SPRFMO
South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation

12TH MEETING OF THE SPRFMO COMMISSION

Manta, Ecuador, 29 January to 2 February 2024

COMM 12 – Doc 07

Report on Cooperation efforts and MoUs

Secretariat

Following Article 31 of the Convention, SPRFMO is committed to cooperating, as appropriate, with other regional fisheries management organisations, the FAO, with other specialised agencies of the United Nations, and with other relevant organisations on matters of mutual interest.

This paper reports on those efforts as well as the Arrangements and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) that SPRFMO has in place for consultation, cooperation, and collaboration with such other organisations.

In addition, where an Arrangement/MoU is due for renewal a short summary of related activities is provided so that Members can review the operation of the Arrangement/MoU and decide whether it should be renewed.

COMM12 is invited to:

- ***Note*** *the Secretariat's report on cooperation efforts and MoUs.*
- ***Note*** *that a new MoU with NPFC was signed on 12 July 2023.*
- ***Decide*** *if the proposed MoU with WCPFC is acceptable and if so, request that the Secretariat coordinate the signing of the MoU with WCPFC.*

Report on Arrangements and MoUs

As an organisation, SPRFMO has entered into 8 Arrangements and/or Memoranda of Understanding and the Secretariat has entered into 3 separate agreements to promote cooperation and ensure the effective functioning of the Secretariat (https://www.sprfmo.int/cooperation/mous/).

NPFC:

Following the SPRFMO annual meeting a draft MoU document was presented to the NPFC during its March 2023 annual meeting. The NPFC adopted a revised draft which was then circulated to SPRFMO Members (Letter G40-2023). After receiving no comments or concerns, the Executive Secretaries of both Organisations arranged for a virtual meeting to sign the MoU, during which, the respective teams were able to meet with each other and exchange views on possible areas for future work.

The MoU with the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) was signed on 12 July 2023.

CCAMLR:

The Arrangement between SPRFMO and the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living resources (CCAMLR) to facilitate cooperation to advance objectives, particularly with regard to stocks and species of mutual interest was renewed on 17 February 2022 (for 3 years).

The SPRFMO Data Manager and Compliance Manager were able to meet with CCAMLR (and other RFMO colleagues) in person during the 10th International Fisheries Observer and Monitoring Conference held in Hobart, Australia from 6-10 March 2023.

SPRFMO and CCAMLR staff also met virtually in May 2023 to discuss the MoU to ensure active collaboration and knowledge sharing between the organisations on topics of mutual interest. The meeting was attended by all SPRFMO Secretariat staff and with CCAMLR counterpart staff. During August the SPRFMO Secretariat has shared details of toothfish releases and recaptures in the SPRFMO area with the CCAMLR Secretariat and the CCAMLR Secretariat continues to report to SPRFMO on recaptures that came from fish tagged in SPRFMO and SPRFMO recaptures that were tagged in CCAMLR.

The two Secretariats have worked over the past year to solidify the data sharing agreements and confidentiality rules, for transparency and consistency.

CPPS:

The MoU with the permanent Commission of the South Pacific (CPPS) was renewed on 18 March 2022.

Under the MoU, CPPS engaged with the SPRFMO Scientific Committee on a proposed joint workplan to participate in each organisations scientific working groups, to share reports and catch data related to sharks and strengthen cooperation in respect of sharks and other resources of mutual interest. SC11 accepted the proposed workplan as a good way to progress the MoU and requested that the Secretariat work with the CPPS Secretariat to advance the described workplan during 2024 and onwards.

IMCS Network:

The Mission of the International MCS Network is to promote and facilitate cooperation and coordination among Members through information exchange, capacity development and collaboration in order to achieve the improved effectiveness and efficiency of monitoring, control and surveillance activities in order to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing and related fisheries activities on local, regional and international levels.

The SPRFMO Compliance Manager attended the 7th Global Fisheries Enforcement Training Workshop in Halifax, Canada from 31 July to 4th August 2023. The agenda covered a range of relevant topics of interest to MCS practitioners from around the globe (including participants representing several SPRFMO Members). The Compliance Manager participated in the panel session on "Regional Cooperation and Partnerships" and networked with other participants. Additionally, the Compliance Manager attended a meeting of RFMO Secretariat staff responsible for Compliance (hosted by the NAFO Secretariat) and also attended a separate meeting, organized by PEW, for Compliance Chairs and Compliance Managers on RFMO Compliance Processes.

The IMCS Network continues to support the Pan-Pacific Fisheries Compliance Network (The PPFCN is an informal group of RFMO compliance officers meet regularly to establish closer links and enable networking with other colleagues, primarily in the Pacific region, who are facing similar compliance challenges in the fight against IUU fishing). The SPRFMO Compliance Manager is the current Chairperson for the PPFCN.

IATTC:

The MoU between SPRFMO and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission entered into force on 27 January 2022 (for 3 years). IATTC continues to provide input concerning jack mackerel bycatch into the SPRFMO jack mackerel stock assessment.

During the Regional Secretariats Network meeting in Rome in September 2022 the Executive Secretary met the new IATTC Director in person (Mr Arnulfo Franco) and both expressed their desire to continue to take advantage of future opportunities to learn and share experiences.

WCPFC:

The MoU between SPRFMO and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) commenced on 6 August 2020 (for 3 years). A short summary of the main activities supported by the MoU over the previous 3 years is as follows:

The Organisations are on each other's communication lists and regularly exchange meeting reports, information and other documents. Both organisations have access to each other's record of vessels and exchange information on vessels identified on the respective IUU vessel lists. The SPRFMO and WCPFC conservation and management measures share many common features, and the organisations seek to align these measures where appropriate. The SPRFMO Secretariat has hosted Ms Eidre Sharp (Assistant Compliance Manager) from WCPFC to converse on a range of matters of shared interest including observer programmes and the systems and processes which each organisation uses for monitoring fishing activity in the respective Convention Areas. The Compliance Managers have exchanged information on the compliance monitoring schemes and are in regular contact via their participation in the Pan Pacific Fisheries Compliance Network (PPFCN) and other compliance related initiatives (eg. exchanging VMS experiences, attendance at PSMA meetings). The SPRFMO Data Manager and the WCPFC ICT Manager have exchanged information on internal developments related to each other's record of vessels, transhipment data exchange and information management systems. The organisations have reciprocal observer status, and the Secretariats take advantage of this to attend specific meeting sessions on topics of mutual interest. In addition, the Executive Secretaries have kept up informal communications throughout the year on lessons learnt and shared experiences and opportunities to enhance cooperation.

Last year COMM11 supported the renewal of the MoU with WCPFC. Following this a Draft MoU was presented to WCPFC for its consideration. The recent WCPFC annual meeting has agreed on text for the MoU renewal with some amendments (the most significant being the removal of the term *competence* of both Organisations and removal of the *3 year renewal* provision, but keeping the 6 month termination provision). The amended text is in Annex 1 in track changes.

FAO-FIRMS:

Since 2004, the Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System draws together a unified partnership of 14 international organizations and 19 regional fishery bodies (RFBs) aiming to provide access to a wide range of high-quality information on the global monitoring and management of fishery marine resources. The 7th Annual Meeting of the Commission of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO) approved a Partnership Arrangement with the FIRMS, and during FIRMS11, SPRFMO became the 15th FIRMS Partner. The backbone information of FIRMS consists of Excel based Marine Resource and Fishery inventories where information provided by the partners is organized in a database and published in the form of Fact sheets, under both a biological domain and a fisheries domain. Initial work on factsheets for SPRFMO was undertaken in 2021 and these factsheets are updated annually. The previous Data Manager attended the FAO Fisheries and Resources Monitoring (FIRMS) 13th Steering Committee (FSC13) meeting in London, UK from 26 – 30 June 2023

Red LAC de Pesca INDNR:

On 27 January 2019 the MoU with the Technical Secretariat of the Network for the Exchange of information and shared experiences between Latin American and Caribbean countries to prevent, deter and eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing (Red LAC de Pesca INDNR) commenced.

Since the commencement of the MoU there has been limited exchange between the Secretariats despite efforts from the SPRFMO side. The SPRFMO IUU Vessel List is automatically shared with Red LAC de Pesca INDNR, and the organisation represents an important network to facilitate the exchange of information and experiences for decision making to prevent, discourage and eliminate IUU fishing, through cooperation among its participating countries (many of whom are also SPRFMO Members: Peru, Chile, Panama, Ecuador and the USA). In the most recent communication (from 16 November 2022) Red LAC de Pesca INDNR indicated its intent to review the MoU however, as of 1 December 2023, there has been no further contact.

US NOAA:

On 16 September 2020, the SPRFMO Secretariat and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce (US NOAA) signed a MoU to enable US NOAA to provide funds to the Secretariat to support the implementation of the SPRFMO's MCS measures and/or other SPRFMO activities for the next 5 SPRFMO financial years, including the observer program accreditation process, implementation of SPRFMO's vessel monitoring system, and other international MCS related goals for the conservation and management of SPRFMO's marine resources. The 2nd report detailing the use of these funds was submitted in November 2023.

In July 2023, US NOAA agreed to provide a third contribution of USD 100,000 in funds which will primarily support the secretariat costs associated with the 11th Compliance and Technical and Committee meeting to be held in Manta, Ecuador in January 2024. This will include the Secretariat's preparatory work, travel costs, and logistical support during the meeting. Secondarily, the Secretariat will use a portion of the funding to evaluate the use of commercially available "rendezvous event" vessel data as a cross-referencing tool to aid in potential transshipment detection in the SPRFMO area.

RMIT University:

The relationship agreement that the Secretariat signed with the RMIT University is aimed at translating documents such as the Convention of SPRFMO and other relevant documents into languages other than English. In 2023 there was ultimately no capacity for the remaining languages identified in Rule 10 of the Rules of Procedure. The Secretariat continues to work with RMIT in the framework of the Agreement to work towards producing translations of the SPRFMO Convention and other basic SPRFMO documents into other languages.

ACAP:

The MoU between the Secretariat and the Secretariat for the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) came into effect on 28 October 2014. Its objective is to facilitate cooperation between both Secretariats, with a view to supporting efforts to minimise incidental catches of seabirds of interest to ACAP. ACAP is a regular attendee at SPRFMO meetings, including the Commission and Scientific Committee, and continues to support seabird risk assessments for the SPRFMO Area. The SPRFMO CMM 09-2017 (seabirds) reflects the ACAP best practices guidelines and notes that these guidelines are supported by ongoing research and improvements.

External projects/inputs:

- Common Oceans program
    - FAO led Deep-sea Fisheries project (5 virtual meetings in 2023).
    - Global Ocean Forum Cross-sectoral cooperation (2 virtual meetings in 2023)
- UN annual Contribution to Oceans and the Law of the Sea
- Other external meetings attended by Secretariat staff are listed on the SPRFMO website

Outreach to non-Members and non-CNCPs:

- Angola, included as observers into General communications – COMM11 Invitation
    - Most recent correspondence 2021
- Colombia, included as observers into General communications – COMM11 Invitation
    - Most recent correspondence 2019
- France Territories, included as observers into General communications - COMM11 Invitation
    - Most recent correspondence 2015
- Japan, included as observers into General communications –SC10 and COMM11 Invitation
    - Most recent correspondence 2022
- Tonga, included as observers into General communications – COMM11 Invitation
    - Most recent correspondence 2013
- Ukraine, included as observers into General communications – COMM11 Invitation
    - Most recent correspondence 2023

Annex 1: Proposed Memorandum of Understanding between SPRFMO and NPFC

Memorandum of Understanding between the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO) and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)

The South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (hereafter SPRFMO) and the Commission for the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (hereafter WCPFC):

Acknowledging that the objective of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fishery Resources in the South Pacific Ocean (hereafter SPRFMO Convention) is, through the application of the precautionary approach and an ecosystem approach to fisheries management, to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of fishery resources in the SPRFMO Convention Area and, in so doing, to safeguard the marine ecosystems in which these resources occur;

Acknowledging also that the objective of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (hereafter WCPFC Convention) is to ensure, through effective management, the long-term conservation and sustainable use of highly migratory fish stocks in the western and central Pacific ocean;

Recognising that Article 22 of the WCPFC Convention calls upon the WCPFC to make suitable arrangements for consultation, cooperation and collaboration with other relevant intergovernmental organizations;

Recognising also that Article 31 of the SPRFMO Convention requires the SPRFMO Commission, *inter alia*, to cooperate, as appropriate, with other relevant organisations on matters of mutual interest and to seek to make suitable arrangements for consultation, cooperation and collaboration with such other organisations;

Conscious of the fact that there is a geographical area overlap within the Convention Areas of both the SPRFMO and the WCPFC;

Noting that provisions of both the SPRFMO and the WCPFC Conventions address the conservation of non-target, associated or dependent species which belong to the same ecosystem as the target species;

Desiring to put in place a mechanism to promote and facilitate cooperation between SPRFMO and WCPFC;

Therefore SPRFMO and WCPFC record the following understandings:

1. OBJECTIVE OF THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The objective of this MoU is to facilitate, where appropriate, cooperation between SPRFMO and WCPFC ('the Organisations') in order to advance their respective objectives, particularly with respect to stocks or species which are within the ~~competence or~~ mutual interest of both Organisations.

2. AREAS OF COOPERATION

The Organisations will establish and maintain consultation, cooperation and collaboration in respect of matters of common interest to both organisations, including but not limited to, the following areas:

i. exchange meeting reports, information, documents and publications regarding matters of mutual interest, consistent with the information sharing policies of each Organisation;
ii. exchange data and scientific information in support of the work and objectives of both Organisations, subject to the information sharing policies and data use, access and confidentiality rules of each Organisation, including but not limited to, information on:
    a. vessels authorised to fish in accordance with conservation and management measures adopted under the SPRFMO and WCPFC Conventions;
    b. at the specific request of one of the Organisations, transhipment activities of those vessels authorised to conduct transhipment in accordance with conservation and management measures adopted under the SPRFMO and WCPFC Conventions, on a necessity basis; and
    c. vessels identified as having engaged in illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activity and on the IUU Vessel Lists established by each Organisation;
iii. collaborate, where appropriate, on research efforts relating to species and stocks of mutual interest, including non-target, associated and dependent species;
iv. cooperate where appropriate, on the implementation of conservation and management measures adopted under the SPRFMO Convention and under the WCPFC Convention;
v. share best practices in areas of mutual interest, including but not limited to:
    a. monitoring, control and surveillance policies and systems, including with respect to Vessel Monitoring Systems;
    b. administration, auditing, training and structure of observer programmes; and
    c. Compliance Monitoring Schemes, and information management systems;
vi. exchange of information between the Secretariats of the Organisations on expertise gained, lessons learned and the use of best practices in their respective activities;
vii. consistent with each Organisation's rules of procedure, grant reciprocal observer status to representatives of the respective Organisations in relevant meetings of each Organisation, including those of each Organisation's subsidiary bodies.

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3. CONSULTATIVE PROCESS

To facilitate effective development, implementation and enhancement of cooperation, the Organisations may establish a consultative process between their respective Secretariats that includes telephone, email and any other means of communication. The consultative process may also proceed in the margins of meetings at which both Organisations' Secretariats are represented by appropriate staff.

4. MODIFICATION

This MoU may be modified at any time by the mutual written consent of both Organisations.

5. LEGAL STATUS

This MoU does not create legally binding rights or obligations. Each Organisation will cover its own costs related to the implementation of this MoU.

This MoU does not alter the obligations of members of either Organisation to comply with the conservation and management measures adopted under their respective Conventions.

6. OTHER PROVISIONS

This MoU will commence on the date of the second signature.

Either Organisation may discontinue this MoU by giving six months' prior written notice to the other Organisation.

~~This MoU will operate for three (3) years. Before the end of the three year period, the Organisations will separately review the operation of this MoU to decide whether it should be renewed.~~

7. SIGNATURES

Signed on behalf of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission:

FOR THE SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION (SPRFMO)	FOR THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL PACIFIC FISHERIES COMMISSION (WCPFC)
---------- ~~Osvaldo Urrutia~~ Chairperson SPRFMO	---------- ~~Jung-re Riley Kim~~Josie Tamate Chairperson WCPFC
Place:	Place:
Date:	Date: