

14TH MEETING OF THE SPRFMO COMMISSION

Panama City, Panama, 2 to 6 March 2026

COMM 14 – Doc 07

Cooperation and Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with other Organisations

Secretariat

1. Summary and Recommendations

This document reports on SPRFMO's cooperation with other organisations since the previous annual meeting, COMM13.

COMM14 is invited to:

- **Endorse** the renewal of the MoU with NPFC, with consideration of an indefinite term, and direct the Secretariat to arrange for its signing subject to NPFC agreement
- **Note** that confirmation is being sought from IATTC to automatically renew the MoU with SPRFMO
- **Endorse** the planned termination of the agreement with RMIT University and the MoU with Red LAC de Pesca INDNR in the absence of reconfirmed cooperation intentions
- **Comment** on the future direction of SPRFMO cooperation

2. Background

Article 31 of the Convention commits the Commission to cooperating, as appropriate, with other RFMOs, the FAO, with other specialised agencies of the United Nations, and with other relevant organisations on matters of mutual interest; and to seek to make suitable arrangements for consultation, cooperation and collaboration with other relevant organisations.

3. Arrangements and MoUs

As an organisation, SPRFMO has entered into 8 Memoranda of Understanding and Arrangements 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/>).

North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC)

The MoU between SPRFMO and the NPFC was renewed on 12 July 2023 for 3 years. It is subject to review by the two organisations before it expires on 12 July 2026.

The Executive Secretaries met virtually and exchanged correspondences over the year, including to review the relevance and functioning of the MoU. It was assessed that it remains relevant, useful and fit for purpose. Since coming into effect, staff from the two Secretariats have engaged with each other and cooperated in various respects, including around compliance and data matters. The Executive Secretaries have also cooperated including sharing approaches and lessons.



The MoU provides for the full range of expected areas of cooperation and flexibility including in relation to its modification. No drafting improvements were identified. The 3-year life of the MoU was noted in contrast to some of SPRFMO's other MoUs.

It is therefore recommended that the Commission approve the renewal of the MoU as currently drafted and considers the necessity of a fixed term or whether the term should be indefinite (see Annex 1, and bracketed text in part 6). The Executive Secretary would then communicate this to the NPFC Secretariat for conveying to the NPFC Commission, which hold its next annual meeting in 14-17 April 2026.

Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living resources (CCAMLR)

The Arrangement between SPRFMO and CCAMLR was renewed on 8 April 2025 for 3 years.

SPRFMO and CCAMLR Secretariat staff met for their annual cooperation meeting in June 2025 under the Arrangement to facilitate cooperation to advance objectives, particularly with regard to stocks and species of mutual interest. The two Secretariats continue to cooperate on science and data related issues, including data management and data exchange. The SPRFMO Secretariat continues to share details of toothfish releases and recaptures in the SPRFMO Area with the CCAMLR Secretariat as foreseen in the Arrangement. The CCAMLR Secretariat provides a report annually to SPRFMO on recaptures that came from fish tagged in SPRFMO, and SPRFMO recaptures that were tagged in CCAMLR.

Potential areas identified for further cooperation include the expansion of SPRFMO's exploratory toothfish fisheries, scientific observers, and reviewing the scope of information exchange to maintain a focus on data sharing. The Executive Secretary has met with the incoming CCAMLR Executive Secretary to brief him on the Arrangement and the value of this cooperation.

Comisión Permanente del Pacífico Sur (CPPS)

The MoU between SPRFMO and the Permanent Commission of the South Pacific (CPPS) was renewed on 18 March 2022 and has an indefinite term.

The Executive Secretary had an introductory call with his CPPS counterpart to understand the relative roles of the two organisations, their intersection and cooperation. There was a shared view that the MoU remains fit for purpose. CPPS submitted an information paper to the 13th Scientific Committee meeting on Cooperation for the Implementation of Decision 13-2023 on Climate Change.

International Monitoring Control Surveillance (IMCS Network)

SPRFMO formally joined the IMCS Network in 2022, following approval by the Commission at its 10th annual meeting. The purpose of the IMCS Network is to foster a globally connected and capable MCS, compliance, and enforcement community that works collaboratively to achieve and maintain optimal levels of fisheries compliance.

As part of this engagement, SPRFMO continues to support in and support the Pan-Pacific Fisheries Compliance Network (PPFCN) –an informal platform for RFMO compliance officers operating primarily in the Pacific region. The PPFCN promotes regular interaction, knowledge exchange, and collaborative problem-solving among officers facing similar challenges in combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing

The IMCS Network also manages the Combined Regional Authorised Vessel Tool (CRAVT) and is currently developing an integrated IUU Vessel List Hub, both of which are relevant to SPRFMO's compliance and monitoring objectives. Following the decision of the COMM13, SPRFMO officially joined the CRAVT in May 2025.

The SPRFMO Compliance Manager serves as the Organisation's primary liaison with the IMCS Network and regularly attends its general meetings, business sessions, and the Global Fisheries Enforcement Training



Workshops (GFETW). Throughout the year, both the Compliance and Data Managers have participated in IMCS-hosted virtual meetings and have actively engaged with IMCS Network service providers to support the development and roll-out of CRAVT and the IUU Vessel Hub.

Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)

The MoU between SPRFMO and the IATTC was renewed on 27 January 2022. The MoU has a three-year term and will automatically renew for a further three years unless either Organisation provides notification to the contrary. As directed by the Commission at its 13th annual meeting, the Secretariat has engaged with IATTC regarding the renewal of the MoU and expects to revert to the Commission intersessionally on progress.

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)

The MoU between SPRFMO and the WCPFC was renewed on 22 May 2024. The MoU has an indefinite term, and its renewal followed direct engagement between the Executive Secretaries of both Organisations.

During discussions of the Executive Secretaries, it was agreed that the MoU remains fit for purpose and enabling, providing a strong foundation for continued cooperation. Informal communication has been maintained throughout the year, particularly to share lessons learned and exchange experiences in areas of mutual interest.

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. The SPRFMO Data Manager and the WCPFC ICT Manager have exchanged information on internal developments related to each other's record of vessels, transshipment data exchange and information management systems.

FAO-Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS)

In May 2019 the [Partnership Arrangement](#) with the Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS) came into effect, making SPRFMO the 15th FIRMS Partner. The FIRMS draws together a 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.

SPRFMO participated in the 14th FIRMS Steering Committee meeting (30 June, 1 and 4 July 2025), where partners discussed several data-exchange challenges. SPRFMO highlighted that reliance on structured submission templates is creating “template fatigue,” particularly for small organisations with limited staff, and moves toward API-based data exchange with appropriate privacy and confidentiality safeguards. The FIRMS Secretariat advised that an API endpoint is already under development and being piloted by ICES, and that once sufficiently mature it could be made available to other partners for configuration and finalisation. Use of the API would be optional, providing an alternative for partners that integrate GRSF UUIDs into their stock databases.

SPRFMO also participated in the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP) as an observer 2-4 July 2025. The SC13 endorsed the Secretariat's recommendation for SPRFMO to join the CWP, recognising that participation in this global inter-agency body would enhance the Organisation's alignment with international statistical standards and improve data interoperability with other RFMOs and international agencies ([SC13 Meeting Report](#), paragraph 272). This would give SPRFMO direct input into the development of fishery statistical standards—such as ASFIS codes, gear and vessel classifications, and data exchange protocols.



Red LAC de Pesca INDNR

On 27 January 2019 the MoU commenced 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).

As reported to the Commission in previous years, 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 could represent a 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 this absence of cooperation activities, the Secretariat will terminate this MoU unless Red LAC de Pesca INDNR responds with its intent to resume cooperation.

US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

On 16 September 2020, the SPRFMO Secretariat and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce (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.

In October 2024, NOAA provided US\$100,000 (NZ\$156,521) for 2024-25. Final reporting was done in October 2025 on how the funds were fully utilised to support the Secretariat's compliance work pertaining to enhancing implementation and operationalisation aspects related to transshipping, vessel/electronic monitoring, vessel inspections, data standards, and reporting requirements.

RMIT University

In 2020 the Secretariat signed a relationship agreement with the RMIT University aimed at translating documents such as the Convention of SPRFMO and other relevant documents into languages other than English. It was successfully used for the translation of the Convention into traditional and simplified Chinese. Since this however, in recent years, there has been no capacity for the remaining languages identified in Rule 10 of the Rules of Procedure. The agreement is also not conducive for ad hoc or short notice translation tasks. The Secretariat will therefore move to formally terminate this agreement.

ACAP

The MoU between the Secretariat and that for the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) came into effect on 28 October 2014 and has an indefinite term. 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 continued its regular attendance at SPRFMO meetings with its participation at the 13th Scientific Committee meeting. It presented an information paper and a joint proposal with New Zealand, Peru and Chile to align CMM 09 Seabirds and CMM 02 Data Standards with ACAP Best Practice Advice. The Executive Secretaries of SPRFMO and ACAP held an introductory meeting in August 2025 on cooperation opportunities. This then included a SPRFMO presentation in September to a workshop of the FAO deep-sea fisheries project on Deep-sea Fisheries Cross-sectoral Interactions on lessons from the MoU as a model for cooperation between sectoral bodies.



4. Wider External Engagement

Summaries of wider external engagement by the Secretariat are provided on the SPRFMO website page on [external meetings](#). Cooperation of particular significance to the Commission is elaborated here.

Common Oceans Program

The Common Oceans Program is a global partnership funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), promoting sustainable fisheries and biodiversity conservation in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) with a particular focus on tuna and deep-sea fisheries, the Sargasso Sea, and cross-sectoral cooperation. Led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Program brings together the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), RFMOs, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, civil society, and academia.

SPRFMO cooperated with this project at the level of the Secretariat, Chairpersons of the Scientific Committee and Deepwater Working Group, and at the Member level.

SPRFMO is a project partner of the [Deep-sea fisheries](#) project and its cooperation has been deepening.

- The Secretariat continued to participate in some of its initiatives and disseminate these and related information to Members.
- The Executive Secretary participated in a workshop on cross-sectoral interactions with deep-sea fisheries (24-26 September at FAO HQ), and in interviews related to deep-sea fisheries and the precautionary approach (with funding support from the project).
- The Executive Secretary will participate in the Second Project Steering Committee meeting in March 2026 being hosted by NPFC (with funding support from the project).

Cooperation is expected to deepen through the project funding the data systems development work (see FAC13-Doc13.2).

SPRFMO is a Project Steering Committee member of the [cross-sectoral project](#) (CSP). The CSP is working with the Southeast Pacific and Pacific Islands as two initial pilot regions i.e., 14 Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) members and 4 *Comisión Permanente del Pacífico Sur* (CPPS) members. The former Executive Secretary participated in its second Project Steering Committee in January 2025. The current Executive Secretary and the Coordination & Communications Officer participated in interviews to inform development of a capacity building program (a capacity needs assessment and a gender stocktake).

Outreach to non-Members and non-CNCPs

The following were included as observers States into relevant General communications and SC13 and COMM14 Invitation:

- Angola,
- Colombia
- Japan
- Tonga
- Ukraine

5. Future Engagement

The Secretariat would welcome the views and guidance of the Commission on the Organisation's cooperation activities, pursuant to Article 31, including but not limited to MoUs and Arrangements. MoUs and Arrangements are often helpful, but not essential, enablers. There is often scope for cooperation in their absence. Global and regional oceans governance continues to evolve (e.g., with the entry into force of BBNJ), and there are many formal and informal networks. Resources for cooperation are inevitably constrained, and the Secretariat often declines invitations to participate in external meetings/processes. The Secretariat is central to much cooperation but the Commission and its Members and Chairpersons also play important roles in SPRFMO's cooperation.



Annex 1: Proposed Memorandum of Understanding between SPRFMO and NPFC



Memorandum of Understanding between the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO) and the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC)

The South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (hereafter SPRFMO) and the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (hereafter NPFC):

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 and, in so doing, to safeguard the marine ecosystems in which these resources occur;

Acknowledging also the objective of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fisheries Resources in the North Pacific Ocean (hereafter NPFC Convention) is to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fisheries resources in the North Pacific Ocean and in so doing safeguard the marine ecosystems in which these resources occur;

Recognising that Article 21 of the NPFC Convention requires the NPFC to cooperate, as appropriate, on matters of mutual interest with relevant regional organizations or arrangements, especially with those regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements with responsibility for fisheries in marine areas near or adjacent to the NPFC Convention Area;

Recognising further that Article 21 of the NPFC Convention calls upon the NPFC to take into account the conservation and management measures or recommendations adopted by regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements and other relevant intergovernmental organizations that have competence in relation to areas adjacent to the NPFC Convention Area;

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 the areas that fall within the purviews of the SPRFMO Convention and NPFC Convention are geographically adjacent;

Noting that both the SPRFMO and the NPFC have conservation and management principles and approaches addressing 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, SPRFMO and NPFC enter into the following Memorandum of Understanding (MoU):



1. OBJECTIVE OF THIS MEMORANDUM

The objective of this MoU is to facilitate, where appropriate, consultation, cooperation, and collaboration between SPRFMO and NPFC ('the Organisations') in order to advance their respective objectives, particularly with respect to matters of common interest.

2. AREAS OF COOPERATION

The Organisations should establish and maintain consultation and cooperation in respect of matters of common interest. In particular, the Organisations intend to:

- i. exchange meeting reports, information, documents, and publications regarding matters of mutual interest, consistent with the confidentiality rules and information sharing policies of each Organization;
- ii. exchange data and scientific information in support of the work and objectives of both Organisations, consistent with the confidentiality rules, information sharing policies, and internal data security procedures 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 NPFC Conventions;
 - b) vessels identified and listed as having engaged in illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing activity and the IUU Vessel Lists established by each Organisation;
 - c) relevant stocks and species
- iii. cooperate, where appropriate, on research efforts relating to species and stocks of mutual interest, including non-target, associated and dependent species.
- iv. share best practices in areas of mutual interest and concern, including, but not limited to:
 - a) addressing bycatch of non-target, associated, and dependent species (ecologically related species);
 - b) monitoring, control, and surveillance policies and systems, including with respect to Vessel Monitoring Systems;
 - c) administration and structure of observer programmes, including information management policies;
 - d) compatibility of the conservation and management measures adopted by the Organisations.
- v. consider methods of supporting conservation and management measures adopted under the SPRFMO Convention and the NPFC Convention;
- vi. exchange on recommending methods to strengthen the compliance review procedures in accordance with each Organisation's Compliance and Monitoring Scheme;
- vii. consistent with each Organisation's rules of procedure and other relevant policies, grant reciprocal observer status to representatives of the respective Organisations in relevant meetings of each Organisation, including those of each Organisation's subsidiary bodies;
- viii. exchange expertise gained, lessons learned, and use of best practices between the Organisations' Secretariats in their areas of activity.

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 should cover their 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 respective Conventions.

6. OTHERS

This MoU should 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 should 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 North Pacific Fisheries Commission:

FOR THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERIES COMMISSION
(NPFC)

FOR THE SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERIES
MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION (SPRFMO)

Robert Day
Executive Secretary

James Brown
Executive Secretary

Place: Tokyo, Japan

Place: Wellington, New Zealand

Date: [DAY MONTH] 2026

Date: [DAY MONTH] 2026