

14TH MEETING OF THE SPRFMO COMMISSION

Panama City, Panama, 2 to 6 March 2026

COMM 14 – Prop 18.1

Explanatory note for COMM14-Prop18 Proposal to Create CMM XX-2026 on Electronic Monitoring Standards

As noted in the cover sheet for the proposal it is a ‘Co-Chairs’ proposal that reflects feedback received from many Member and Observer delegates over the past two years. While the draft is largely a consensus text it (a) does not reflect the positions of each Member, CNCP, or Observer, as the WGEMS has not had the opportunity to achieve resolution on all areas where differing positions were expressed; and (b) includes some bracketed text.

The co-chairs have made some judgement calls to remove brackets that were in the most recent working group draft for text that did not appear to be controversial based on the discussions, as well as for other elements that received broad support but for which some Members expressed some reservations. One example of the latter is the proposed requirement that EM systems operate for an entire fishing trip, from port to port, while only collecting image records as required to collect the required data fields. This is good practice according to our research, as it facilitates detection of potential technical problems or system tampering (for example, if there is a record of a sensor that is meant to initiate image collection being triggered, yet no images, that would be an indication of potential technical failure or tampering). So, while there were a few reservations expressed on this point in the working group, there was a vocal group arguing for the principle and strong outside empirical support for its utility. The final text will be up to Commission to decide, but the co-chairs deemed it important to signal support for some elements that had not reached consensus.

There were other elements that did not reach consensus, for which the differing views were much more mixed and for which there is less outside evidence to aid the co-chairs in proposing preliminary decisions. For these there are remaining sections of bracketed text.

To aid delegations in reviewing the text and being prepared to discuss these elements at Commission the paragraphs and sections with bracketed text are listed below.

Paragraph 6: “EM equipment shall [operate from port to port during a fishing trip,] automatically and autonomously collect EM records to generate the required EM data, and shall be tamper-evident (i.e., any attempts to tamper with the equipment will be detectable to the EM service provider/vessel owner and reported to the respective vessel flag authority).”

Paragraph 12b: “in case the EMS malfunctions, report the malfunction, including the display of any critical warning, to the flag Member or CNCP competent authorities, or its designated institutions, through automatic real time notification of the malfunction or manually, within a maximum of [48] hours [or as soon as practicable];”

Paragraph 15: “The EM program description required in paragraph 14 above shall be submitted to the SPRFMO Secretariat [and approved by the Commission] before a Member or CNCP’s EM program may be used to fulfill a Member or CNCP’s data requirements.”

Paragraph 16: “The Secretariat, [in consultation with the WGEMS as appropriate,] shall evaluate within [30] days of receipt, the EM domestic program descriptions for the inclusion of the required elements specified in paragraph 14 and share its assessments with the Commission [and the Commission will decide whether to



grant interim approval to operate. This decision may be circulated for intersessional decision, consistent with the SPRFMO Rules of Procedure Regulation 7, at the discretion of the Chair, depending on the timing of the assessment results.] Members and CNCs shall report any changes to their EM domestic program to the SPRFMO Secretariat whenever such changes occur. If such changes result in a deficiency of a required program element the Secretariat will inform the Commission.”

Paragraph 18: “The [WGEMS] shall: [...]”

Paragraph 22a: “The Secretariat shall: review[, with assistance of the WGEMS where appropriate,] the EM domestic program descriptions submitted pursuant to paragraph 15, following the process described in paragraph 16;”

Paragraph 24: “Members and CNCs may continue using their own [approved but] non-accredited EM domestic programs to generate data to fulfill the data requirements of SPRFMO CMMs until [31 December 2030]. From [1 January 2031] Members and CNCs shall only utilize EM domestic programs accredited by SPRFMO to fulfill the data requirements of SPRFMO CMMs.”

Annex 3, Table 2: Option to Increase VMS reporting interval to 30 minutes in lieu of requiring location data to be derived directly from EM system.

Annex 3, Table 2: Possibility to not require EM systems to measure jigs per line, but to allow this to be derived from fishing activity data.

Annex 3, Table 2: Possibility to estimate retained catch of all species by counting cases or other containers of known weight moved into storage/processing areas.

Annex 3, Table 2: Possibility to eliminate estimated weight of discards by species as a required data field or to change the requirement to # of discarded individuals.

Annex 3, Table 6: Possibility to eliminate “estimated size” of species incidentally captured.

Annex 3, Table 6: Possibility to eliminate length of each individual incidentally captured as a required data field.

Annex 5, paragraph 15: [Standardized species-specific length-weight and weight-number conversion factors, based on peer-reviewed research results and/or empirical data, should be developed by the SPRFMO Secretariat, endorsed by the SC and adopted by the Commission, and updated as necessary.]