Current performance of a fishery control system applied to Far East pollock fisheries

Sustainable Fisheries Partnership

STUDY OBJECTIVES

1. Consider operation of a fishery control system as it applied to pollock fisheries at a scale of monitoring fishing activities of vessels and their catches from the point of harvesting to the point of landing and trade.

2. Consider whether the system operates effectively in order to ensure that -

- Fishing is carried out in full accordance with all fishing regulations in force, i.e. not only those related to target species quotas, fishing areas and seasons; and

- Verifiable fishery monitoring data are collected timely and consistently from the point of harvest to the point of landing and trade.

3. Map and evaluate (drawing on published information and field research) the operation of the regualtory institutions responsible for the operation of the fishery control system.

The fishery monitoring and control system is based on one core-source of information – Daily Vessel Reports (DVRs). Information submitted in DVRs is complemented by a continuous stream of VMS vessel position data, and data from at-sea and port inspections.

The hub of the system is the Kamchatka Fishery Monitoring Centre with the following two major functions:

Satellite-based vessel monitoring (VMS), including quality control of vessel position data; and

Monitoring quality of DVR data, including their checks for 'syntax' errors and systematic analyses for 'semantic' errors.

In terms of its role in fishery control, the second most important organisation is the Maritime Inspection of the North-East Border Control and Coast Guard Division, Federal Security Service. In January 2009, the maritime Inspection also participates in exercising governmental control duties in newly established maritime ports.

On fisheries control matters, the Territorial FAR Department is responsible for the issue of fishing permits and amendments to permits issued during the fishing season. The Department also takes some part in processing 15-days operational and statistical reports.

Performance of the fishery monitoring and control system in 2009

Favourable outcome of fishery management is reported

BAMR-ROLIZ corporate system of catch verification operates in a well-organised and transparent fashion

However, some problems persist and require actions both at governmental and commercial sector levels:

- Fishing by FOC vessels
- Misreporting of catches and vessel positions
- Catches of undersized fish above the limits allowed
- Potential discard of by-catches of low-value fish species

- Conclusions
- The study highlighted several potential and apparent shortcomings in the system, which could negatively affect its capability to meet the above-mentioned objectives and, consequently, the associated MSC assessment criteria.
- Formally, the national Fishing Industry Monitoring System (FIMS) contains all of the required mechanisms for effective fishery monitoring and control. Currently, the system is primarily focused on the collection, processing and analyses of catch and fish production data. An overall performance of FIMS is still to be demonstrated, in particular, that it work effectively to ensure that:
  - **Fishing is carried out in full accordance with all fishing regulations in force, i.e. not only those related to target species quotas, fishing areas and seasons**
  - **The system relies mainly on one source of consistent information Daily Vessel Reports (DVRs). The DVR format, content and associated procedures need to be updated, in particular, to meet requirement for catch data verification from the point of harvesting to landing and trade.**

- **Conclusions (continued)**

- **The above requirement closely relate to the following DVR potential shortcomings:**
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Application of electronic logbooks on fishing and fishing transport vessels is still in early stages of development. An absence of electronic logbooks does not allow for an automatic generation of DVRs, i.e. a condition which should ensure that both DVRs and logbooks contain and maintain the same records**.**

The use of electronic signatures by vessel masters to sign DVRs is not yet in place. Without a certified e-signature, DVR does not support the required legally-based interaction between vessel owners and fishery control administration

DVR processing procedures practically allow for almost endless corrections of DVR-reported-data. The DVR regulations contain neither acceptable ranges of corrections, nor any deadlines for such action.

- Conclusions (continued)

- **The most common practice for estimating daily catches on board is not by direct weight or volume measurement of each catch but by recalculating raw fish weight from the fish product on board.**
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- A lack of full integration of regional fishery monitoring databases into a single multi-functional network slows down considerably a timely and in-depth interaction between all participants of the fishery control and monitoring network. A lack of integration could seriously diminish the system capability for real-time processing of data which should be required for a reliable verification of fish and fish products at the point of landing or export clearance.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that, in preparing further documentation for the final MSC assessment, the Russia Pollock Association should consider taking into account the shortcomings identified, in particular, regarding:

- **Lack of verification that fishing was carried out in full accordance with all fishing regulations in force, i.e. not only those related to quotas, fishing areas and seasons.**
- **DVR content, format and associated procedures.**
- **Use of electronic signatures by vessel masters to sign DVRs.**
- **Use of electronic logbooks, in particular, for automated generation of DVRs.**
- **Full integration of regional fishery monitoring databases into a single multi-functional network**

Final Remarks

Most recent initiatives on MSC and CE matters

Fisheries Sector –

The Fishery Act should incorporate a special Article dealing with problems of IUU fishing, in particular, by Flags of Convenience (FOC) vessels.

Government –

Plans for information exchange between maritime port administrations and the Fishing Monitoring Centre, in particular, regarding changes in fishing vessel ownership and fishing vessel-charter agreements.

Plans for the conduct of a pilot project in the Far East to develop and test new formats of information exchange network between all governmental fishery control bodies.