



PACIFIC ISLAND FISHERIES - ENFORCEMENT

REGIONAL MONITORING, CONTROL, SURVEILLANCE

With an area of 30 million square kilometers, or over 10 per cent of the Earth's surface, and limited public government and policing resources, monitoring, control and surveillance of illegal fishing in the region is a significant challenge. However, Pacific Islands have developed a number of region-wide tools to assist them including regional surveillance operations, the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) Observer Program, FFA Vessel Monitoring System, FFA license information list and staff training and support to Pacific Islands States regarding the relevant regional decision making bodies, notably the Technical Compliance Committee of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).

Pacific Islands maintain national licencing authorities and continue to strengthen their compliance functions through stronger sea and air patrols and the use of the FFA Vessel Monitoring System. To address the management gap on the high seas, a group of Pacific Island countries who are Parties to the Nauru Agreement decided in 2008 to close two high seas pockets as a condition of their licensing arrangements to deter illegal fishing and strengthen national fisheries management.

Within their zones, Pacific Islands undertake national legal and policy reforms necessary for the ratification of the Convention and implementation of measures applied by the WCPFC. Some key elements of the Commission's compliance framework, including high seas boarding and inspection, a regional observer programme and a Commission satellite-based high seas remote tracking Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) have been agreed and are in early stages of implementation, often with staging.

Pacific Islands have contributed fully to these outcomes. Most of the Commission's measures to do with monitoring, control and surveillance are either based on proposals from FFA members or build on existing FFA arrangements to broaden them from Pacific Islands only to the entire Western and Central Pacific Ocean. For example, the WCPFC's VMS is operated through the same facility as the FFA VMS and based largely on FFA standards and the start-up of the WCPFC observer programme is based on Pacific Islands' existing national observer programmes.

The Pacific Islands Oceanic Fisheries Management Project contributes to enforcement capacity in the region by supporting regional decision making and building training and enforcement capacity at the national level.