



INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR THE COOPERATION AND COORDINATION OF FISHERIES-RELATED MONITORING, CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITIES

Background/History

The increase in illegal activities in the fisheries sector that has accompanied globalization underscores the need for cooperative law enforcement across national borders. Focusing on ways to combat illegal fishing and related activities continue to be top priorities in the international community. The benefits derived from cooperation and coordination in fisheries-related monitoring, control and surveillance activities are well known and essential. Recognizing the need, the country participants in the International Conference on Fisheries Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (Santiago, Chile, January 2000) indicated their intention to create an international network for the coordination of fisheries-related enforcement.

This intention was translated into reality in Key Largo, Florida, in 2001, when the Executive Committee of the MCS Network (Network) was convened for the first time. Executive Committee participants present in Key Largo included representatives from national organizations/institutions charged by their governments with responsibility for fisheries-related monitoring, control and surveillance. The countries that participated were Australia, Canada, Chile, Peru, and the United States of America. The European Commission was also represented and an FAO representative participated as an observer.

Goals/Objectives

The goal of the Network is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of fisheries-related MCS activities through enhanced cooperation, coordination, information collection and exchange among national organizations and institutions responsible for fisheries-related MCS. The Network works to strengthen MCS capabilities in participating countries through coordination and cooperation with the goal of deterring, reducing, and eliminating IUU fishing and other harmful activities to living marine resources in the world's oceans. It is designed to support countries in their attempts to satisfy their obligations arising from international agreements and their national responsibilities in performing MCS functions.

Membership

The MCS Network is a voluntary arrangement and is not based on a treaty or memorandum of understanding. It is comprised of national organizations and institutions in charge of fisheries-related MCS activities in their countries. Taking into account the many different national situations and organizational configurations, the Network has determined that each country is in the best position to determine the level of participation that is appropriate. Each member may participate within the limits of its current resources, and is encouraged to participate further as resources are available. The Network respects the varying laws, regulations or restrictions each country places on sharing various types of information and confidentiality. Special account is taken of the needs of developing countries, whose participation in combating IUU fishing is critical.

The Network, like MCS activity, involves multiple disciplines—investigators, agents, inspectors, attorneys, prosecutors, biologists, foreign affairs specialists, and others. All contribute to successfully resolving MCS matters. The members guide the Network in its growth and operations. The Network members meet, on average, every 9-12 months and stay in touch through telephone, fax, mail and electronic communications and the Network website. The meetings are a combination of administrative business and substantive MCS training. Also, the Network sponsored a weeklong large-scale global MCS training conference in July of 2005.

Given the sensitive nature of MCS information, those outside of government cannot have full access to all Network information. However, the Network has recognized the value those outside government can often contribute. An appropriate category of membership for such interested entities and individuals is under consideration.

Costs

Membership is free. No costs are associated with joining or participating, other than travel to meetings.

Operation

The details of the operations of the MCS Network are outlined in the Technical Terms of Reference, which were developed at the Key Largo meeting in 2001 and adopted unanimously. The Terms outline the MCS Network's objectives and functions, organization, protocol for information exchange and information requirements.

The Network is intended to have an informal and operational level focus. It is not a substitute for formal government-to-government relations nor has it operated as a policy setting body. It also does not confer any additional authorities on MCS organizations. However, it does allow more efficient use of existing powers and authorities.

It is intended to complement any existing regional cooperative networks or committees. The MCS Network provides a global mechanism for exchange of information where none has existed in the past.

Website

The address for the MCS Network website is: <http://www.imcsnet.org>. The website provides access to the “public” portion of the MCS Network website. The website carries the name of the national contact for each member country as well as useful information about its laws, vessels, permitting requirements and more. General reference material is also located on the website regarding various topics and historical information about the Network itself. Each member is responsible for working with the website administrator to update its own submissions.

Joining

To join the MCS Network, or request more information on activities and membership, you can use the application form located on the website, or you can contact the individuals listed below.

Contact Information

MCS Chair



Michele Kuruc

Assistant General Counsel for
Enforcement and Litigation
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
8484 Georgia Avenue
4th Floor - Suite 400
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Voice: 01-301- 427-2202
Fax: 01- 301- 427-2211
Email: Michele.Kuruc@noaa.gov

MCS Executive Secretary



Alejandro Covarrubias

Jefe Departamento Fiscalización
Sernapesca
Calle Victoria 2832
Valparaiso, Chile
Voice: 56-32-819-302
Fax: 56-32-819-300
Email: acovarrubias@sernapesca.cl



Monitoring Control And Surveillance Network

LIST OF THE CURRENT MCS NETWORK MEMBERSHIP

Member Countries			
Australia	Federated States of Micronesia	Netherlands Antilles	South Africa
Bahamas	Iran	New Zealand	Spain
Belize	Japan	Nicaragua	Tanzania
Burkina Faso	Kenya	Norway	Kingdom of Tonga
Canada	Kiribati	Sultanate of Oman	Tuvalu
Cayman Islands	Maldives	Panama	United Arab Emirates
Chile	Mauritania	Papua New Guinea	United Kingdom
Ecuador	Mexico	Peru	United States
El Salvador	Mozambique	Seychelles	Vietnam
		Solomon Islands	Yemen
<u>Government entities¹</u>			
European Commission 25 countries represented ²	Forum Fisheries Agency 17 countries represented ³	Southern African Development Community ⁴	

The FFA and SADC have been authorized by their member states to act on their behalf at Network meetings whereas the EC says it speaks for the Commission as opposed to each and every member state.

¹ In each of these cases the entity is the Network member. In some cases, some of their member states have joined individually as well.

² Membership - Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands, United Kingdom.

³ Membership - Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.

⁴ Membership - Angola, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Mozambique, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mauritius