, Jose Vazquez and Sarah Lenel

**Agenda:**

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| 1. Welcome and opening remarks                           | Gary Orr       |
| • Special welcome for new members and observers for 2023 |                |
| • Adoption of agenda                                     |                |
| 2. IMCS Network year in review                           |                |
| • Overview   | Mark Young     |
| • Operations and projects                                | Damian Johnson |
| • Communications and partnerships                        | Sarah Lenel    |
| 3. Member needs and priorities                           | Damian Johnson |
| 4. Strategic Plan and work plan development              | Gary Orr       |
| 5. Executive Committee                                   | Gary Orr       |
| 6. Nomination of Vice-Chairs                             | Gary Orr       |
| 7. 8 <sup>th</sup> GFETW                                 | Mark Young     |
| 8. Other business  | Gary Orr       |

## Executive Committee and General Membership Brief

### Purpose

This brief has been prepared to provide guidance regarding the development the IMCS Network annual work plan.

### Background

The IMCS Network was established twenty-two years ago and adopted its Governing Framework and Strategic Plan over ten years ago. The Strategic Plan provides the basis for the development of Network work plans that are intended to establish specific performance indicators for the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

In recent years, the Network has developed a Business Plan rather than a work plan, with the last Business Plan adopted in 2021 (2021 – 2023). Following past practice, a new draft Business Plan would normally have been developed by staff and presented to the Chair and Executive Committee for consideration and adoption during the Executive Committee and General Membership scheduled to be held at the 7<sup>th</sup> GFETW. However, there are several factors that suggest a different approach may be more appropriate:

- The Network is experiencing a period of growth following a period of limited organizational development prior to and during the early stages of the global Covid-19 Pandemic.
- The Covid-19 Pandemic adversely impacted delivery of the in-person GFETW and in-person meetings of the Network Executive Committee over the last three years. Consequently, this limited opportunities to directly engage with the Chair, Executive Committee, and other Network members. The 7<sup>th</sup> GFETW represents the first opportunity in four years to meet directly with members to better understand their MCS needs and priorities. It is important for the Secretariat to have a firm understanding of these, particularly in a post-Covid world, *before* a work plan or Business Plan is developed and agreed to.
- At the Network 2021 Business Meeting, the Chair and Executive Committee agreed to commence a review and revision of the Network Strategic Plan. Following a Network Executive Committee meeting in December 2022 the Chair and Executive Committee agreed to explore a range of options for securing long-term sustainable financing. Both priorities should be advanced *before* a work plan or new Business Plan is developed and presented (and inform this development) to the Chair and Executive Committee for consideration and adoption. This will ensure that the work plan or new Business Plan is consistent with the Members MCS needs and priorities that will be reflected in the redeveloped strategic plan and considers the funding required and available to deliver on these priorities.
- Also, after two years and in accordance with the Governing Framework, the positions of the two Network Vice-Chairs are up for nomination. It is important to appoint and confirm the two Vice-Chair positions *before* a work plan or Business Plan is developed so that they each have an opportunity to provide sufficient input in support of the Chair.
- In addition to these considerations, there is a need to develop a clear work plan or Business Plan framework and process to help inform its development.

The Governing Framework references both a work plan and a business plan. The current Strategic Plan calls only for a work plan and identifies the purpose of the work plan. It is recommended that the redeveloped Strategic Plan should continue this approach and that the work plan define activities and establish specific performance indicators for measuring the performance of the Network in delivering on the intent of the Strategic Plan in line with the Governing Framework.

## Recommendations

In consideration of the points outlined above, it is recommended the Chair, supported through the Executive Committee, agree to the following sequence of work that will directly inform the development of the new Network work plan:

- Directly engage with members at the 7<sup>th</sup> GFETW to identify needs and priorities.
- Continue work to secure sustainable funding – from both members and external sources – that can be used to support core IMCS Network work.
- Review and revise the Network Strategic Plan (based on Member input at the 7<sup>th</sup> GFETW) and finish the development of the Network Communication Plan, taking into account recent Secretariat developments such as staffing, recent enhancement of the IMCS Network website, and revitalization of the IMCS Network LinkedIn account.
- Examine and evaluate a range of sustainable financing options as well as fiscal sponsorship arrangements.
- Present opportunities to streamline and enhance the role of the Executive Committee to ensure that it is representative of the diversity of Network members, operates effectively and contributes to the work of the Network.

It is proposed that this work be undertaken over the next six months to provide the basis for the development of an annual work plan that will be circulated to members by the end of January 2024. The annual work plan will:

- reflect core Network activities and a range of projects and initiatives for the following twelve-month period;
- include key tasks and associated activities that focus on priority member needs to meet the strategic objectives identified in the Strategic Plan;
- identify persons responsible, timeframes and inputs
- be iterative where a task completed in one year may provide the foundation for one or more other tasks in following years. The work plan will be used to evaluate the implementation of the Strategic Plan; and
- be reviewed at set intervals as defined in the Strategic Plan.