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Online Reporting Technology Working Group (WG-ORT)

2024 Status report

(submitted by the WG-ORT Chair)

Summary of 2024 Working Group activities

The WG-ORT activities are planned annually at the February intersessional meeting to accommodate the deliberations of the preceding Commission Annual Meeting. The WG-ORT met virtually on 7-8 February 2024 to review progress on the development of the ICCAT Integrated Online Management System (IOMS) and to plan future activities. The report from the meeting, available as document COC_302/2024, details the summarised activities.

During 2024, the Secretariat continued its progress in the development of the IOMS by completing Phase 3 (2 years: 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2024) and starting Phase 4 (2 years: 1 June 2024 to 31 May 2026). All IOMS development phases are presented in the WG-ORT workplan (Table 6 of COC_302/2024). Great advancements were made to the two modules currently under active development, the Vessel Manager (containing the UN/FLUX) and the Form Manager. Both modules are foreseen to be released into production at the beginning of 2025. Also, in line with the permanent IOMS enhancement strategy, improvements have been constantly made to several IOMS administrative tools and functionalities (details in Table 2 of COC_302/2024).

Vessel Manager module

Advancements in the development of two (out of three) Vessel Manager working modes (online and offline completion, to register and authorize vessels in the IOMS) allowed the Secretariat to do a "live" demonstration at the WG-ORT meeting, with two dedicated online training sessions held during 2024. Significant progress was also achieved on the integration of the UN/FLUX into the Vessel Manager module (3rd working mode). This functionality will allow an automatic exchange of vessel information between the IOMS and interested CPCs. Two additional sub-modules of the Vessel Manager aimed to handle Transhipment Authorizations and Chartering Arrangements, both with online and offline working modes, were developed intersessionally. These two sub-modules were presented and tested at the second training session dedicated to the Vessel Manager. Overall, the development of the Vessel Manager module is virtually completed and is now under heavy testing (Secretariat and IOMS users) to be released into production, as planned, in January 2025 with a requirement for CPCs to use the module to edit vessel characteristics and authorizations in April 2025. The automatic data exchange working mode (using UN/FLUX) and the Chartering Arrangements sub-module may be slightly delayed, as some additional time is required to address a couple of technical issues. This potential delay will not affect the timeline to release the Vessel Manager module into production.

Form Manager module

The development of the Form Manager module is virtually completed and under fine-tuning and heavy testing using several ICCAT standard forms. The remaining forms (35 out of a total of nearly 50 existing ICCAT forms) will be continuously added in the future as soon as each one becomes standardized. This continuous standardization process will increase the relevance of the Form Manager module, by consistently allowing additional information to be provided/managed by ICCAT CPCs through the IOMS. The Secretariat was also able to do a "live" demonstration at the 2024 Annual Meeting. Additionally, a training session on this module was held in June 2024. The module is ready to be released into production in January 2025 with a requirement for CPCs to submit the CP01 form through IOMS starting in April 2025.

Other relevant activities

To accelerate the IOMS user training process using the new modules, the Secretariat has created an IOMS testing environment (IOMS sandbox: https://sandbox-ioms.iccat.int) identical to the IOMS in production but with the new modules that can be used for practicing with the new developed functionality. The WG-ORT highly recommends that all IOMS users start using the new sandbox environment to train and additionally to collaborate on the development of the IOMS by identifying errors and recommending enhancements to the various modules.

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The WG-ORT also established in 2024 an ad hoc working group to reduce redundancy in reporting requirements, one of the priority goals of the WG-ORT. It started its work by correspondence, on providing recommendations to Panel 4/COC on how to reduce redundancy in the shark measures. The first interim report is available as document PA4_807/2024.

To address several misunderstandings on the terminology (concepts, definitions, etc.) used by the IOMS in relation to the Vessel Manager module, the WG-ORT agreed to create the "IOMS glossary of terms and definitions". The draft was presented to and endorsed at the 17th Meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Monitoring Measures (IMM). This glossary will evolve over time and cover all the terminology used by the IOMS. The WG-ORT will guide the development of this activity by the Secretariat and the support of the IMM and other pertinent ICCAT subsidiary bodies. At a later stage, it will also be published directly inside the IOMS.

After two years of work deliberating the open-source license type to be adopted for the IOMS, the WG-ORT has finally adopted the GPLv3 open-source licence (details in section 6 of COC_302/2024) for the IOMS source-code.

Major updates to the WG-ORT Work plan

The 2024 WG-ORT workplan was rescheduled to accommodate the agreed changes to Phase 4 (just started) and Phase 5. The adopted workplan is presented in **Appendix 1**. The major changes, shown by order of priority, were:

- Phase 4 (1 June 2024 to 31 May 2026):
  - Complete the Vessel Manager module
  - Complete the Form Manager module
  - Start the Port Manager module
  - Start the Shark/Billfish Check Sheets Manager module
  - T1NC (Task 1 nominal catches) Manager module (2nd year)
  - Compliance Tables manager (2nd year)
  - Training workshops, as appropriate

- Phase 5 (1 June 2026 to 31 May 2028):
  - SDP Programme (SWO and BET) Manager module
  - BFT (bluefin tuna) weekly/monthly catch reports Manager module
  - T2CE (Task 2 catch & effort) Manager module
  - Other modules considered
    - Task 2 size frequency samples
    - Task 1 fleet characteristics
    - Transshipment declarations/reports, supply declarations
    - Port inspection / Joint Inspection Scheme reports
    - Fishing plans, Access agreements, etc.

The IOMS workplan will be revised by the WG-ORT at the 2025 intersessional meeting (February 2025), and potentially adjusted considering the progress achieved at the meeting and the priorities determined by the Commission at the 2024 Annual Meeting. These adjustments will include a more detailed overview of the activities and priorities scheduled for Phase 5.

2024 intersessional tasks

In addition to the various IOMS enhancements discussed/adopted (Table 2 of COC_302/2024) the WG-ORT together with the Secretariat has planned the following list of intersessional work:

Follow up actions and intersessional WG-ORT tasks:

1. To review and adopt the February 2024 meeting report, including modifications to the workplan.
2. As part of the 2024 WG-ORT status report to be submitted to the Compliance Committee at the Annual Meeting, the Chair is to include details that describe Secretariat technical staff activities to develop and maintain the IOMS and to facilitate CPC reporting and is to identify future needs for addressing redundancy in reporting requirements. Relevant portions of this report will also be presented to STACFAD.

3. The Chair is to create the "IOMS glossary of terms and definitions" for review (and endorsement) by the Working Group on Integrated Monitoring Measures (IMM).
4. The Compliance Department will raise the question of consistency of terminology among tuna RFMOs at the next meeting of the Tuna Compliance Network.
5. To consider adding Vessel Manager presentation to IMM (Secretariat to discuss with IMM Chair).
6. The Secretariat will provide further description of differences between the two main license options (EUPL v 1.2 and GPL v3) in the meeting report. The Chair will seek any strong concerns or preferences from WG-ORT members intersessionally by a determined date well in advance of FAO's 1 July 2024 deadline. In the absence of a strong preference for one option from the majority of the group, the WG-ORT will defer to the expertise of the Secretariat.
7. The Chair will communicate with the Chairs of Panel 4 and COC on WG-ORT request for Panel 4 to modify and simplify the billfish and shark Check Sheets.
8. The Chair will coordinate with the Secretariat to confirm that Rec. 22-17 does not need to be updated to require CPCs to use new modules in the IOMS, including the Vessel Manager and Form Manager, to fulfil reporting requirements.
9. The Secretariat will prepare a proposal for the next WG-ORT meeting on making appropriate IOMS data publicly available.
10. The Chair and the Secretariat will work intersessionally to develop a proposal for COC in 2024 on translating IOMS data into three languages and determine appropriate timing for requesting resources from STACFAD to develop this capability.
11. The WG-ORT will form an ad hoc working group to address redundancy. The Chair will solicit interested members from the WG-ORT. The ad hoc group will work intersessionally through correspondence and present an interim report to the Commission in 2024 and provide a formal presentation at the next WG-ORT meeting in 2025. The ad hoc group will identify additional funding and resource needs for this effort and present them to STACFAD (see item 2).
12. The Secretariat will make initial contact with FAO and IOTC regarding future implementation of the data exchanges required by the ICCAT Rec. 23-17, with a view to developing efficient data sharing mechanisms for CPCs through a dedicated IOMS module in a future phase. The possibility of using UN/FLUX will be considered for such exchanges.

These tasks have progressed as planned and with no major adjustments. The majority of intersessional tasks are already completed (1 to 8, 10, 11, 12) at the time of the 2024 Annual Meeting. Task 9 will be addressed at the 2025 WG-ORT intersessional meeting. In review of Task 8, the WG-ORT Chair, in consultation with the Secretariat, tabled a revision to Rec. 22-17 (COC-319/2024).

IOMS training sessions

The WG-ORT agreed to hold three IOMS training session in 2024, two focused on the Vessel Manager (30 April 2024 and 7 October 2024) and one focused on the Form Manager (24 June 2024). In all sessions participation averaged more than 70 individuals from 32 CPCs, as well various ICCAT Officers and the Secretariat staff. All the recorded training sessions remain available to ICCAT CPCs registered and potential IOMS users.

To facilitate the planning of the 2024 Commission meetings calendar, the WG-ORT has planned in advance two additional training sessions in 2025. The exact dates will be agreed at the next intersessional WG-ORT meeting.

Complementary support was given to the IOMS users of several CPCs during 2024, following explicit requests to the Secretariat for individual sessions. The Secretariat recalled that this complementary user support modality, also provided during the 2023 Commission Annual Meeting (Cairo, Egypt) with great success, will be maintained in the future.

2024 annual reporting

The ICCAT IOMS has been in production since 1 August 2021, with the Annual Report module (Section 3/Part 1 and Section 3/Part 2) available online for the last three years. The submission of Annual Reports via IOMS for 2021 (experimental year) and 2022 (recommended for online completion) served mostly for training purposes, whereas submission of the Annual Report (Section 3/Part 1 and Section 3/Part 2) via IOMS was a requirement from 2023 onwards (paragraph 2 of Rec. 22-17).

As in previous years, the Secretariat assisted all ICCAT CPCs with the completion of the 2024 Annual Reports in IOMS, as recommended by the WG-ORT. A summary of statistical indicators regarding submission of Annual Reports via IOMS for the years 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 (as of 2023-10-24) are presented in **Table 1**. Annual reports for 2021 and 2022 (probation years) were included for comparative purposes, mainly to observe the progress made by the ICCAT CPCs in using the IOMS.

In 2024, a total of 47 CPCs (44 Contracting Parties; 3 Cooperating non-Contracting Parties) used the IOMS (82% of the 57 CPCs) to provide the two parts of Section 3 (Part 1: Statistical provisions; Part 2: Compliance provisions) of the 2024 Annual Reports. There are, however, some CPCs that have yet to fully complete and submit the first version or both sections of the 2024 Annual Report (Part 1: 5 CPCs; Part 2: 9 CPCs). Among all CPCs that used the IOMS, the number of CPCs requesting the Secretariat's support to complete the two sections of the Annual Report decreased consistently on average from 42% (24 CPCs) in 2021 to only 4% (3 CPCs) in 2024. This improving trend likely indicates an increasing gain of autonomy on the utilization of the IOMS by CPC users, reflecting the reasonable investment and success of the IOMS user support policy, particularly over the last two years.

In line with paragraph 1 of Rec. 22-17, all ICCAT CPCs have at least one IOMS users registered since the 2023 Annual Meeting. These and other statistical indicators are also available to IOMS registered users (both CPC roles: administrators and officers) in the IOMS online portal (https://ioms.iccat.int).

Section 2 - Part 2.2 of the 2024 Annual Report invited CPCs to inform the Commission of the primary difficulties encountered in the implementation of and compliance with ICCAT conservation and management measures. Only one CPC mentioned having encountered difficulties in using the IOMS system (see COC_311/2024 for further details).

Secretariat technical staff activities to develop and maintain the IOMS

The Secretariat includes 4 staff that work full time on the IOMS (2024-2025 budget), in addition to another staff member who dedicates 5% of their time to supervising the online management system. Additionally, an external expert, funded by the GEF, provides consulting services focused on system interoperability. These activities revolve around maintaining the current system, developing new modules, and assisting CPCs with using the platform. The workload of the Secretariat has increased significantly for IOMS-related tasks due to the implementation of new modules and the aggressive workplan of the WG-ORT to continue transitioning to online reporting.

The IOMS regular budget for 2024-2025 was increased to €328,846.67 for 2024 and €412,180 for 2025 (from € 212,180) by the Commission at its 2023 Annual Meeting. This increase has enabled the addition of two more full-time experts to the IOMS team, which previously consisted of only two staff members. It should be noted that any decreases to the budget or staff will prevent the Secretariat from simultaneously maintaining the system, developing new modules, or assisting CPCs.

2025 and beyond

In order to continue the WG-ORT's progress in reducing the burden associated with ICCAT reporting requirements for both the Secretariat and the CPCs and to increase access to valuable information, the WG-ORT requests to meet virtually during the 2025 intersessional period to continue its work on Phases 4 and 5 of the IOMS. The WG-ORT also supports the previously agreed two IOMS training session(s) to take place in 2025.

Table 1. Number of Annual Reports (and relative ratios) available in the IOMS for 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024, by section, completion status, and completion mode (with/without Secretariat support). Values in "red" indicate the number of pending sections that must be completed by various CPCs as soon as possible.

Indicator	Section	Completion status	Party type	2021 No	Yes	pending	Total	2022 No	Yes	pending	Total	2023 No	Yes	pending	Total	2024 No	Yes	pending	Total
number of annual reports	Compliance (Section 3/Part 2)	complete	CP	18	19		37	32	10		42	37	1		38	41			41
			NCC	1	3		4	5			5	5			5	3			3
		incomplete	CP	3	2	10	15	1	3	6	10			14	14	6	2	4	12
			NCC			1	1									1			1
		Total		22	24	11	57	38	13	6	57	42	1	14	57	51	2	4	57
	Statistical (Section 3/Part 1)	complete	CP	17	21		38	32	10		42	36	1		37	44			44
			NCC	2	2		4	5			5	5			5	3			3
		incomplete	CP	4	1	9	14	1	6	3	10	2	2	11	15	2	3	4	9
			NCC			1	1											1	1
		Total		23	24	10	57	38	16	3	57	43	3	11	57	49	3	5	57
Ratio (%)	Compliance (Section 3/Part 2)	complete	CP	32%	33%		65%	56%	18%		74%	65%	2%		67%	65%	2%		67%
			NCC	2%	5%		7%	9%			9%	9%			9%	9%			9%
		incomplete	CP	5%	4%	18%	26%	2%	5%	11%	18%			25%	25%			25%	25%
			NCC			2%	2%												
		Total		39%	42%	19%	100%	67%	23%	11%	100%	74%	2%	25%	100%	74%	2%	25%	100%
	Statistical (Section 3/Part 1)	complete	CP	30%	37%		67%	56%	18%		74%	63%	2%		65%	63%	2%		65%
			NCC	4%	4%		7%	9%			9%	9%			9%	9%			9%
		incomplete	CP	7%	2%	16%	25%	2%	11%	5%	18%	4%	4%	19%	26%	4%	4%	19%	26%
			NCC			2%	2%												
		Total		40%	42%	18%	100%	67%	28%	5%	100%	75%	5%	19%	100%	75%	5%	19%	100%

IOMS revised workplan (2024), covering the ongoing and future development phases

Phase	Priority	Module /Task	Description	Data requirements	Dev. status	Start date	End date	Phase end	Budget	Remarks
1	1 Module		IOMS core/database	N/A	Complete	2019-06-01	2021-08-01	2	COM-18	
1	2 Module		IOMS Annual Report (Part II/Section 3, Part I/Annex 1)	S:GEN01, M:GEN01	Complete	2019-06-01	2021-08-01	2	COM-18	
1	3 Task		IOMS in production		Complete	2019-06-01	2021-08-01	2	COM-18	
1	1 Task		Training/workshop sessions (Phase 1)		Complete	2022-04-28	2022-09-01	2	COM-18	Two sessions (4 hours each)
1	1 Task		Maintenance (including improvements & error fixing)		Ongoing	2019-06-01	n/a	n/a	COM-18	Continuous task (maintenance)
2	1 Module		Dynamic Help system (module)	N/A	Complete	2021-03-31	2022-03-31	2	CPC (EU)	
2	1 Task		Adjustments to the new roles definition	N/A	Complete	2022-02-15	2022-03-15	2	COM-19	Adopted by WG-ORT 2022
2	1 Module		ICCAT Vessel Manager	Up to 21 data requirements (Vessel registration, 11 authorisation lists, carriers, chartering arrangements, transhipment authorizations, previous year activity)	Ongoing	2021-03-01	2024-10-31	4	COM-19 & CPC(EU)	Development extended to Phase 3 (10 additional months) jointly with UN/FLUX integration. Partially covered by EU voluntary contributions (2021, 2022, 2023, 2024)
2	1 Task		UN/FLUX integration into Vessel Manager	All requirements of Vessel registration and authorizations (11 lists)	Ongoing	2022-04-01	2024-10-31	4	CPC (EU)	EU contribution (2021, 2022, 2023, 2024)
2	2 Module		Enhancements to dynamic help system (generalization)	N/A	Complete	2022-04-01	2023-03-31	3	CPC (EU)	
2	1 Task		Vessels training/workshop session (1st session)	N/A	Planned	2024-04-29		4	COM-19	IOMS users preliminary tests on Vessel module
2	1 Task		Vessels training/workshop session (2nd session)	N/A	Planned	2024-10-09		4	COM-19	IOMS users preliminary tests on Vessel module (optional)
2	1 Task		Maintenance (including improvements & error fixing)	N/A	Planned	2020-06-01	n/a	n/a	COM-19	Continuous task (maintenance)

Phase	Priority	Module /Task	Description	Data requirements	Dev. status	Start date	End date	Phase end	Budget	Remarks
3	1 Module	Form Manager	Module to upload and manage all ICCAT forms (ST, CP, TG)	Ongoing	2023-07-01	2024-09-30	4	COM-21	Includes improvements from workshops
3	1 Task	Form Manager workshop sessions	N/A	Planned	2024-07-04	TBD	4	COM-21	
3	1 Task	Maintenance (including improvements & error fixing)		Ongoing	2022-06-01	n/a	n/a	COM-21	Continuous task (maintenance)
4	1 Module	Port Manager	M:GEN11, M:GEN12, M:BFT20, M:BFT21, M:SWO10	Planned	2024-11-01	TBD	4	COM-21	
4	1 Module	Shark/billfish Check Sheets Manager	M:SHK05, M:BIL01	Planning	2024-12-01	TBD	4	COM-21	Not possible to reuse AR code. Requires big structural changes.
4	1 Task	Shark/billfish Check Sheets training/workshop sessions	N/A	Planned	TBD	TBD	4	COM-21	
4	3 Module	T1NC (Task 1 nominal catches) Manager	S:GEN03	Planned	TBD	TBD		COM-23	Start may change (pending study on time required)
4	4 Module	Compliance tables (COCT) Manager	M:GEN03	Planned	TBD	TBD		COM-23	Start may change (pending study on time required)
4	1 Task	T1NC/COCT training/workshop sessions	N/A	Planned	TBD	TBD		COM-23	
4	1 Task	Maintenance (including improvements & error fixing)	N/A	Planned	TBD	TBD		COM-23	
5	1 Module	SDP programs (SWO, BET)	M:TRO06, M:SWO01	Planning	TBD			COM-25	
5	2 Module	Bluefin tuna (BFT) weekly and monthly reports Manager	M:BFT22, M:BFT23, M:TRO14 weekly BET	Planning	TBD			COM-25	
5	3 Module	Task 2 - Catch and effort	S:GEN04	Planning	TBD			COM-25	
5	1 Task	Maintenance (including improvements & error fixing)		Planning	TBD			COM-25	

Complementary information on IOMS Phases:

Phase	Start	End	Budget (months)	COM meeting	Budget year	Budget type
Phase 1	2019-06-01	2020-05-31	12	annual	2018	Extraordinary
Phase 2	2020-06-01	2022-05-31	24	biennial	2019	Regular
Phase 3	2022-06-01	2024-05-31	24	biennial	2021	Regular
Phase 4	2024-06-01	2026-05-31	24	biennial	2023	Regular