

14TH MEETING OF THE SPRFMO COMMISSION

Panama City, Panama, 1 to 6 March 2026

COMM 14 – Doc 08 Report of the *Ad-Hoc* Working Group on Electronic Monitoring Standards (WGEMS)

Co-Chairpersons of the WGEMS

(Note: This report may be revised on the basis of discussions at the CTC meeting and the WGEMS session scheduled to take place on 28 February 2026)

1. Background and basis of work

- a) COMM14–Prop 18 (Proposal for CMM XX-2026 on Electronic Monitoring Standards) is a “Co-Chairs’ proposal” that reflects feedback received from Member and Observer delegates over the past two years.
- b) The current draft is largely a consensus text, but it does not necessarily reflect the positions of each Member/CNCP/Observer because WGEMS has not had the opportunity to achieve resolution on all areas where differing views were expressed; accordingly, the text includes remaining bracketed provisions.
- c) In recent work cycles, the Co-Chairs made limited editorial judgement calls to remove brackets where text did not appear controversial based on discussions, or where elements received broad support, including in cases where some Members expressed reservations.

2. Progress achieved (summary)

- a) WGEMS has progressed a consolidated framework establishing minimum requirements for:
 - i. EM programs (governance and processes);
 - ii. EM systems (EMS) (technical standards); and
 - iii. minimum EM data, applicable when EM is used in SPRFMO fisheries to fulfil data requirements of SPRFMO CMMs.
- b) WGEMS maintained a prudent approach to deliver standards in a timely manner by proposing, at this stage, specific equipment configurations and minimum data fields only for jigging vessels (jumbo flying squid fishery), recognising this is currently the only activity for which the Commission has authorised EM to fulfil fishery observation requirements.
- c) The Co-Chairs also strengthened the technical rationale for certain “good practice” elements (e.g., EMS operating from port to port) by noting its utility for detecting potential technical problems or tampering (for example, sensor triggers without corresponding imagery).

3. Key outstanding issues without consensus (for Commission decision/guidance)

Based on the Explanatory Note, the principal items that remain **bracketed** and require political/technical definition by the Commission include:

- a) port-to-port operation and tamper-evident requirements (paragraph 6);



- b) timeframe for reporting EMS malfunction ([48] hours vs “as soon as practicable”) (paragraph 12(b));
- c) whether an EM domestic program requires Commission approval before being used to fulfil data requirements (paragraphs 15–16);
- d) the role of WGEMS and support to programme review processes (paragraph 18 and paragraph 22(a));
- e) transition to mandatory accreditation, including dates and conditions (paragraph 24);
- f) technical options within minimum data fields (Annex 3) and conversion factors (Annex 5, paragraph 15).

The Co-Chairs note that where views were mixed and there was less outside evidence to support preliminary choices, brackets were retained to facilitate Commission discussion and decision.

4. Recommendations from the Co-Chairs to the Commission

The Co-Chairs recommend that the Commission:

- a) take note of the substantive progress made in drafting the proposed CMM and annexes, recognising that the draft is largely consensus-based but still contains key unresolved issues;
- b) noting that the WGEMS plans to meet just before COMM14 in hopes of resolving remaining issues, discuss and consider the proposal for adoption at COMM14.c) if the proposal is not adopted, consider extending the WGEMS mandate for a further one (1) year, with the specific objectives to:
 - i. close the bracketed provisions through technical work and intersessional negotiation;
 - ii. refine implementation options (e.g., in Annex 3) to ensure consistency with data objectives and operational feasibility; and
 - iii. present to COMM15 a revised text with the highest possible level of consensus;
- d) keep open the possibility for the Commission to provide specific guidance (policy direction) to WGEMS on sensitive outstanding issues, to facilitate timely closure, noting the Explanatory Note explicitly identifies the provisions where Commission direction may be required.

5. Possible “specific guidance” the Commission may wish to provide (menu of decisions)

To accelerate progress during a possible additional year of work, the Co-Chairs suggest the Commission consider providing explicit guidance to WGEMS on:

- a) whether EM systems should port-to-port and be tamper-evident: confirm the principle, or instruct an alternative drafting approach (e.g., port-to-port as a general standard with defined exceptions);
- b) malfunction reporting timeframe and modality: set the standard (48h vs practicable) and clarify whether real-time automatic notification should be required where feasible;
- c) approval/validation of domestic programs: clarify whether Commission approval is required, or whether Secretariat evaluation with an intersessional interim mechanism is sufficient;
- d) minimum data fields and conversions: determine the minimum required level (e.g., discards by weight vs number) and the approach to developing conversion factors.



6. Expected outcome and next steps (if the extension is agreed)

If the proposal is not adopted and an extension of the work of the WGEMS is agreed, the WGEMS would work intersessionally on the items identified in the Explanatory Note and present to the next Commission meeting a version with:

- a) a refined text (fewer brackets);
- b) clearly justified options where divergences persist; and
- c) recommendations ready for final Commission decision.