As of 13 August 2024

Summary Report
The 2nd Focus Group Discussion on Data-sharing Mechanism
1 July 2024`
Via Zoom Platform

General Overview

The first discussion of the data-sharing mechanism was held in Dili, Timor-Leste on October 25, 2023. The discussion aimed to initiate the development of policies and guidelines for the mechanism. During the second discussion, some countries suggested holding another meeting to reconfirm and proceed with the consensus-driven approach for data-sharing as a priority. Based on this suggestion, the RPOA-IUU secretariat with support from USAID SuFia Ts will conduct the second discussion of the RPOA-IUU data-sharing mechanism development.

The 2nd Focus Group Discussion on the Data-sharing Mechanism was held on July 1, 2024, via Zoom Platform. 6 of 11 participating countries attended the discussion and shared their valuable insights and ideas regarding the need for a regional data-sharing mechanism to combat IUU fishing. Mr Eko Rudianto, a Vice Executive Director of the RPOA-IUU Secretariat and Mr Farid Ma'ruf, a SuFia TS expert facilitated the discussion.

Session 1. Introduction

The representative of the RPOA-IUU secretariat, Ms Dita Primaoktasa, presented the objectives and the expected outputs of the activity. She mentioned that the discussion was expected to compile the highlights from countries regarding the importance of data-sharing and to discuss the data type to be shared among countries. She informed that the agenda included several key activities: a) refresh on the Adopted Summary Report of the 16th CCM; b) review of the Regional Data Sharing Mechanism Concept; and c) discussions on convincing RPAO-IUU participating countries to participate in the data-sharing mechanism. She also highlighted thai data-sharing among countries to address IUU issues has always been a challenge, and one of the reasons is that there is no consensus on how data will be shared.

Session 2. A brief refresh on the adopted summary report of the 16th CCM

In this session, Mr Eko Rudianto presented the outcome of the discussion on the previous CCM and reaffirmed the commitment established on October 25, 2023, in Dili, Timor-Leste. Key outcomes from this initial discussion included the formulation of the terms of reference (ToR) for the data-sharing mechanism working group and the activity roadmap. Participating countries agreed to establish a dedicated working group and appoint focal points to coordinate this initiative and it will be incorporated into the 2024 RPOA-IUU Work Plan. Mr Eko Rudianto expressed his message about the intention to develop a roadmap which will be presented at the next CCM in Manila, The Philippines.

Session 3. The importance of the data-sharing mechanism

This session was initiated by presenting the outcome of the discussion from the initial meeting in Dili, Timor-Leste—the initial meeting aimed to revive the development of the data-sharing mechanism. The representative of USAID SuFia TS explained that the workshop consists of three sessions which include the concept of the data-sharing mechanism, the formulation of the terms of reference of the data-sharing mechanism working group, and the initial discussion of the development of the road map.

It was mentioned that a data-sharing policy is important for several reasons. It can promote openness about how the data is collected, used, and shared and streamline data management process within organizations. The discussion also identified the challenges in the data-sharing mechanism, ranging from technological disparity and interoperability, data integration, training and capacity-building, privacy and security concerns to the legal and regulatory framework.

The representative of USAID SuFia TS elaborated on the table of the RPOA-IUU participating countries' status of the data security and protection laws. The table indicated that all participating countries have developed and set out the protection of data storage, local data technology and services, and data localization. Those efforts have entered into force. He listed the type of data for fisheries management. It includes strategic, tactical, and emotional. Strategic data is used for long-term planning and high-level decision-making. Meanwhile, tactical data is used for medium-term planning and management decisions. Lastly, operational data is used for day-to-day management and immediate decision-making.

He added several reasons for implementing the data-sharing mechanism to help operations for combating IUU fishing. It can help identify suspicious patterns of vessels. A shared database of the registered vessels will help identify unauthorized vessel and blacklisted vessels. It was concluded that a robust data sharing mechanism is essential for fisheries managers and authorities to combat IUU Fishing effectively. By facilitating a secure, timely exchange of critical information across borders, while respecting national regulations, it enables swift, coordinated responses to threats and significantly enhances regional maritime governance.

Conclusions from the discussion session:

- Australia's representative shared insight about the capacity differences of each country in implementing the data-sharing mechanism based on Slido result from the initial discussion in Dili, Timor-Leste, due to diverse data standardization and integration and legal framework. He also conveyed that he finds it difficult to visualize the mechanism and framework and suggested that the mechanism can be aligned with the sub-regional working groups. This is because one of the cooperation activities in the sub-regional working groups is the intensification of data/information sharing;
- Malaysia's representative shared the bureaucratic system in Malaysia in which the data-sharing mechanism is under the Malaysia Coast Guard so it upholds stringent privacy and

confidentiality. He also added that the data category under operational and strategic is important to combat IUU fishing;

- Timor-Leste's representative shared his progress in developing communication and information technology for sharing the data. She also elaborated on the ASEAN Network on IUU fishing (AN-IUU) upcoming activities which will be a valuable platform for Timor-Leste to learn from other countries how to share the data.

Response from the USAID SuFia TS's representative

- The establishment of protocol, guidelines, and law is important to achieve the ultimate goal of the data-sharing mechanism. The guidelines should be integrated with the existing objectives of the RPOA-IUU. The context of guidelines should be determined;
- Strategic data could be presented in several forums and meetings**;**
- The activity of real-time fisheries intelligence can be shared by using technology;
- Fish landing and processing and catch reports (e.g. e-log book systems) can be considered as one of the data thai could be shared under the RPOA-IUU mechanism.

Session 4. An in-depth and holistic discussion on the need for the development of a data-sharing mechanism

Mr Eko Rudianto presented real-case incidents and he illustrated the practical implications of our findings and reinforced the importance of operational data-sharing in addressing IUU fishing challenges. He also explained the asked assigned to the Working Group which encompassed endorsing its establishment and ToR, appointing focal points, facilitating a subsequent session overseen by the Secretariat with backing from partners such as USAID SuFiA TS, and drafting and presenting a roadmap for the data-sharing mechanism. The document outlined various milestones, including presenting initial discussion outcomes, confirming the formation of the Working Group, appointing focal points, selecting leadership roles during the Consultative Meeting, conducting detailed talks on the necessity of the data-sharing mechanism, formulating and reviewing a draft roadmap, and presenting the finalized roadmap and action plan for endorsement at the CCM.

Conclusions from the discussion session:

- Countries raised a question regarding the type of data to be shared and the mechanism that should be developed for this initiative;
- Countries who attended the discussion agreed to support the follow-up activities of the data-sharing mechanism, such as the development of a roadmap;
- The RPOA-IUU secretariat said that the mechanism will be complementary and not duplicative. It requires further discussion with countries;
- Papua New Guinea and Australia are not part of the Regional Fishing Vessels Record (RFVR). They shared information with Global Fishing Watch (GFW);

- Some countries agreed that operational data-sharing will be more effective and the mechanism should focus and integrate with sub-regional working groups. The operational data includes catch documentation, vessel record, VMS data, and case-by-case basis;
- Some countries agreed that the data-sharing mechanism should be at the regional level;
- All countries agreed with the shared timeline and will support the follow-up activities for the data-sharing mechanism;
- The next step is the selection of Chair and Vice Chair in the consultative meeting;
- Singapore's representative shared their concern about data privacy and regulation and suggested that the mechanism should not be duplicative;
- Indonesia's representative suggested developing the terms of reference of the Working Group.

The meeting also featured a detailed discussion on developing a data sharing mechanism, concluding with next steps and a closing session. Overall, the session aimed to foster regional cooperation in data sharing to combat IUU fishing, emphasizing the importance of consensus and collaboration among participating countries.