

The 15th Coordination Committee Meeting

Regional Plan of Action to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices including Combating Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing in the Region (RPOA-IUU)

22 – 24 November 2022

Summary Report

General Overview

The 15th Regional Plan of Action to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices including Combating IUU Fishing in the Region (RPOA-IUU) Coordination Committee Meeting (CCM) was held in Fremantle, Australia, for two days from 22 to 24 November 2022 in hybrid mode. The meeting was attended by 11 (eleven) RPOA-IUU participating countries (Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam), RPOA-IUU advisory bodies (InfoFish and Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC)), and RPOA-IUU observers (Australian Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIRO), United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Arafura and Timor Seas Ecosystem Approach Phase-2 (ATSEA-2 Project), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United States Agency of International Development Sustainable Fish Asia Technical Support USAID-SuFia TS).

Of the participating countries, Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam participated in-person. The Philippines and Thailand participated virtually.

Of the other organisations that participate, NOAA and CSIRO participated in-person. InfoFish, SEAFDEC, FAO and USAID-SuFia TS participated virtually. ATSEA-2 project was represented in-person and virtually.

The majority of the meeting was conducted in open session, however discussion on the Joint Ministerial Statement (JMS), Resolution on Vessels Without Nationality, and progress of terms of reference (TOR) on a data sharing mechanism (agenda item 4) was conducted by participating countries in a closed session.

The detailed information of participants who attended the 15th RPOA-IUU CCM can be seen in **Annex 1** and the updated list of RPOA-IUU Coordination Committee representatives is shown in **Annex 2**.

The meeting was co-chaired by:

- Mr. George Day, Assistant Secretary, Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry (DAFF).
- Mr. Eko Rudianto, Principal Fisheries Inspector, on behalf of Executive Director of RPOA-IUU Secretariat.

Opening Session

Mr. George Day opened the meeting with an acknowledgment of the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the meeting was being held, and paid his respects to their Elders past and present. He also extended the respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The remarks from the host country of the RPOA-IUU Secretariat were delivered by Rear Admiral (Navy) Adin Nurawaluddin, Director General of Surveillance for Surveillance of Marine and Fisheries Resources, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, The Republic of Indonesia. He acknowledged all participants and delegates of the 15th RPOA-IUU CCM. Mr. Adin Nurawaluddin furthermore highlighted Indonesia's commitment to combat IUU fishing and also informed that Indonesia as the current host country of the RPOA-IUU Secretariat is happy to continue the commitment to serve as the host of the RPOA-IUU Secretariat. He cited that the meeting was to discuss the progress report from respective countries, advisory bodies, and observers in implementing the 2022 RPOA-IUU Work Plan and develop RPOA-IUU Work Plan 2023. He also encouraged all participating countries to have a mutual position to endorse the JMS and proposed to their relevant Ministers to adopt the JMS. Mr. Adin Nurawaluddin. The remarks of Mr. Adin Nurawaluddin are available in **Annex 3**.

The remarks from the host country of the 15th RPOA-IUU CCM were delivered by Andrew Metcalfe, Secretary of DAFF. As is customary in Australia, at the start of the meeting, Mr. Andrew Metcalfe expressed respect for the Traditional Owners. He also raised the importance of regional collective cooperation to face the challenges and threats of IUU fishing, especially in Southeast Asia which is a vulnerable region for IUU fishing operations. In addition, he noted the progress of Australia's Combating IUU Fishing and Promoting Sustainable Fisheries in Southeast Asia Program (SEA-IUU program), which is currently working with several institutions, such as Nha Trang University, Viet Nam, the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA), and CSIRO. He added the SEA-IUU program was designed to be in line with the RPOA-IUU structure. He extended gratitude to Indonesia for continuing to host the RPOA-IUU secretariat and facilitate coordination among RPOA-IUU participating countries, especially during challenging times in the past two years. The opening remarks can be accessed through this link <https://bit.ly/3luky0u>

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the meeting

Mr. George Day gave a general introduction and outlined the objectives and expected outcomes of the meeting. He outlined the RPOA-IUU Coordination Committee is an annual forum to review the progress status of RPOA-IUU Work Plan 2022, share reports of the RPOA-IUU core elements implementation, and develop the RPOA-IUU Work Plan 2023.

1.2. Adoption of Agenda

The draft of the agenda was adopted and can be found in **Annex 4**.

2. Regional Outlook and Priorities

2.1 Emerging issues on international effort in promoting responsible fisheries

The representative from FAO, Mr. Matthew Camilleri presented important aspects in realizing international efforts to promote responsible fisheries. Including sharing information on the results of port inspections and the compliance reports of fishing vessels visiting port; reviewing legislation and institutional arrangements to strengthen the implementation of port state measures.

Mr. Camilleri further highlighted that FAO continued to seek ways to strengthen the implementation of FAO Compliance Agreements to ensure unlicensed fishing vessels do not operate in the high sea. He also encouraged the countries to implement this instrument. Further information on the Implementation of the FAO Compliance Agreement: Problems and Prospects can be accessed through <https://www.fao.org/3/cc1871en/cc1871en.pdf>.

Mr. Camilleri further explained that FAO has accomplished an important milestone on endorsement of the International Voluntary Guidelines for Transshipment. FAO encouraged regional fisheries management organizations (RFMO) to make this guideline binding by including it in the RFMO regulations or mechanisms. He emphasized that this instrument could be promoted and applied at the regional level. Furthermore, he explained that FAO has developed e-Pilot for better implementation of information exchange for PSMA. FAO also has a program to support institutional capacity building for PSMA implementation.

Finally, Mr. Camilleri reported there are a quite number of RPOA-IUU Participating Countries that are not party to the FAO Compliance Agreement and Transshipment Agreement. He noted that several countries are not party of any RFMOs, as well as the United Nation of Fish Stock Agreement (UNFSA) 1995. FAO encouraged all participating countries to become a party to those international agreements.

In response from a question from Vietnam, FAO suggested that any fisheries product that has been transshipped at sea should show a document from the flag state or from the RFMO, when the product is landed. This action is needed to verify that the fishery product has not been derived from IUU fishing activities.

As a response for the comment from Thailand regarding storing mechanism of the fishing vessel record, FAO encouraged any country to upload any vessel information to the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (FAO GRFV). FAO looks forward to further collaborative engagement with all RPOA-IUU participating countries to support the implementation of international instruments and regional mechanisms.

During the discussion, the representative of FAO informed several additional pieces of information:

- FAO publications that can be used as a reference for RPOA-IUU participating countries to advance and improve the capacity in implementing their role as a flag state, port state, and coastal state through the following links:
 - FAO Capacity Development Portal that hosts information of projects that support States' capacity in combating IUU fishing, not only projects implemented by FAO, but also other IGOs, including SEAFDEC. (<https://www.fao.org/iuu-fishing/capacity-development/en/>)
 - Streamlining efforts to combat IUU fishing: The Global Capacity Development Portal (<https://www.fao.org/3/cc1808en/cc1808en.pdf>)
- The representative of FAO announced the sixth meeting of Global Record Informal Open-Ended Technical and Advisory Working Group which will be held on 12 December 2022. The information details can be accessed through the link <https://www.fao.org/global-record/news-events/detail/en/c/1607598/>

3. Presentation of Reports

3.1. RPOA-IUU Secretariat Evaluation of RPOA-IUU Workplan, challenges, follow-up action, and recommendations

The representative of RPOA-IUU Secretariat presented the RPOA-IUU Secretariat's report on the implementation of the 2022 Work Plan. The representative highlighted the RPOA-IUU secretariat activities in 2022, including working with partners and international agencies to support the RPOA-IUU activities. The representative of RPOA-IUU Secretariat

also explained that the RPOA-IUU Secretariat had approached several potential partners to support and facilitate the implementation of RPOA-IUU Work Plan. The partners include Global Environment Facility (GEF-5)/Indonesian Sea Large Marine Ecosystem(GEF-5/ISLME Project); USAID-SuFia TS; National Fisheries Intelligence Services, Canada; and Australia's DAFF.

The representative reported on two activities in 2022, the RPOA-IUU Fisheries Intelligence Training and the International Workshop on Advancing Responsible Fisheries to combat IUU fishing. The RPOA-IUU Fisheries Intelligence Training, hosted in collaboration with United National Development Program (UNDP)/ATSEA-2 Project, was held on 5-8 April 2022. The International Workshop on Advancing Responsible Fisheries to combat IUU fishing was held to commemorate the International Day for the fight against IUU fishing and also to support Indonesia's G20 Presidency. The workshop was hosted collaboration with the Government of The Republic of Indonesia and UNDP/ATSEA-2 Project and was held on 7-9 June 2022.

The representative also reported that the RPOA-IUU Secretariat had intensified the coordination with RPOA-IUU participating countries on the finalization of the JMS through email correspondences. To facilitate the finalization of the Joint Ministerial Statement, the RPOA-IUU Secretariat held a consultative meeting in September 2022. The consultative meeting also included discussions with RPOA-IUU partners to determine their support for continue and future activities of the RPOA-IUU.

The representative also presented some proposed activities that will be incorporated in the RPOA-IUU 2023 Work Plan. The proposed activities included the finalization of monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) Curriculum and Training, advanced fisheries intelligence training and development of data sharing mechanism. The other priorities included the Sub-regional MCS Group Workshop and gap analysis on a country's institutional capacity to combat IUU fishing.

The discussion results are, as follow:

1. The RPOA-IUU participating countries acknowledge the report from the RPOA-IUU Secretariat regarding the implemented activities in 2022
2. The RPOA-IUU participating countries appreciated the RPOA-IUU Secretariat's progress and efforts on realizing the mandate from the RPOA-IUU Work Plan 2022
3. RPOA-IUU participating countries and the RPOA-IUU Secretariat would follow up the recommendations indicated in the RPOA-IUU Secretariat's presentation in **Annex 5**.

3.2. RPOA-IUU Participating Countries Reports

3.2.1. Australia

Australia's delegates provided an update on Australia's multifaceted approach to combating IUU fishing through taking strong on-the-water action against IUU fishing in Australian waters, information sharing on known and suspected IUU fishing vessels, engagement with international partners, and education of operators. Australia's delegates updated that Australia has worked bilaterally with countries to address fisheries issues and engaged closely with regional fisheries bodies and multilateral organisations.

Australia's delegates emphasised that to further strengthen efforts to combat IUU fishing, Australia has begun implementing the Combating IUU Fishing and Promoting Sustainable Fisheries in Southeast Asia program (SEA-IUU program). The delegates provided

an update on the progress of the SEA-IUU program, including ongoing engagement with several agencies to administer the four components. The delegates further encouraged eligible countries to consider the opportunities provided by SEA-IUU program to meet MCS, regional coordination and gender inclusivity capacity building needs.

Referring to implementing international instruments, Australia's delegates encouraged countries to consider becoming a party to the FAO's Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA), to deposit their national instrument of acceptance to the World Trade Organization (WTO) of the WTO Fisheries Subsidies Agreement, and to integrate FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Transshipment into regulation in the region. The details of Australia's country report are in **Annex 6**.

3.2.2. Brunei Darussalam

Brunei Darussalam's delegates restated Brunei Darussalam's commitment and support for RPOA-IUU and its program towards the promotion of responsible fishing practices including combating IUU fishing activities in the Southeast Asia region. In 2022, foreign vessels were caught conducting IUU fishing activities in Brunei Darussalam's exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Brunei Darussalam's delegate also updated that they participated in several relevant capacity building programmes and activities on instruments and measures to promote responsible fishing practices as well to combat IUU fishing activities organized in 2022. The activities include SEAFDEC's Regional Fishing Vessel Record (RFVR), Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR's) Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN's) CDS. The Brunei Darussalam's delegation also mentioned its active participation in regional organizations such as ASEAN, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and SEAFDEC. The delegation informed that they are a party to UNCLOS since 1996.

Brunei Darussalam's delegate noted that Brunei Darussalam would adopt in its domestic legislation, measures consistent with the requirements for responsible fishing under the UN Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA), FAO Compliance Agreement, and the relevant international plans of action. Brunei Darussalam is also committed to fully implement the RPOA-IUU and support the implementation of all other relevant cooperative arrangements. Brunei Darussalam will work closely and collaboratively with regional organizations to develop conservation and management measures for fish stocks to promote optimum utilization. Brunei Darussalam's delegates encourage relevant regional organizations to aid in technical support and development of guidelines for conservation and fisheries management, capacity building, sharing data and information on fisheries and trade. The delegates expected to strengthen networking for the purpose of enhancing participation and ensuring implementation of conservation and management measures in the region. Brunei Darussalam's country report is in **Annex 7**.

3.2.3. Cambodia

Cambodia's delegates reported that Cambodia is a party to PSMA and UNFSA. Cambodia's delegate also mentioned that Cambodia is undertaking discussions regarding a new fisheries law and has developed a 5 year Marine and Inland Fisheries management Plan, and Inland Plan of Control and Inspection. The delegate also mentioned that Cambodia regularly updated the SEAFDEC RFVR and FAO GRFV data. Cambodia's delegates added that Cambodia is currently working with FAO and SEAFDEC to discuss the pilot activities on eACDS.

Furthermore, Cambodia is also committed to fully implement the RPOA-IUU and support the implementation of all other relevant cooperative arrangements. Cambodia's

delegates proposed to conduct sub regional meetings or bilateral dialogue on the management of the transboundary species with the fund supported by the partner agencies or organization. Cambodia's delegates also encouraged the capacity building program to be implemented as soon as possible. Cambodia's country report is in **Annex 8**.

3.2.4. Indonesia

Indonesia's delegate presented that Indonesia has continued to support the RPOA-IUU both as RPOA-IUU participating countries and RPOA-IUU Secretariat. Indonesia's delegate also reported that it has ratified the PSMA and has adopted the Job Creation Law as a new set of regulations to strengthen the existing National Fisheries Law. Indonesia's delegate also mentioned that Indonesia regularly submitted data for the SEAFDEC RFVR and FAO' GRFV data. Furthermore, Indonesia's delegate reported that Indonesia has implemented an e-logbook for fishing vessels above 5 gross tonnage (GT). Indonesia has regulated transshipment at sea through The Regulation of The Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries Number 58 of 2020 and The Regulation of The Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries Number 10 of 2021. Indonesia has conducted surveillance related to transshipment activities through surveillance vessel operations at sea.

Indonesia's delegates proposed that the RPOA-IUU Ministerial Meeting could be held in 2023 and RPOA-IUU to re-engage with the International MCS Network. They encouraged the RPOA-IUU Coordination Committee to re-evaluate the annual RPOA-IUU Work Plan and priorities to be more achievable activities and actions. Indonesia's delegates suggested re-activating the MCS Sub-Regional Groups of the Southern and Eastern Area of the South China Sea (SEASCS) and the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas (SSS) through seeking potential support from partners. Finally, Indonesia's delegate suggested to explore the support from international partners to support RPOA-IUU activities including capacity building programs. Indonesia's country report is in **Annex 9**.

3.2.5. Malaysia

Malaysia's delegate stated that Malaysia will continue the collaboration with RPOA-IUU participating countries. Malaysia's delegate also mentioned that Malaysia are currently in the process of reviewing the Fisheries Act 1985 and modernizing their fishing vessel policy by providing decent working conditions for the fishing vessel crews. Malaysia's delegate added that they have developed standard operating procedures (SOPs) for port state measures (PSM). Malaysia's delegate also shared Malaysia's effort to improve their food security through implementation of several policies. Malaysia's delegate urged RPOA-IUU countries to work more closely to combat IUU fishing. Malaysia's country report is in **Annex 10**.

3.2.6. Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea's delegates reinstated their commitment to combating IUU fishing and other related activities not only in their water but also in the region, this included the continuation of MCS capacity development. Papua New Guinea's delegates reported that fully automate MCS tools for electronic reporting and to fully automate the fisheries industry reporting has been implemented.

Papua New Guinea's delegates reported that Papua New Guinea is working towards the development of the small-scale artisanal tracking system through its *connect, protect and empower* module for artisanal fishers through e-commerce. To achieve this goal, PNG NFA-MCS has captured the development of small-scale fisheries in the context of the blue economy to *Connect, Protect and Empower* as a priority activity that will set out to achieve its Key Result

Areas in the MCS business Plan 2023-2025. They also committed to continuous incursions of IUU fishing vessels inside Papua New Guinea's fisheries waters.

Papua New Guinea's delegates recommend exploring the officer exchange program among RPOA-IUU participating countries through MCS sub-regional groups. They also proposed to enhance capacity development among participating RPOA-IUU participating countries and to develop a clear policy on IUU fishing data sharing and information exchange mechanisms for RPOA-IUU participating countries. Papua New Guinea's country report is in **Annex 11**.

3.2.7. Philippines

The Philippines' delegate reported that the Philippines have strengthened domestic policy and legal basis, conducted capacity building, and conducted regional and international cooperation to combat IUU fishing. The Philippines' delegate noted the Philippines intends to amend certain provisions of their Fisheries Code. The Philippines also stated that the Philippines has ratified the FAO PSMA and has designated two fishing ports. The Philippines also adopted the Fisheries Administrative Order 267 series of 2021. The Philippines also mentioned that they are consistently implementing the Catch Certification Scheme in accordance with the international market's requirement.

The Philippines' delegate reported that they already implemented the pilot project for the use of the Philippine IUU Fishing Index and Threat Assessment Tool (I-FIT) developed by the USAID Fish Right Program and DA-BFAR through the Marine Environment and Resources Foundation. They also reported that the Philippines implemented a continuous implementation of a closed fishing season in various regions of the country. The Philippines, through the BFAR, continuously implements a program which gives recognition and incentives to outstanding local coastal communities for their efforts and contributions to sustainable resources/fisheries management. The Philippines' delegates encouraged RPOA-IUU participating countries to consider review or study on fishing gear marking for combating IUU fishing efficient and affordable fishing vessel monitoring devices specifically for small scale fishing vessels. The Philippines' country report is in **Annex 12**.

3.2.8. Singapore

Singapore's delegates shared that amendment of the Fisheries Act to enable effective implementation of port State measures is ongoing. He also added that Singapore has established an inter-agency working group to combat IUU fishing. Singapore's delegates delivered that Singapore has reviewed fisheries legislation (Fisheries Act 1967) and took into consideration the RPOA-IUU Model Fisheries Legislation report.

The delegates also informed that Singapore has continued cooperation with Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMOs), such as CCAMLR, ICCAT, and CCSBT. Singapore cooperates with the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) on the monitoring of the toothfish trade and compliance with the CCAMLR's electronic CDS. Singapore also cooperates with ICCAT in providing authorization for all ICCAT tuna transshipments by Singapore flagged vessels.

Singapore will be focusing on the amendment of the Fisheries Act. It is estimated that the Fisheries Act amendment will be completed in 2024. The delegates added that Singapore will participate in programmes of RPOA-IUU, SEAFDEC and RFMOs, and the 4th Meeting of PSMA Parties in Indonesia in May 2023. Singapore concluded that participation by countries in FAO and RFMO meetings and programmes to combat IUU fishing, could enable closer

collaborations towards more effective compliance and enforcement activities against IUU fishing. Singapore's country report is in **Annex 13**.

Thailand

Thailand's delegates reported that Thailand is committed to continue implementing activities to prevent, deter and eliminate fishing, despite the changes of the COVID pandemic. Thailand's delegates also reported that Thailand has Fisheries Reform Scheme through IUU – Free national Policy which has been carried forward to ensure that fish and fisheries products imported from and/or exported to do not come from IUU fishing activities and that IUU fish and fisheries products do not enter into the supply chain. The Royal Ordinance on Fisheries 2015 and its amendment 2017 were entered into force to meet international standard in order to prevent, deter and eliminate IUUF.

Thailand's delegates noted that as an ASEAN SEAFDEC member country, Thailand still cooperates in the sharing and updating of SEAFDEC Regional Fishing Vessel Record (RFVR) database system, and FAO GFVR for Thai FVs information. Moreover, the vessels engaged in IUU fishing have always exchanged with coastal states, flag states include RFMOs. In addition, Thailand promotes the use of the AN-IUU Platform as a way to exchange information and coordination to prevent IUU fishing vessels entering into ASEAN waters.

Thailand's delegates addressed a plan to issue fishing licenses for small-scale fisheries and potential study on the fishing gears marking to support issuance of fishing licenses based on the calculation of Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY). Regarding surveillance efforts, Thailand established fisheries monitoring center (FMC) as an operational center for fishing vessels surveillance. Thailand's delegates also explained that Thailand has several measures to control the transshipment activities at sea using observers onboard, such as Electronic Reporting System (ERS) and Electronic Monitoring System (EMS).

Thailand's delegates proposed research on the marking of fishing gears by FAO consultation for combating IUU fishing and a development of auxiliary fishing gears for reducing the labor required onboard fishing vessels. Thailand's delegates suggested RPOA-IUU member countries should strengthen PSM inspection and investigation via AIS data evaluation and to explore knowledge on data collection for small-scale fishing vessel. Thailand's country report in **Annex 14**.

3.2.9. Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste's delegates emphasized that Timor-Leste is striving towards achieving the RPOA-IUU work plan 2022 and commit to continue establishing the collaboration and cooperation with other countries, cooperating with local communities, adopting the international instrument and collaborating with the regional and international organizations.

Timor-Leste's delegates conveyed that Timor-Leste is revising the fisheries law, engagement in the National Maritime Authority and PSMA accession are the main priorities for this year. Timor-Leste's delegate also added that Timor-Leste is in the final process of becoming a party to PSMA. Those commitments are described in the National Plan of Action of Timor-Leste in combating the Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing. In addition, Timor-Leste's delegate stated that they have sent a request to RPOA-IUU participating countries to assist them to identify 7 (seven) fishing vessels of Chinese companies before operating in the Timor-Leste jurisdiction area.

Timor-Leste's delegate recommended that RPOA-IUU participating countries should commit to sharing the necessary data and information to the other member countries if

required. Timor-Leste's delegate outlined that transparency between countries is essential and countries must commit to controlling their own fishing vessels to not cross the other maritime boundaries. The public information campaign (PIC) is one of the important programs to raise awareness and knowledge of the local communities including fishers. This activity is a strategic action to avoid and prevent the conflict between countries. Timor Leste's country report is in **Annex 15**.

3.2.10. Viet Nam

Viet Nam's delegates informed that they are members of PSMA, UNFSA and have submitted to SEAFDEC RFVR all fishing vessels larger than 24m length. Viet Nam's delegate also reported that through cooperation with the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), the capacity of Viet Nam's tuna fishery management system continues to be improved, in line with international practices. Viet Nam's delegate also updated that Viet Nam has reviewed and amended the Government's Guidance implementation of the Fisheries Law 2017, regulations on vessel monitoring system (VMS), the regulations on controlling the import of fish and fish products originated from marine fisheries into Viet Nam, and administrative sanctions on fisheries. Viet Nam also has imposed regulations on the use of the offshore fishing license quotas that have been distributed to the cities and provinces.

Viet Nam's delegate informed that they have enacted new regulation on IUU Vessels List and High-risk Vessels List. Vietnam has publicly posted the lists on its website for the competent authorities to access and obtain information for their monitoring and controlling of fishing vessels entering the fishing ports. Viet Nam's delegate also added the maritime law enforcement forces (the Navy, the Border Guard, the Coast Guard and the Fisheries Surveillance), along with the authorities of the coastal cities and provinces, have implemented specific measures to prevent and manage the violations involving illegal fishing of Vietnamese vessels and citizens in foreign waters. Viet Nam plans to strengthen coastal state, port state, flag states, MCS system, and regional market measures. Viet Nam's country report is in **Annex 16**.

The discussion results are, as follow:

1. The RPOA-IUU participating countries note the reports from respective RPOA-IUU participating countries
2. The RPOA-IUU participating countries and meeting participants appreciate the countries' progress and efforts on realizing the actions from the RPOA-IUU Work Plan 2022
3. Timor-Leste's delegate raised a question about alignment of Global Fishing Watch to RPOA-IUU Watch List and the RPOA-IUU Secretariat suggested all RPOA-IUU participating countries send the data through email as the current reporting mechanism
4. Singapore's delegates suggested that the RPOA-IUU Secretariat should engage with the RFMOs to update the RPOA-IUU Vessel Watch List
5. Co-chair recommended to have a further discussion on fish box placement in Thailand and Cambodia's shared water in the RPOA-IUU MCS Sub-Regional Working Group of Gulf of Thailand (GoT)
6. Papua New Guinea's delegates suggested RPOA-IUU Secretariat to develop program and activities list

7. Papua New Guinea's delegates acknowledged the joint surveillance program by the QUAD partners through our membership with the Forum Fisheries Agency and the Niue Treaty Subsidiary Agreement cooperation to safeguard and deter illegal fishers in the Arafura-Timor Seas including our EEZ
8. Viet Nam's delegate raised a question to Thailand about the checking system of fisheries products under PSMA control
9. Following Viet Nam's question, Thailand's delegates provided the following answers:
 - a. In the case of Thailand before we announced the required document through the WTO channel. After we received the comments from the members, we replied with all clear information. Afterward, we officially announced the required documents via Ministerial Notification under Royal Ordinance (2017)
 - b. In the case of previous landed, Thailand requested a catch certificate or a copy of the custom clearance or a copy of the customs declaration or export permit of aquatic animals or aquatic animal products from a respective government agency. and invoice and air waybill or bill of landing (if any) in conformity with the Department of Fisheries Notification under the Royal Ordinance (2017). These documents were also notified by the WTO channel. For suspicious cases, we have the power to request more information and documents. We will contact flag States, related States, and RFMOs for verification
 - c. Thailand, as a port state, has the sovereignty over our ports to adopt more stringent measures on the exception previously landed and to apply in a fair, transparent, and nondiscriminatory manner, consistent with international law and that would not constitute an abuse of right, to fulfill more effective implementation on PSMA in preventing the fish products from IUUF to enter into our ports. From Thailand's prospecting, Thailand applies international standards such as under PSMA as mentioned above, it is less likely to be challenged legally in the WTO. The concern should be on trade barriers from trade-related measures on PSM inspection procedure and not relevant to the WTO TBT agreement dealing with product standards in general on food safety and animal and plant health and safety which cover measures based upon product characteristics, process or production methods related to product characteristics, etc.

3.3. RPOA-IUU Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS) Sub-Regional Group Reports

The three MCS sub-regional groups reported on their activities and key issues.

3.3.1 Gulf of Thailand (GoT)

Thailand, as the Chair of the Gulf of Thailand (GoT) MCS sub-regional group, reported that the GoT MCS sub-regional group did not meet in 2022.

3.3.2 Southern and Eastern Area of the South China Sea (SEASCS) and Sulu-Sulawesi Seas (SSS)

Malaysia, as the Chair of the SEASCS and SSS MCS sub-regional group, reported that the group was still inactive, noting the last meeting was held in 2015. Malaysia's delegates also informed that Malaysia was unable to host the meeting this year due to domestic issues. Malaysia's delegate committed to conduct the sub-regional group meeting next year either virtually or in person, subject to budget availability.

3.3.3 Arafura and Timor Seas (ATS)

Australia, as the Chair of the ATS MCS Sub-Regional group, reported that the group would not be meeting in 2022, though would be meeting in early 2023. Australia's delegate noted that the countries in the sub-region are still actively engaged in some activities such as exchange of information, coordinated patrols, and other activities. ATS's presentation is in **Annex 17**.

The discussion results are, as follow:

- The representative of the GoT MCS sub-regional group noted that an on-going project in the Gulf of Thailand can support the GoT Sub-regional group Meeting.
- There is an offer to conduct MCS sub-regional group meeting in conjunction with USAID-SuFia TS the South China Sea and Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion Ecosystem Approach on Fisheries Management (EAFM) Workshop in Manila, the Philippines. However, Malaysia's delegate mentioned that the plan to organize SCS and SSS sub-regional group meeting will be further discussed and will be held in Malaysia.
- The representative of the ATS MCS sub-regional group reported that the group plan to conduct the meeting in March 2023. Australia proposed to invite other sub-regional group participants in an effort to exchange experience from the ATS Sub-region and support greater collaboration between the Sub-Groups. Australia's delegates further proposed to have MCS sub-regional group workshop that will be held in conjunction with ATS MCS sub-regional group meeting. Australia's delegates and RPOA-IUU Secretariat will discuss further the detail of the workshop.

3.4 RPOA-IUU Advisory Bodies

3.4.1. Info Fish

The representative of InfoFish elaborated on its cooperation with RPOA-IUU. InfoFish has facilitating specific technical training, workshops, and/or industry seminars in partnership with relevant stakeholders, partners, and industry experts. The representative explained that InfoFish has conducted several conferences and dialogues for sustainable tuna. The representative also mentioned that publications and digital platforms can be utilized as acceptable media to raise awareness and strengthen coordination and cooperation to combat IUU fishing. InfoFish will continue to use its trade promotion, technical advisory and consultancy network and platforms to support and strengthen coordination and cooperation in promoting responsible and best fishing practices and combating IUU fishing. Info Fish's presentation is in in **Annex 18**.

3.4.2. World Fish

World Fish did not attend the 15th RPOA-IUU CCM.

3.4.3. SEAFDEC

The representative of SEAFDEC, Mr. Worawit Wachana, reported on a proposed series of capacity building activities with RPOA-IUU covering PSMA, stock assessment training, the improvement of data collection and analysis. The representative also suggested to conduct workshops to review and collect information in AMSs on national legislation and procedures for implementation of PSM.

Currently, SEAFDEC implements “*strengthening regional cooperation and enhancing national capacities to eliminate IUU Fishing in Southeast Asia*” under the Japanese Trust Fund (JTF)’s funding in collaboration with Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS) partners including FAO, NOAA, RPOA-IUU. Subregional fisheries management plan for transboundary species, RFVR 24 m length and over, Supporting Member Countries implementing PSM, Capacity building on MCS and Electronic ASEAN Catch Documentation Scheme are the expected outputs.

The representative noted that in 2023, there is a plan to have collaboration in capacity building program, responsible fishing practices and implementation of SEAFDEC new projects. The representative further explained that beside the above project, there will be activities in fisheries resources and habitat conservation which include development fisheries management plans (fishing gear, vessels, seasons, areas, transboundary species, etc.) and stock assessment (regional and sub-regional stock status of specific species). All above activities have potential to be collaborated with RPOA-IUU. SEAFDEC’s presentation is in **Annex 19**.

The discussion results are, as follow:

- SEAFDEC suggested to Timor Leste that they have an official communication in advance of Timor Leste announcing its interest to join the SEAFDEC . SEAFDEC also noted that Timor Leste has already actively participated in several SEAFDEC activities as an observer; these would ease the membership process.
- As a response to the question regarding potential contribution of InfoFish to RPOA-IUU participating countries, InfoFish proposed to have an initial survey and consultation with the countries before determining the capacity building program that would be tailored according to the countries needs.
- Australia’s delegates suggested the RPOA-IUU Secretariat provide further clarification on the term and status of the advisory bodies. The RPOA-IUU Secretariat agreed to the suggestion and recommend revisiting the RPOA-IUU rules and procedure on advisory bodies' engagement.
- SEAFDEC invites RPOA-IUU participating countries to attend RFVR meetings in the upcoming years.

3.5 RPOA-IUU observers

3.5.1. Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIRO)

CSIRO’s representative presented on some current research it is undertaking in the region, which includes volume and value of illegal fishing, illegal fishing hotspots identification, illegal fishing practices characterization, and governance practices and policies assessment. The representative also informed that CSIRO would deliver the study result in 2023. CSIRO welcomes discussion on the opportunity of conducting an IUU Fishing survey in RPOA-IUU sub-regions. CSIRO’s presentation is in **Annex 20**.

3.5.2. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

NOAA’s representative presented 5 (five) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) International Priority Focus Area which are combating IUU in international fisheries, promoting sustainable fisheries and maintaining equitable access for shared and transboundary stocks. The other focus area is recovering protected species through an ecosystem approach that conserves biodiversity. It is also supporting fair trade and ensuring safety and social

sustainability in the U.S. Seafood Supply, and encountering trafficking of protected and endangered species. The representative also proposed several regional activities such as a regional PSM benchmarking workshop, technical assistance, and capacity building training. NOAA's presentation is in **Annex 21**.

3.5.3. Arafura and Timor Seas Ecosystem Approach Phase-2 (ATSEA-2 Project)

The representative of ATSEA-2 Project reported the progress of collaborative activities with RPOA-IUU in 2022. The activities are Fisheries Intelligence Training and International Workshop on Advancing Regional Standard of Responsible Fisheries to Combat IUU Fishing. The representative also mentioned that ATSEA-2 engaged an individual consultant who are spearheaded the process under RPOA-IUU Secretariat close coordination in development of data sharing mechanism and MCS curriculum and training.

The plan for collaborative activities in 2023 includes Focus Group Discussion (FGD) on fisheries intelligence cooperation and advanced fisheries intelligence training. The other activities are continuation of Development of data sharing mechanism and Development of MCS Curriculum and Training Plan. The representative also emphasized that the ATSEA-2 Project will continue to support RPOA-IUU through the implementation of ATS Strategic Action Program (SAP) and National Action Programs (NAPs). ATSEA-2 Project's presentation is in **Annex 22**.

The discussion results are, as follow:

- Following a study of illegal fishing in the Indian Ocean, the co-chair proposed CSIRO specify IUU fishing targeted species in illegal fishing spots and the infrastructure as a basis for identifying fisheries product supply chain.
- Considering the sensitivity of using intelligence terminology, Singapore's delegates explained that information and data sharing is considered intelligence components. Therefore, Singapore and Viet Nam's delegates proposed to modify the intelligence terminology. As a response, RPOA-IUU Secretariat planned to conduct an FGD on Fisheries Intelligence in early 2023, noting FGD was proposed for inclusion in 2023 Annual Work Plan.
- Co-chair informed that ATSEA-2 Project will prepare roadmap for data sharing mechanisms. The roadmap will be further implemented and continued by USAID-SuFia TS.

3.5.4. USAID-SuFia TS

USAID-SuFia TS is a project supported by Regional Development Mission for Asia (RDMA) of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The Objective of the project is to improve the management of marine biodiversity and fisheries resources in the Indo-Pacific region by reducing illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing. The other objective is adoption of fair-labor and sustainable fishing practices by fisheries businesses increased.

SuFia TS is designed to provide technical products and services as requested by RPOA-IUU and other regional partner organizations. The proposed timeframe is in January 2023 through August 2025. The proposed technical support for RPOA-IUU Annual Work Plan 2023 will be activities no. 3.1, 3.6, 4.1, 5.3, 7.1, 11.6, 12.5.

The discussion results are, as follow:

- To avoid duplication or work done by other partners, Singapore requested the RPOA-IUU Secretariat to work with USAID-SuFia to better scope the role of USAID-SuFia and its proposed projects. This would enable a more complete overview of project proposals for RPOA-IUU participating countries' holistic assessment and consideration
- Indonesia's delegates recommended incorporating the USAID-SuFia TS component activity into the RPOA-IUU Work Plan 2023.
- RPOA-IUU participating countries agree that RPOA-IUU will cooperate with the USAID-SuFia TS, with the cooperation to be managed through the RPOA-IUU Secretariat.
- RPOA-IUU participating countries agree that several activities on the 2023 RPOA-IUU Work Plan could be supported by the USAID-SuFia TS
- RPOA-IUU participating countries assign the RPOA-IUU Secretariat to circulate a draft of non-binding cooperation concept note between the RPOA-IUU Secretariat and USAID-SuFia TS
- RPOA-IUU participating countries assign the RPOA-IUU secretariat to seek country approval on non-binding cooperation concept note.
- The summary document of the discussion and details of the report of the USAID-SuFia TS presentation in **Annex 23**.

4. RPOA-IUU issues for consideration/ endorsement

4.1. Concept Note of Gap Analysis on Countries' Institutional Capacity to Combat IUU Fishing

RPOA-IUU participating countries suggested the RPOA-IUU Secretariat recirculate the draft of the concept note to RPOA-IUU participating countries. RPOA-IUU participating countries also requested extra time to examine and analyze the objective of these activities before assigning the RPOA-IUU Secretariat to undertake these activities. RPOA-IUU participating countries requested that the RPOA-IUU Secretariat hold a consultative meeting aimed at discussing this initiative. The concept note is available in **Annex 24**.

4.2. Concept note for Initial Discussion on Rules and Procedures

The co-chair highlighted the importance of consultative meeting (CM) as it provides opportunities for participating countries to discuss outstanding or particular items. The participating countries agree that CMs could be held as an inter-sessional decision-making platform. The CM aims to discuss outstanding and items as stated in the RPOA-IUU Workplan then the decisions should be formally adopted in CCM. The RPOA-IUU participating countries agree that for urgent matters and special requests from RPOA-IUU participating countries, additional ad-hoc virtual CCM could be held. RPOA-IUU participating countries assign the RPOA-IUU Secretariat to revisit and develop CM and ad-hoc CCM Procedures, for endorsement at the next CCM. The summary document of the rule and procedures of CM can be found in **Annex 25**.

4.3. Concept note for Initial Discussion on Implementation of FAO Compliance Agreement 1993

The chair invited the RPOA-IUU Secretariat to deliver an introduction to FAO Compliance Agreement 1993. The RPOA-IUU Secretariat explained that FAO Compliance Agreement 1993 is one of the international fisheries instruments that had been elaborated

within the RPOA-IUU core elements under the framework of the international instrument. RPOA-IUU participating countries agreed to assign the RPOA-IUU Secretariat to develop and design the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and to clarify the scope of the FGD. For example, the FGD could focus on the FAO Compliance Agreement and its requirement, and CCM's advice will subsequently be sought for the next steps. RPOA-IUU participating countries also agreed to assign the RPOA-IUU Secretariat to communicate with potential international partners for organizing the FGDs. The summary document of the activity proposal for enhancing RPOA-IUU participating countries' capacity to implement the FAO Compliance Agreement 1993 can be found in **Annex 26**.

4.4. Concept Note of Fisheries Intelligence Cooperation

RPOA-IUU participating countries suggested the RPOA-IUU Secretariat recirculate the draft of the concept note to RPOA-IUU participating countries. RPOA-IUU participating countries also requested extra time to examine and analyze the objective of these activities in the first place before assigning the RPOA-IUU Secretariat to undertake the activities. RPOA-IUU participating countries assigned the RPOA-IUU Secretariat to hold consultative meetings aiming to discuss this initiative. Similar to the agenda item 3.5.3. discussion where sensitivity of the term of 'intelligence' was raised, Singapore advised the Secretariat to explore using alternative terms, for example, information-sharing. If the term 'intelligence' will continue to be used, a footnote should be included to state what this term 'intelligence' means. The Fisheries intelligence cooperation's summary document is available in **Annex 27**.

4.5. The progress of MCS Curriculum and Training

RPOA-IUU participating countries highlighted that there should be early identification to compare the previous MCS curriculum and training developed by the University of Wollongong and the current MCS curriculum and training refinement prepared by ATSEA-2's project consultant. Australia impressed that it was crucial that this work did not duplicate the MCS curriculum development that Australia was already undertaking as part of its program, and that its work in this area could be used to inform the work being undertaken by ATSEA-2's consultant. Australia, the RPOA-IUU Secretariat and ATSEA-2's consultant agreed to work together to avoid duplication. The Secretariat will circulate the curriculum to the RPOA-IUU participating countries to get feedback and input before being finalized. The MCS curriculum and training summary document are available in **Annex 28**.

4.6. Matrix of Capacity Building Programs

RPOA-IUU participating countries requested the RPOA-IUU Secretariat to recirculate the draft of the capacity-building programs and activities matrix. The RPOA-IUU Secretariat will invite RPOA-IUU participating countries to provide feedback and input for the matrix. The draft of the capacity-building programs and activities matrix is provided in **Annex 29**.

4.7. The progress of ToR on Evaluation and Reporting Tool

RPOA-IUU participating countries suggested developing criteria and components of the evaluation and reporting tool. RPOA-IUU participating countries were welcomed to assist the RPOA-IUU Secretariat in developing the criteria and components. The discussion indicated that there is a possibility that USAID-SuFia TS could facilitate this activity. The TOR on evaluation and reporting tool is provided in **Annex 30**.

4.8. The RPOA-IUU Joint Ministerial Statement

The RPOA-IUU Joint Ministerial Statement of re-commitment was agreed upon and adopted. Countries supported the implementation of The Joint Ministerial Statement. RPOA-

IUU participating countries also recommended the Joint Ministerial Statement of re-commitment be discussed for adoption in a Ministerial Meeting. Indonesia suggested this could happen in-person and in Indonesia. Countries agreed in-principle but noted it would be difficult to get all responsible Ministers in one place for such a meeting, and that a virtual meeting may be an alternative. The Secretariat would follow up on potential arrangements. The summary document and the latest version of the Joint Statement is available in **Annex 31**.

4.9. Brief Recall on Commitment by RPOA-IUU CCM on Vessels Without Nationality

RPOA-IUU participating countries agreed to adopt, support, and proceed with the implementation of the Commitment by RPOA-IUU CCM on Vessels Without Nationality. RPOA-IUU participating countries also recommended The Commitment by RPOA-IUU CCM on Vessels Without Nationality be discussed for adoption in the Ministerial Meeting. The summary document and the agreed commitment document is available in **Annex 32**.

4.10. The progress of ToR on Data Sharing Mechanism Working Group

RPOA-IUU participating countries agreed to establish a working group dedicated to designing and developing the ToR on a data sharing mechanism. RPOA-IUU participating countries agree to assign the RPOA-IUU Secretariat to cooperate with international organizations/ agencies to develop the ToR on Data Sharing Mechanism Working Group. The ToR on the Data Sharing Mechanism Working Group is available in **Annex 33**.

5. RPOA-IUU Workplan

5.1. Review the Progress of the RPOA-IUU Workplan 2022

The progress of the RPOA-IUU Workplan 2022 had been reviewed. Countries provided input and feedback on the progress. The progress of RPOA-IUU Workplan 2022 is in **Annex 34**.

5.2. Development of RPOA-IUU Work Plan 2023

The secretariat circulated the draft of RPOA-IUU Work Plan 2023 and invited countries to provide feedback on the draft. Countries, the secretariat, advisory bodies, and observers would work together to implement the RPOA-IUU Work Plan 2023. The draft of RPOA-IUU Work Plan 2023 is shown in **Annex 35**.

6. 2023 Meeting

6.1. Host for Next RPOA-IUU CC Meeting

Timor-Leste's delegates expressed a kind offer to be the host country for the 16th RPOA-IUU CCM. Countries agreed that the upcoming CCM would be held in Timor-Leste. Australia's delegates proposed a schedule for the RPOA-IUU CCM host country, noting previous host countries as follows:

Year	Host country	Year	Proposed host country
2008	Philippines	2023	Timor-Leste
2009	Indonesia	2024	Philippines
2010	Viet Nam	2025	Viet Nam
2011	Cambodia	2026	Singapore

2012	Singapore	2027	Malaysia
2013	Malaysia	2028	Brunei Darussalam
2014	Australia	2029	Thailand
2015	Brunei Darussalam	2030	Papua New Guinea
2016	Thailand	2031	Timor-Leste
2017	Papua New Guinea	2032	Indonesia
2018	Indonesia	2033	Cambodia
2019	Cambodia	2034	Australia
2020	Secretariat-virtual		
2021	Secretariat-virtual		
2022	Australia		

6.2. Hosts for Next RPOA-IUU MSC Sub-regional Group Meetings

RPOA-IUU participating countries agree that RPOA-IUU GoT MCS sub-regional group meeting could be possibly held in 2023. Malaysia's delegates offered to be the host country for RPOA-IUU SEASCS and SSS MCS sub-regional group meeting in 2023, subject to high-level approval. RPOA-IUU ATS MCS sub-regional groups Arafura and Timor Seas noted that the next meeting will be held March 2023, with the location to be subject to further confirmation from RPOA-IUU ATS MCS sub-regional group.

6.3. Arrangements for Ministerial Meeting

The participating countries agree to work toward the Ministerial Meeting that could be held in 2023. In response to suggestions, concerns were raised about the practicality of hosting all responsible Ministers in-person at the same time, given their busy schedules. The decision on the Ministerial Meeting, host country, format and the agenda for the Ministerial Meeting will be further discussed in the forthcoming CM.

The 2023 RPOA-IUU Meetings' summary document is presented in **Annex 36**.

6.4. CM, Workshop, Training agenda for 2023

The RPOA-IUU Secretariat would facilitate a consultative meeting, workshop, and training in 2023.

7. Finalization and summary report

7.1. Information about Work Plan and report

RPOA-IUU Secretariat informed that the final work plan and the summary report will be circulated in early 2023. RPOA-IUU participating countries to review the draft and give comments, inputs and suggestions within 3 weeks after receiving the draft.

8. Other Business

8.1. SEA-IUU Fishing Program

Australia's delegates explained Australia's combating IUU-Fishing and Promoting Sustainable Fisheries in Southeast Asia Program. The program is a 5-year initiative (running from 2022 to 2026) that specifically targets the ASEAN member states and the RPOA-IUU participating countries. This program is managed by Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), with the support from Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA), and Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Association (CSIRO). The objective of the program is to improve regional Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS), and strengthen regional cooperation by also enhancing gender inclusivity in fisheries management and MCS. The SEA-IUU fishing program will be implemented through four components, MCS training course; Officer Exchange Program; Targeted Capacity Building Support; Southeast Asia Regional Innovation Fund for Fishing (SEA-RIFF). Eight RPOA-IUU participating countries have expressed their interest to participate program.

Australia will consult with RPOA-IUU participating countries on the RPOA-IUU Secretariat's role in regional activities. The participating countries assign the RPOA-IUU secretariat to circulate a draft of non-binding cooperation concept note between the RPOA-IUU Secretariat and DAFF as country coordinator for the SEA IUU fishing program. The summary document and the presentation are in **Annex 37**.

8.2. Introduction on UK-led IUU Fishing Alliance

Australia's delegates reported that they have been approached to join the UK/US/Canada IUU Fishing Action Alliance Pledge. Australia's delegates emphasized that Australia is not yet part of the pledge and seeks views from the RPOA-IUU Secretariat and other RPOA-IUU participating countries. Australia's delegates also informed the main objectives of the pledge include international agreement implementation, effective MCS activities, and transparency and data sharing. Australia's delegates also added that it may be worth discussing the merits of the RPOA-IUU joining the pledge as a bloc.

RPOA-IUU participating countries took note of the general objective of UK-led IUU Fishing Alliance presented by the Australian's delegates. The RPOA-IUU participating countries assign RPOA-IUU Secretariat to explore further information regarding the UK-led IUU Fishing Alliance. Further discussion on this initiative with RPOA-IUU participating countries will be held by the RPOA-IUU Secretariat and Australia, if required. A brief of the pledge explanation can be found in **Annex 38**.

9. Closing Session

All of the RPOA-IUU participating countries delivered short closing statements. RPOA-IUU participating countries conveyed their gratitude to Australia as the host country for the 15th RPOA-IUU Coordination Committee Meeting and Indonesia for continuing their commitment as the host of the RPOA-IUU secretariat. The participating countries also expressed their commitment to continue to cooperate to combat IUU fishing under the framework of RPOA-IUU. The summary of countries closing statement can be found in **Annex 39**.