

New Zealand comments on Australian proposal for the provision of operational data

New Zealand generally supports the proposal on the provision of fisheries-dependent data, and notes providing operational-level data is consistent with what might be considered 'best practice' internationally.

The Joint Tuna RFMOs Meeting of Experts to Share Best Technical Practices on the Provision of Scientific Advice that took place in Barcelona in 2010 noted that fine-scale operational data should be made available in a timely manner to support stock assessment work, and confidentiality concerns should be addressed through RFMOs' rules and procedures for access, protection, and security of data.

Likewise, CCSBT's performance review self-assessment noted that the ability to comprehensively analyse fisheries data would be significantly improved if such data was provided at an operational level. Specific recommendations included that:

- clear standards are set of the level of detail and the type of data provided by members, in order to ensure the science process has the information it requires
- appropriate data which meets the minimum UNFSA requirements are collected from all Members and Cooperating Non-Members.
- Commercial confidentiality should no longer limit the access to data within the CCSBT. Members should make every effort to ensure that domestic constraints on data provision will not undermine the conservation and management efforts by CCSBT.
- Members and Cooperating Non-Members fully comply with the confidentiality agreements and provisions within the CCSBT.¹

In the past, some concerns have arisen about how obligations to provide such data would interlink with Members' domestic requirements and regulations (in particular in relation to the confidentiality of such information, and the timing of reporting obligations). In addition, the provision of such information may be limited by its availability (e.g. for developing countries where the infrastructure for collecting fisheries data is still being developed). In order to reach the agreement of all members, the draft resolution needs to accommodate these concerns. For example, the resolution may need to be accompanied by a staged programme for improving the quality and availability of fisheries data where this is currently a limiting factor.

In relation to concerns about data confidentiality and/or domestic laws on how data is collected and used, New Zealand notes it has been able to resolve these concerns for its own fishery. Recently some Members have used alternative means of

¹ Report of the Performance Review Working Group, 3 - 4 July 2008, Canberra, Australia

making the data available to the scientific process, which has been valuable in interpreting such data as CPUE indices, particularly where information on both target and non-target catches is available. Nonetheless, it is recommended Members attempt to find a lasting resolution to their concerns about the provision of operational level data, including through application of the recently-agreed rules and procedures for the protection, access to, and dissemination of data compiled by the CCSBT. It is hoped that the draft Australian proposal can be used as a basis for coming to this resolution.