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First Meeting of the PSMA Strategy ad hoc Working Group¹

Rome, Italy,² 3-7 April 2023

CONCLUSIONS OF THE THIRD MEETING OF THE PSMA OPEN- ENDED TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON INFORMATION EXCHANGE. ROME, ITALY, 13-14 DECEMBER 2022

1. The TWG-IE reiterated the importance that all Parties submit information on NCPs and DPs and keep this information updated. This information is essential for PSMA implementation including enabling contacts among NCPs and for the functioning of GIES.
2. The TWG-IE noted that the communication of the NCP to FAO is through the online form of the application, however some supplementary information may be required by the Secretariat to confirm the identity of the proposed NCP.
3. The TWG-IE welcomed the proposal by the Secretariat to work on migrating the functions and data contained within the PSMA application on NCPs and DPs into the GIES, hence creating a single access point for sharing information to support the implementation of the Agreement. Furthermore, the Group suggested that this new development could include the following features:
 - facilitated bulk upload of designated ports along with the implementation of security and confidentiality of country data;
 - a section showing all national contact points and designated ports;
 - the registration of an authority as well as the main NCP and multiple alternate NCPs;
 - optional data fields within the designated port form, whereby Parties can specify which services are available to vessels in those ports.
4. The TWG-IE highlighted the importance of ensuring that all designated ports under the PSMA, have been attributed a UN/LOCODE, when possible.
5. The TWG-IE welcomed that Comoros and Ukraine have initiated the process of becoming Party to the Agreement and encouraged other FAO Members to also adhere to the Agreement.

¹ To be held in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

² FAO Headquarters, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy.

Documents can be consulted at www.fao.org/port-state-measures/meetings/part-6-working-group/en/

6. The TWG-IE welcomed efforts by FAO to improve the security of the GIES, such as through the changes made in relations to the strengthening of user passwords and the approach of having accounts tied to individual users rather than having a generic account per Party. The Group welcomed proposals by the Secretariat on further improving security, such as multiple factor authentication and encryption of emails, however noted that such changes should not delay the operationalisation of the system nor make the system overly complex for the users.

7. The TWG-IE agreed that emails can only be used for sending links to secured parts of the application, ensuring that no sensitive data is part of the email or leaked by the GIES, which could contain personal and business identifiable information. The Group recommended that a manual or guidance related to the protection, uploading and access of protected or sensitive data be considered for development.

8. The TWG-IE noted that security goes both ways, and it is also important for Parties to take careful considerations with regard to security. The Group welcomed the proposal to have an access log within the GIES to show who accessed what data and facilitate identification of leaks, should they occur. In such cases, the Group considered that the relevant State(s) should be informed.

9. With regards to the development of the GIES, the TWG-IE welcomed the advancements by the Secretariat and recommended that work towards the operationalisation of the system should be focused on increasing participation. Additionally, the Group called for several changes to the current pilot system such as:

- Multiple fishing areas and species within fields of the authorisation module;
- Review the reference list of RFMOs within the GIES and ensure it is comprehensive;
- Allow for the inclusion of vessels with an unknown or false flag to be entered into GIES reports;
- Ability to download published reports notified to the State within the application in PDF format;
- Allow an option of free entry for port related fields within GIES reports;
- Inclusion of an additional optional field within inspection reports, to specify whether a related court case is open or closed;
- Removal of list of 'Actions taken' within inspection result module, instead have free entry of information;
- Inclusion of an additional entry fields for fishing areas;
- Removing the binary nature of the data field "evidence of IUU fishing";
- Inform coastal States of any IUU activities through an email which contains all the contact points of coastal States so that they could be informed.

10. The TWG-IE recommended that a deadline be set for all Parties to share technical comments on the GIES system, should they have them, so that the Secretariat can address these issues before the operationalisation of the system.

11. The TWG-IE recommended the operationalisation of the GIES in 2023 following the approval of Parties at their fourth Meeting.

12. The TWG-IE noted the importance of defining how long reports published within the GIES should be retained.

13. The TWG-IE noted that consideration should be made on cases of Force Majeure in relation to the GIES.

14. The TWG-IE welcomed the proposal of the Secretariat with regard to new features to be included in the GIES, whilst stressing that consideration should be made to ensure that the system remains sustainable. The Group called that such features when developed should be tested by Parties in parallel to the main environment of the GIES and should not postpone the operationalisation of the GIES with its current base features. The Group considered that the following features could be included in future development phases, if agreed by the Parties:

- The voluntary advance request for port entry (ARPE) feature, noting that this development should take into account normal use cases whereby such requests are supplied directly by non-State actors.
- Work to help countries to have systems able to provide data to the GIES, if they wish to.
- The inclusion of features to facilitate risk analysis, such as the receipt of summary compliance information to port States for the vessel for which it has received an ARPE or in another manner. The Group however noted that a decision on which summary fields should be included would need to be considered by the Parties.
- The inclusion of advanced user management, allowing a Party's PSMA National Contact Point to be able to approve or define additional user accounts for their State, including the rights of such accounts.
- A feedback mechanism whereby Global Record NFPs of the flag State would be notified when a vessel entered within the GIES is not in the Global Record, or the information on a vessel is outdated.
- A unified search, to serve as a single-access point to search of any information contained on the GIES.
- Dynamic dashboard.

15. The TWG-IE called on the Secretariat to analyse the potential inclusion into the GIES of the following features:

- increasing the number attachments that can be attached to reports in the application considering the cost implications on cloud space; and
- an alert system in the application so that NCPs of neighbouring States could be notified when a vessel has been suspected of having conducted IUU fishing activity.

16. The TWG-IE considered that the IMO number should be made mandatory in the GIES if the vessel has an IMO number. Furthermore, the Group recommended the use of other identifiers for

vessels without an IMO number such as the international radio call sign, the external marking usually referring to national registration numbers, the RFMO identifiers and MMSI.

17. The TWG-IE recognized the important role of RFBs in supporting their Contracting Parties with regard to information exchange and more widely their key role in support of the implementation of international instruments. The Group recalled the importance of connecting the GIES and the Global Record with existing regional systems, as relevant, following approval from the relevant RFMO decision making body.

18. The TWG-IE emphasised that effective information exchange requires that the Parties have legal, policy and operational procedures in place, in line with the Agreement.

19. The TWG-IE recommended that Parties to the PSMA be more active in RFMO to which they are a member to support the implementation of the Agreement.

20. The TWG-IE recommended materials and modalities to provide guidance to Parties for the use of the GIES including user guides and in-person training when possible, and stressed that training and guidance in the use of the GIES is important for all Parties.

21. The TWG-IE recognized the need for the terms of reference for the working group, noted that a draft has been prepared by the Secretariat and called for this matter to be brought up at the next Meeting of the Officers to the PSMA.