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South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation

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Discussion paper: CMM on Port State Measures
Suggested areas of focus for scheduled review at CTC/COMM 2027

Australia

CMM on Port State Measures – Suggested areas of focus for scheduled review at CTC/COMM 2027

Submitted by: Australia

Australia is submitting this information paper to outline six issues which could benefit from discussion and consideration during the scheduled review process for *Minimum Standards for Inspection in Port* (CMM 07-2025) at the 14th CTC/COMM15 in 2027. Australia welcomes any discussion or views on these identified issues and on the process for undertaking the review. It is Australia's view that this work would benefit from the formation of an intersessional working group in 2026 to provide recommendations for CTC/COMM15 in 2027.

Australia proposes the following topics be considered during the scheduled review:

1. **Use of the Global Information Exchange System (GIES)**
2. **Inconsistent RFMO Port State CMMs** – how to avoid duplication and administrative burden when a vessel has fished across several RFMOs
3. **The Port Inspection report template** and its suitability for SPRFMO inspections and guiding inspection priorities
4. **Voluntary inspection guidelines** to assist in port inspections
5. **Secretariat data on port landings** – to understand where SPRFMO resources are being landed to improve the effectiveness of the CMM
6. **Inspection data sharing arrangements with CCAMLR on toothfish** – including the provision of SPRFMO inspection reports to CCAMLR Secretariat

Australia welcomes any comments, including other proposed topics for consideration and the review timeframe.

1.1 Use of the Global Information Exchange System (GIES)

In the last reporting year, there were 266 inspections of SPRFMO vessels. The Secretariat receives these inspection reports in the paper-based SPRFMO inspection report template (Annex 3).

As noted by the Secretariat in the previous implementation report on Minimum Standards for Inspection in Port, this paper-based reporting is very labour intensive for the Secretariat, requiring the manual extraction and processing of data from the templates, which is a significant burden on a small Secretariat with limited resources.

There are other drawbacks of paper-based forms – both for advanced requests for port entry and inspection reports; those completed by hand can be difficult to read and interpret – which provides room for error, and standardised codes for species or FAO areas may not be recorded or accurately without drop down menus which would usually be provided by an online direct data entry system to facilitate

accurate reporting. This can compromise the quality of the information received by SPRFMO, ultimately affecting the data used to make decisions.

The Second Performance Review recommended data collection and information system management to be a priority for SPRFMO. The Review emphasised the need for cost-effective information management, organising and structuring data, to enable SPRFMO to use the information it collects to make sound decisions.

With the recent formation of the Data Working Group, it would be a good opportunity for an Intersessional Working Group on Port State Measures, to work with the Data Working Group and consider the prospects of SPRFMO transitioning from a paper-based format for port inspection reporting to a direct data entry electronic system in which the Secretariat can automatically ingest the data it needs without manual processing.

One potential solution is increased use of the Global Information Exchange System (GIES), or alternatively, an e-PSM interface developed by SPRFMO with an API to the GIES.

Noting the challenges with adopting the GIES as it continues to evolve and respond to the needs of PSMA States, there is also an opportunity for an Intersessional Working Group to consider any upcoming opportunities to propose potential improvements to the GIES to the benefit of SPRFMO at the PSMA Technical Working Group and Meeting of the Parties.

1.2 Inconsistent RFMO Port State CMMs

When a vessel has fished across several RFMOs in the one trip and seeks entry to port, there are issues with unnecessary duplication of port inspection paperwork which causes significant administrative burden and complexity.

The vessel must provide an advanced request for port entry in the form and with the data required by each RFMO Convention Area it fished in. The inspectors must then fill out inspection reports for each RFMO, often requiring the filling out of the same information in different templates several times. It may also be necessary to fill out the PSMA Annex C to ensure all data fields have been met.

An Intersessional Working Group could consider how to fix this issue across RFMOs, including how to build on work recently undertaken by CCAMLR on its PSM CMM, and how uptake of e-PSM systems, such as GIES could fix this issue.

1.3 The Port Inspection report template (Annex 3)

In Australia's view, the suitability of the Port inspection template (Annex 3) of *CMM 07-2025* should be reviewed against SPRFMO's unique MCS priorities and scientific data needs.

Although Annex 2 'Port State Inspection Standards' provides a list of standard verification checks for inspectors inspecting a vessel under the CMM, Annex 3 only replicates the Port State Measures

Agreement's (PSMA) Annex C data fields. As such, there is only a single cell for inspectors to note 'apparent infringements.'

<p>Apparent Infringements <i>(include reference to relevant legal documents):</i></p>
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In our experience, this single cell is insufficient for an inspector to record and report on the vessel's compliance or infringements against all SPRFMO CMMs, nor effectively promote the Annex 2 inspection standard.

An intersessional Working Group on PSM could consider what should be prioritised for inspection on a vessel that has fished in SPRFMO. This could vary by vessel type and be informed by the specific MCS and compliance priorities unique to SPRFMO. And secondly, consider how this should be incorporated into the SPRFMO's Annex 3.

1.4 Voluntary inspection guidelines

Australia has submitted an information paper on WCPFC's recent adoption of Voluntary High Seas Boarding and Inspection Guidelines. These guidelines were developed after extensive deliberation by an Intersessional Working Group of WCPFC. The Guidelines promote a consistent approach for inspection, they include:

- DNA sampling guide;
- Catch quantification guide;
- Measuring tool calibration guide;
- Bycatch mitigation measuring guide.
- Collection and dissemination of photographic and video evidence.

While these Guidelines were developed for WCPFC in the context of HSBI, they could also be useful for guiding the use of such tools in port inspections.

Australia suggests that these voluntary HSBI guidelines could be considered for use by SPRFMO Members more broadly than the HSBI context and that an Intersessional Working Group could also consider adoption of such voluntary guides under the PSM CMM framework.

1.5 Secretariat data on port landings

Australia suggests it would be of great use to understand where SPRFMO catches are being landed. Such information could help better direct SPRFMO's MCS focus. For example, an Intersessional Working Group could consider if any proportion of domestic vessels that have fished in SPRFMO should be inspected, or if certain port States should be encouraged to become a CNCP of SPRFMO. There may also be a need to define 'landing' if this is causing issues for interpretation of obligations.

Currently, the CMM's scope is limited to foreign fishing vessels carrying SPRFMO-managed species caught in the SPRFMO Convention Area.

An Intersessional Working Group could work with the Secretariat to analyse the data that the Secretariat holds on port landings.

1.6 Inspection data sharing arrangements with CCAMLR

Australia suggests that an Intersessional Working Group could also consider whether there needs to be a decision taken by Members on the appropriateness of SPRFMO Members sharing port inspection reports of vessels that have fished for toothfish in the SPRFMO Convention Area with the CCAMLR Secretariat.

Additionally, whether there should be a modification to the MOU which would allow the Secretariat to provide more inspection related information with the CCAMLR Secretariat.