RECORD OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE SADC MCSCC OPERATIONAL TASK FORCE

17 and 18 June 2024

Maputo, Mozambique

In 2001, the Heads of State or Government of the *Southern African Development Community (SADC)* signed the *SADC Protocol on Fisheries*. This landmark Protocol has been a steppingstone for region-wide commitment to fisheries cooperation, with the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing as one of the main targets.

This target was reiterated by SADC Ministers responsible for marine fisheries in 2008, through the *Statement of Commitment on IUU Fishing*, which called for the creation of a regional monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) Centre. This commitment materialised in 2017 through the *Charter Establishing the Regional Fisheries MCS Coordination Centre (MCSCC)*, known as the *MCSCC Charter*, which came into force on 8 April 2023. With this, State Parties to the MCSCC Charter established the SADC's MCS Centre in Maputo, Mozambique as an international organisation and an autonomous and self-accounting institution of the SADC.

A key element of the MCSCC's mechanism is the *MCSCC Operational Task Force (OTF)*. The Task Force's actions, decisions and recommendations are intended to support and facilitate the realisation of commitments made by the SADC towards a common future where responsible and sustainable fisheries are protected to enhance food security, generate economic opportunities and alleviate poverty.

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1. Introduction and opening

After the adoption of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Fisheries in 2001 and the Statement of Commitment on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in 2008, the Charter for the Establishment of the SADC Regional Fisheries Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Coordination Centre (MCSCC) entered into force in April 2023. This new milestone enabled the formalisation of the MCSCC Operational Task Force (OTF) for regional cooperation against IUU fishing, consolidating an informal process that SADC Member States had been building for some years.

The second meeting of the MCSCC OTF, also referred to as the Task Force, was held in the city of Maputo on 17 to 18 June 2024. It was attended by 36 delegates from 12 State Parties to the MCSCC Charter: Republic of Angola, Kingdom of Eswatini, Kingdom of Lesotho, Republic of Madagascar, Republic of Malawi, Republic of Mozambique, Republic of Namibia, Republic of Seychelles, Republic of South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Republic of Zambia and Republic of Zimbabwe. It was also attended by the SADC Secretariat, the Interim Project Management Unit (IPMU), the Regional Technical Team (RTT) of the MCSCC and representatives from partners to the MCSCC: Benguela Current Convention (BCC), Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC), Stop Illegal Fishing (SIF), TRAFFIC, Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) and FishFORCE Academy. The list of participants is provided in Annex 7.2. The meeting was kindly supported with resources from projects of the MCSCC including Oceans Vigilance, funded by Oceans 5; the SWIO Fisheries Programme "Improving Governance, Livelihoods and Ecosystems", funded by GIZ; and the FishFORCE Academy, funded by Norad.

1.2 Opening session

The meeting was chaired by the Chairperson of the SADC MCSCC OTF, Manuel Bengui Tungo, Head of the Department of Information and Monitoring of Fishing Activities (MONICAP), National Fisheries and Aquaculture Inspection Service of the Government of the Republic of Angola. Mr. Tungo greeted all participants and reiterated the significance of the meeting, underscoring that the Task Force is a regional entity aimed at promoting regional collaboration against IUU fishing, and at supporting the standardisation of operational procedures for fisheries management across the region.

Below: Victor Minde Zimba
National Directorate of Police and Cooperation, Maputo, Mozambique

The meeting was opened by the representative of the Government of the Republic of Mozambique that hosted the meeting, Victor Minde Zimba, Acting Director of National Directorate of Police and Cooperation. Mr. Zimba welcomed the meeting participants on behalf of the Ministry of the Sea and Inland Waters. He highlighted the importance of regional commitment to combat IUU fishing and its challenges for marine biodiversity and food security. He commended the role played by the Task Force to strengthen human and institutional capacity to address these threats, and to promote the sharing of international best practices tailored to the regional context.

He extended his gratitude to the SADC Secretariat, the SADC Ministers responsible for fisheries, the IPMU, and all officials and partners involved in making the MCSCC Charter operational. He welcomed the establishment of the MCSCC in Maputo as a source of pride for Mozambique and as an important milestone reflecting over two decades of regional commitment. He highlighted that the hosting of the MCSCC is also in line with the blue economy objectives of Mozambique.

The IPMU Coordinator presented the meeting agenda, which was adopted.

1.3 Revisiting OTF 1 – outcomes and decisions

The representative of the SADC Secretariat, Motseki Hlatshwayo, Technical Advisor for fisheries, started by expressing his gratitude to Victor Minde Zimba, Acting Director of the National Directorate of Police and Cooperation in the host country, for taking the time to attend the meeting. He highlighted the long-standing relationship and collaboration between the SADC Secretariat, the Government of the Republic of Mozambique and Mozambique's maritime authority (INAMAR).

He also thanked Isaías Elísio Mondlane, Chairman of the INAMAR Board and representative of the Republic of Mozambique in the SADC MCSCC Regional Technical Team (RTT) for his crucial role in driving the operationalisation process of the MCSCC. Dr. Hlatshwayo also congratulated Mozambique on starting the physical building of the MCSCC. "With these achievements, I can now confidently say that the region has an MCS centre", he said.

He recalled that the process of operationalising the MCSCC after the Charter establishing the MCSCC was approved in August 2017 in Pretoria was driven by a RTT, composed of representatives of selected Member States appointed by Ministers of Fisheries in November 2017. This team has been meeting three times a year to review progress. It has been pivotal in obtaining the signatures for the Charter, establishing institutional arrangements, as well as providing technical support to the MCSCC IPMU. The RTT enabled the setting up of the Task Force, which forms one of the technical structures of the MCSCC and plays a crucial role in ensuring that operations are carried out effectively.

Additionally, Dr. Hlatshwayo acknowledged the support and contribution of the various partners of the MCSCC, including Fish Force Academy, SIF, TMT, TRAFFIC and WWF who have contributed to policy work, implementation of agreements, capacity building, and development of tools to combat IUU fishing. He also expressed gratitude to the African Development Bank for allocating funds to the MCSCC. Mobilising funds is critical, as so far only 0.9 percent of the budget from the SADC Secretariat was allocated to the MCSCC.

At the outset, Motseki Hlatshwayo expressed gratitude to the IPMU and SIF for preparing the record of the inaugural meeting of the OTF. He encouraged Member States to regularly review the record to see what has been agreed upon and what remains to be achieved. Several recommendations from the first meeting need to be presented to the newly appointed Board of Directors (BoD), and he called on the Task Force members to revisit and agree on the recommendations.

Motseki Hlatshwayo
Technical Advisor, SADC Secretariat, Botswana

Key interventions from Dr. Hlatshwayo concerned the following aspects:

- it is important to align recommendations to the objectives of the MCSCC Charter and to continually review the services provided by the MCSCC to track progress.

- the Terms of Reference have been adapted according to the recommendations made at OTF 1, for finalisation at the present meeting before being presented to the Board of Directors.

- it was recalled that the Basecamp platform is a key tool of the MCSCC to provide information exchange services and to enable Member States to communicate, in line with agreements made in the Charter and the Information Code. All OTF members should be registered and actively contribute on Basecamp. It was emphasised that SIF and TMT are available to provide technical assistance through the MCSCC.

- inland fisheries countries were called on to share information on their IUU fishing incidents, to increase the understanding of IUU fishing issues in inland waters and the measures required to address them.

- cooperation should be sought beyond the MCSCC countries, in particular with neighbouring countries and other relevant regions (e.g., West Africa).

- capacity-building

  - it was recalled that the MCSCC, in collaboration with its partners, is currently offering capacity building to Member States. The importance of collaboration with those partners was emphasised.

  - several countries, including Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa, Angola, and Namibia, are already benefiting from capacity-building. The next trainings are scheduled to take place in Tanzania, Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar, and Seychelles.

  - at OTF 1, it was suggested that capacity building on MCS should be conducted for inland States in 2024. It was suggested to strengthen linkages between such trainings for inland States and the current pilots being conducted through other projects.

  - it was proposed to explore the possibility to build capacity of the inland countries with regards to Lacey Act[1] provisions – as the question is currently discussed for West Coast Rock Lobster. This could be added to capacity-building plans for the region.

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[1] The main objective of the Lacey Act (US legislation) is to enable prosecution of actions that are crimes in the country of origin, even if those actions are not unlawful in the country where they are committed – *https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC153636/*

1.4   MCSCC activities update

Since the first OTF meeting, States and partners of the MCSCC have reported over 64 incidents of possible IUU fishing on the MCSCC's communications platform, Basecamp. This tool allows States, the MCSCC, and technical partners to exchange information securely.

Maria Eulália Vales provided a brief overview of the SADC MCSCC, as an entity mandated to coordinate measures to improve fisheries MCS to combat IUU fishing in the SADC region.

She recalled that "Fisheries MCS Data and Information Sharing" and "Regional Fisheries MCS Portal" were established as priority services of the MCSCC. The IPMU assists SADC Member States in routine monitoring of their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) through the online tool SeaVision. SIF and TMT provide the IPMU with technical support on those activities and conduct regular intelligence analysis through SeaVision and Starboard Maritime Intelligence.

Thanks to this, incidents of suspected IUU fishing were identified and follow-ups were conducted on queries from Namibia, South Africa, Kenya, Seychelles, Tanzania, Angola, and beyond the SADC region (e.g., Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa). A total of 265 data sets and information were shared through the Basecamp Platform (messages, comments, and files) until May 2024.

Activities organised through the MCSCC since the OTF 1 Meeting included:

- workshops on MCS training and Risk Assessment under the SADC Atlantic Project conducted in Durban, South Africa; Walvis Bay and Lüderitz, Namibia; and Luanda and Lobito, Angola.

- Participation in a webinar organised by the Government of the United States in collaboration with the EJF organisation to address "How do SADC and SADC MCSCC address human abuse onboard fishing vessels?", April 25, 2024.

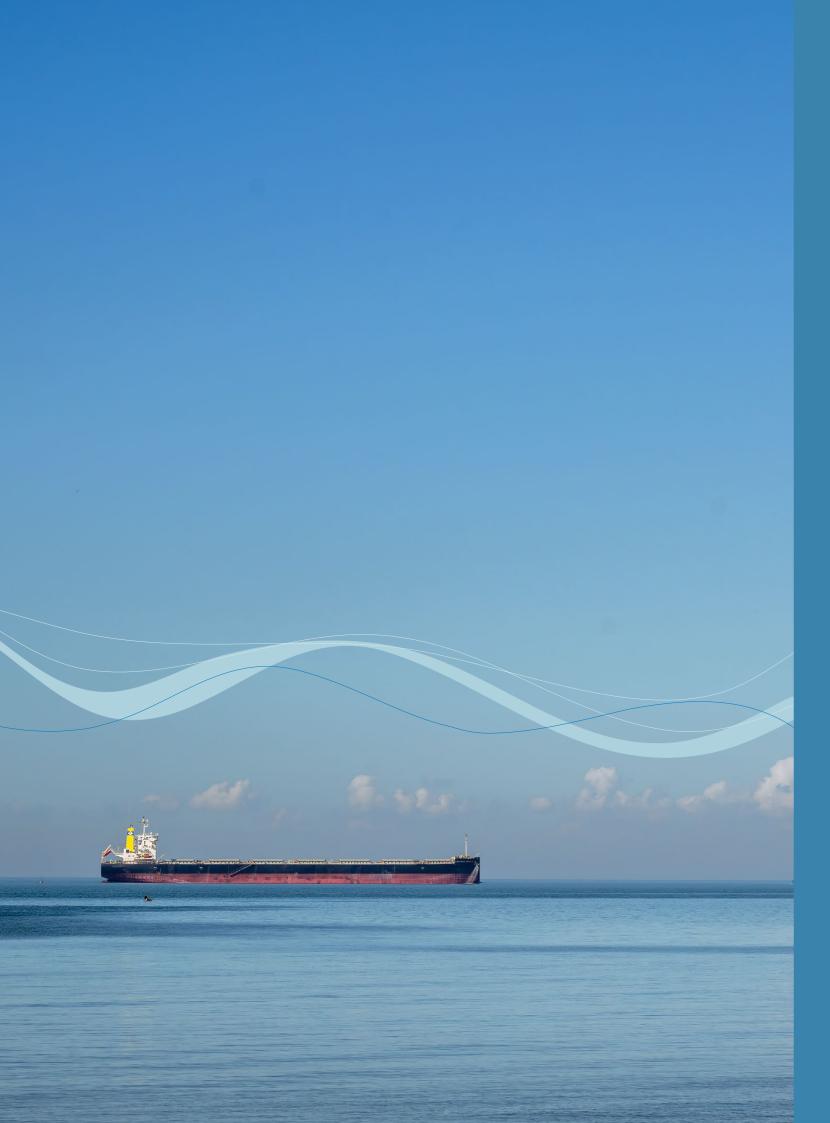Expectations of the MCSCC for 2024 include:

- proactive interaction of MCS experts through the OTF and on Basecamp, including inland States;

- knowledge sharing with other Member States on capacity acquired under the SADC Atlantic Project and Oceans Vigilance; and

- coordination of mechanisms among Regional MCS/Maritime Safety Centres in Africa.

Maria Eulália Vales
and Hernani Pequenino
SADC MCSCC IPMU

2. Updates by MCSCC State Parties

Focal persons from the Task Force Members provided updates on activities since the last OTF meeting. Questions and country-specific points of discussions are included following the summaries.

2.1   Angola

MCS activities, achievements and challenges

Angola's commitment to reduce IUU fishing is demonstrated by increased and more stringent measures taken against IUU fishing cases. Angola is working on updating its fisheries legislation to make IUU offenses criminal; currently, fishing offenses are handled administratively. In terms of training, Angola welcomed support from SIF through the MCSCC, with two risk assessment trainings in Luanda and Lobito (February 2024) followed by a coaching session in June 2024.

IUU issues and incidents

The support provided by the MCSCC's technical partner (SIF) has already showed significant effects and allowed Angola to take actions against Angolan licensed fishing vessels that committed IUU fishing activities.

Needs and suggestions

Angola's needs and suggestions include:

- implementing continuous staff training programmes.
- harmonising Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) for better data exchange.
- developing an alert system and negative list for vessels engaged in recurring IUU fishing activities.
- coordinating joint patrolling activities.

Manuel Bengui Tungo
MONICAP, Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR), Angola

2.2 Eswatini

MCS activities, achievements and challenges

With regards to marine issues, the responsibility for fishing vessel registration lies with the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MoWT), rather than the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), as it had been previously understood. The MoWT has engaged an Indian company for vessel registration, including fishing vessels. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is in the process of developing a framework for Eswatini's participation in the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

Queen Chazile Vilakati
Ministry of Agriculture,
Eswatini

Some issues pertaining to maritime concerns include:

- limited awareness of high-level collaboration among the respective ministries.
- challenges in expediting collaboration and decision-making within the ministries.
- identified gaps in capacity on maritime issues.

In terms of inland fisheries persisting issues include:

- high occurrences of illegal fishing.
- the revised Fisheries and Aquaculture Act of 2019, Part VI, which prescribes penalties for IUU offences, has been finalised, but its implementation is pending.
- scarcity of both financial and non-financial resources, such as the absence of infrastructure near large water dams for inspectors during inspection; and resources for conducting fish surveys to ascertain fish statistics and stocks.

- limited expertise in the management of inland fisheries and related activities.
- lack of budget prioritisation for MCS activities.

IUU issues and incidents

40 oil tankers utilising the Eswatini flag have been identified, seized, and subsequently deregistered. Efforts towards addressing these matters are progressing at a gradual pace, with ongoing collaboration among the relevant ministries to ensure adherence to regulations.

Needs and suggestions

Eswatini's needs and suggestions include:

- support for the investigation of fishing vessels using the Eswatini flag.
- assistance in enhancing capacity on maritime issues and inland fisheries MCS.
- financial support for the assessment of fish stocks.

2.3 Lesotho

MCS activities, achievements and challenges

The country has not been actively engaging in capture fisheries for many years. Only a few fishers with permits are allowed to catch fish using hook lines for subsistence farming in various water bodies, as commercial fishing is not permitted in Lesotho. The government provides free permits to subsistence fishers to fish in communal waters, while fishers in Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) are required to pay a fee for their fishing permits.

Mankeane Mofoti
Ministry of Agriculture,
Food Security and Nutrition,
Lesotho

Since the last meeting, activities on the MCS agenda have included:

- organisation of a joint stakeholder meeting to raise awareness of illegal fishing activities, involving the Department of Livestock-Fisheries, Department of Environment-Natural Resource, Police, and LHDA as a private entity.
- development of community forums to help monitor and report any suspected illegal fishing activity, along with spot checks on different water bodies by relevant stakeholders.

Lesotho is experiencing budgetary challenges in the implementation of MCS activities, as those were not included in the budget for 2024/2025. Despite those challenges, there is a willingness to develop relevant legislation to support those activities.

IUU issues and incidents

No issues and incidents shared.

Needs and suggestions

Lesotho's needs and suggestions include:

- assistance to stop Lesotho being used as a transit for illegal fish export.
- assistance with stopping the fishing of threatened fish species.
- facilitating the updating of the outdated legal framework.
- aiding with stopping the use of illegal fishing gear (gill nets).
- support with limited human resources.
- assistance with capacity needs for technical officers and border officials from different government departments and agencies.

2.4 Madagascar

MCS activities, achievements and challenges

Miarintsoa Rakotoarimalala
*Fisheries Monitoring Center,
Ministry of Fisheries and the Blue
Economy, Madagascar*

Madagascar is engaged in ongoing efforts to combat IUU fishing. Various surveillance measures are implemented, including maritime, terrestrial, and aerial surveillance, although the latter was discontinued in 2021 due to budgetary constraints. Additionally, Madagascar actively monitors activities at ports, within fishing industries, and in fish markets, while also implementing the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) and utilising VMS Monitoring. Madagascar's patrol resources consist of 2 patrol vessels, 11 speedboats, 5 interceptor cruisers, and 5 semi-rigid cruisers, supported by a team of 70 fisheries inspectors and 10 observers covering the extensive Malagasy coast. Madagascar has implemented community surveillance in marine protected areas (MPA), but these systems require further work.

Challenges to address IUU fishing include:

- limited human resources to cover the entire coast.
- financial constraints, including budget for operationalising patrol boats (sufficient assets, but need for financial mechanism to implement MCS activities).
- lack of national interagency coordination.
- difficulties in monitoring small-scale fisheries because of free access and monitoring constraints. According to the legislation, every fisherman must have a fisher ID; yet this is not implemented.
- limited fisheries observers (retired observers not replaced due to financial constraints).
- difficulty to set up an aerial surveillance mechanism.

IUU issues and incidents

Madagascar's intercepted 3 vessels in Malagasy waters, all Sri-Lankan flagged longliners:

- SRI-DENUWAN was caught on 19 October 2023 after receiving information from the Navy.
- RUTH BABY was caught on 24 March 2024.
- RUTH BABA 3 on 28 March 2024, during the 62nd mission for IOC-PRSP (Regional Plan for Fisheries Surveillance).

Needs and suggestions

Madagascar's needs and suggestions include:

- support with establishing an analyst team to bolster PSMA implementation.
- assistance with strengthening and diversifying regional and international cooperation.
- assistance with promoting community-based surveillance.
- support with increasing personnel such as inspectors and observers.
- providing capacity building for the inspectors and observers.
- facilitating knowledge exchange with other countries to adopt best practices in MCS and sustainable financing mechanisms.

2.5 Malawi

MCS activities, achievements and challenges

Allan Katola
*Ministry of Natural Resources
and Climate Change,
Malawi*

Malawi is a landlocked country. The small-scale fishery in Malawi is open access; and fishing in the country is mostly carried out in major rivers and lakes. The country has three major lakes, the largest being Lake Malawi. The MCS achievements that were registered in Malawi include:

- rolling out of a VMS project for small-scale fishers, which is being implemented with support from ProfishBlue and WWF. Data on the pilot is currently being collected. A main lesson learnt from the pilot is the importance of fisher sensitisation: initially, fishers thought the gadgets had cameras and thus vandalised or covered the VMS. This improved after a sensation training.
- implementation of a boat marking project to assist in monitoring of IUU.
- development of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the enforcement of fisheries regulations – these include small scale fisheries enforcement, large scale fisheries enforcement and court procedure.
- during the previous meeting in Cape Town, Malawi reported that they did not have an MCS centre, but one is currently being built with support from the African Development Bank.

Malawi faces challenges to finance its MCS activities. The country only has one reliable patrol boat stationed at the southern tip of the lake, which is insufficient given the magnitude of the lake and the need to cover five other districts.

IUU issues and incidents

During the last closed season for Lake Malawi, consistent patrolling and the MCS activities have allowed to detect an increasing number of incidents of IUU fishing. It has also been observed that there is a proliferation of illegal fishing gear coming in from neighbouring countries, necessitating greater regional cooperation with Mozambique, Zambia, and Tanzania.

Needs and suggestions

The needs and suggestions for Malawi included:

- assistance to address resource constraints, particularly in the areas of financial resources, human resources, and equipment.
- need for regional cooperation with neighbouring countries to prevent illegal fishing gears coming from neighbouring countries (Tanzania, Mozambique and Zambia).

2.6 Mozambique

MCS activities, achievements and challenges

Leonid Santana Chimarizene
*Ministry of Seas,
Inland Waters and Fisheries,
Mozambique*

Activities aimed at strengthening MCS actions in Mozambique include the operationalisation of the Maritime Surveillance Operations Coordination Centre (CEFMAR) and maritime courts, as well as the enforcement of fisheries crimes before the maritime court system. To enhance the capacity of the maritime courts to make decisions on offences, Mozambique is partnering with the Legal and Judiciary Training Center.

This partnership started a year ago and aims to provide training to prosecutors, judges, inspectors, and other relevant individuals. INAMAR assists the Public Prosecutor's Office in its work with the Maritime Courts, in accordance with the revised Fisheries Law no. 10/2022. Mozambique's OTF focal point presented a model for optimising maritime supervision in Mozambique, which would link to the MCSCC.

IUU issues and incidents

No issues and incidents shared.

Needs and suggestions

Not reported.

2.7   Namibia

MCS activities, achievements and challenges

Namibia reported 40 port visits by foreign fishing vessels, the majority (75%) from Spain, followed by Portugal (7.5%), Argentina (5%), and Angola (12.5%). Of these visits, 85% were for offloading and 15% for repairs.

Body-worn cameras (BWCs) were deployed during inspections to record vessel checks, landings, and port operations, ensuring full compliance with inspection procedures under the Fisheries Policy. Risk assessments were conducted for all foreign vessels entering Namibian ports or the EEZ, with technical support from the SADC MCSCC, focusing on ownership structures and compliance histories. Namibia also actively engages on Basecamp, sharing information and requesting assistance for background checks and intelligence exchange with other Member States.

Key MCS achievements in 2024 included participation in training courses and workshops between March and June 2024, covering risk assessment, port security, and IUU fishing crimes:

- SADC Atlantic Project trainings on risk assessment and inspection (Walvis Bay and Lüderitz, March 2024)
- International Advanced Course on Fisheries MCS (Zaragoza, Spain, May 2024)
- UNODC Training on Port Security and IUU Fisheries Crime (June 2024)

These initiatives have led to improved officer competence and confidence in handling licensing and port access requests. Namibia has prioritised the organisation of joint patrols with Angola, with high-level discussions already underway, though implementation depends on the availability of funding.

Malcolm Block
Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Namibia

IUU issues and incidents

Noteworthy IUU fishing incidents included:

- arrest of the MFV LUCIMAR in December 2023, leading to the arrest of the captain, chief engineer, and engineer under specific charges, the case is still ongoing.
- regular sightings from air patrol missions reporting instances of Angolan licensed pelagic trawlers (AVACHINSKY and OLUTORSKY) illegally entering Namibian waters.
- intrusions of fishing vessels from Angola into the Namibian EEZ prompting letters to the Angolan Fishing Authorities to request investigations into the incidents and necessary enforcement actions.

Needs and suggestions

Namibia's needs and suggestions include:

- more active engagement of MS on Basecamp and for states to treat enquiries on Basecamp as urgent, emphasising their key role in combatting IUU fishing.
- need for the MCSCC to establish contact points for engagement with other flag states.
- financial support for the planned MCS regional joint patrols.
- support to address IUU fishing on rivers, including from neighbouring states and illegal gears.

2.8   Seychelles

MCS activities, achievements and challenges

MCS activities conducted included:

- strengthened regulation of fishing activities, including through joint management areas.
- completion of the first draft of the National Plan of Action to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing (NPOA-IUU), pending Ministerial approval.
- procurement of a new patrol vessel for MCS under the SWIOFISH 3 Project.
- implementation of MCS protocols around the Mahé Plateau, allowing vessels to spend 3 to 6 days at sea with a total crew of 8 people.
- national and regional patrols conducted: 17 national missions with 8 coastal infractions found, and 22 land patrols with 10 infractions found.
- developments in the monitoring and tracking systems, including:
  - upgrade of the Themis platform to support automatic identification system (AIS) and satellite imagery data.
  - commencement of trials for drifting fish aggregating device (DFAD) tracking units (NAOS), with the receipt of 100 new terminal units in May 2024.
  - installation of tracking devices for 138 small vessels (Nemo terminals).
- ongoing electronic monitoring (EM) project with 100% coverage on all Seychelles purse seiners.

MCS staff benefited from trainings and workshops, including on vessel registration, risk assessment, license and registration, and marine domain awareness. Exchanges and visits by inspectors from the European Union (EU) and other organisations took place.

Upcoming events include exchanges in Madagascar and Mauritius through the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), and a regional Themis upgrade training in Toulouse, France in July 2024.

In 2023/2024, Seychelles entered into three new fisheries access agreements, imposing strict operating frameworks for all industrial vessels. The companies involved in the agreements are Pemba Tuna Ltd (Tanzania), Tuna Development LLC (Oman), and DongWon Industries Co. Ltd (Korea).

Julie Bibi
Seychelles Fishing Authority, Seychelles

IUU issues and incidents

Five Sri Lankan vessels suspected to be involved in IUU cases were identified and cases sent for investigation. Much IUU fishing occurs in the close season. This includes small-scale fishers (SSF) targeting protected species in MPAs. A lot of fishers come from neighbouring countries, in particular to target sea cucumbers. Many fishers have received tracking devices but have not installed them.

Needs and suggestions

Seychelles' needs and suggestions include support with:

- collection and verification of beneficial ownership.
- addressing vessels with unclear markings.
- enforcing regulations against fishing during closed seasons and targeting restricted species.
- addressing illegal fishing by neighbouring countries.
- enhancing educational awareness regarding the nemo terminals.
- addressing the limited MCS staff capacity.

Fatima Savel and
Thanduxolo Ntshangashe
*DFFE Cape Town and Durban,
South Africa*

2.9 South Africa

MCS activities, achievements and challenges

Notable achievements in the MCS domain include capacity building:

- appointment of honorary marine conservation officers (HMCO) and catch data monitors (CDM).
- permanent appointment of the MCS Chief Director.
- strengthening of the MCS legal and institutional framework:
  - review and amendments to the Marine Living Resources Act 1998.
  - establishment of Operation Phakisa, focusing on fisheries and environmental related transgressions.
  - implementation of the PSMA and establishment of the Border Management Authority (BMA) at ports, to bolster marine conservation efforts.
- trainings:
  - ongoing training programs for Fisheries Compliance Officers (FCO), such as crime scene handling and environmental management inspectorate (EMI) workshops.
  - training of fisheries officers through the South African International Maritime Institute (SAIMI) facilitated by FishFORCE.
  - risk assessment workshops supported by SIF and through the SADC Atlantic Project.
  - training workshops for prosecutors in fisheries and IUU fishing.

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) has seen a positive result from the trainings; the confidence the officers display when doing their work, and the outcomes have improved. Officials from the DFFE now perform risk assessments before a vessel arrives at port utilising the IOTC platform.

IUU issues and incidents

No issues and incidents shared.

Needs and suggestions

South Africa's needs and suggestions include:

- strengthening MCS human capacity.
- assistance in addressing challenges with hostile communities.
- enhancing cooperation with neighbouring countries in countering transport of illegal marine products.

2.10 Tanzania

MCS activities, achievements and challenges

The MCS unit in Tanzania is involved in MCS activities across the country's borders and IUU hot spots. With established zones and units, it focusses on ensuring compliance with fisheries legislation, curbing illegal fishing and fish trade, issuing licenses and permits, conducting routine inspections of fish and fishing vessels, and organising awareness training for the fishing community. Furthermore, Tanzania established the Deep Sea Fishing Authority (DSFA) to manage deep sea fishing activities within its EEZ. The authority oversees the licensing of fishing vessels and supports implementation of relevant legislation and regulations, as well as international agreements and treaties concerning deep sea fishing.

Azizi D. Mhukula
*Deep Sea Fishing Authority,
Zanzibar, Tanzania*

As a transboundary country to Lake Nyasa/Niassa/Malawi, cooperation is starting with Malawi on the piloting of a VMS system for fishing vessels operating on the lake.

It was noted that Tanzania still has not submitted instruments of ratification of the PSMA to the FAO.

IUU issues and incidents

Tanzania still experiences IUU challenges on Lake Victoria. Particularly targeted by IUU fishers are fish bladders, known as fish maws, when dried.

Needs and suggestions

Tanzania emphasised the need for increased funding, human capacity, and equipment for MCS activities, including the acquisition of a patrol vessel to monitor the EEZ. Cooperation and collaboration in terms of capacity building, information sharing, legal review, and the implementation of electronic monitoring projects were highlighted as essential for the way forward.

In particular, Tanzania's needs and suggestions include:

- support with the need for capacity building, training of staff.
- financial support with the acquisition of MCS equipment.
- collaboration with partner organisations to provide technical and legal support.
- assistance with joint patrol operations.
- support with information sharing related to IUU fishing.

Kagoli Muyangali
*Ministry of Fisheries
and Livestock,
Zambia*

2.11   Zambia

MCS activities, achievements and challenges

The MCS activities are governed by various legal frameworks, including the Fisheries Act no. 22 of 2011, which is currently being revised. Licensing is required for commercial and artisanal fishers, and fishing bans are enforced, such as the recent ban in Lake Tanganyika. This ban is now in its second year as of 2024 and has highlighted improvement in compliance.

The implementation of MCS activities involves community participation in MCS through Fisheries Management Committees (FMCs) and Fisheries Management Areas (FMAs). Additionally, fish breeding sites identified by communities are gazetted and monitored by both communities and MCS officers. The setting-up of FMCs and establishment of FMAs are supported by a range of organisations. Priorities for Zambia include:

- continuing with the establishment of fisheries management areas.
- developing fisheries management plans.
- establishing fisheries reserves.
- implementing the Blue Economy strategy and the Fisheries Act.
- continuing conducting the stock assessments.

Cooperation efforts include:

- a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Zambia and the FishFORCE Academy to enable training of the fisheries officers.
- MCS judicial dialogue with FishFORCE.
- the development of capture fisheries extension manuals.

IUU issues and incidents

No issues and incidents shared.

Needs and suggestions

Zambia's needs and suggestions include:

- assistance with inadequate staffing levels.
- support with the shortage of patrol vessels.
- support with budget constraints for MCS requirements.
- support in addressing issues with non-compliance, such as delayed acquisition of fishing licenses and the use of illegal fishing methods and gear.
- support with the need to improve skills in handling fisheries crimes.

2.12   Zimbabwe

MCS activities, achievements and challenges

MCS activities conducted included:

- ongoing second trial for VMS on Lake Kariba, with six self-powering units tailored to address IUU fishing challenges in shallow waters (until 20 meters) and boundary infringements. These self-powering units have an alarm device that sends a message to the regulatory authority in case of tampering. In the third VMS trials 10 VMS units will be installed.
- Implementation of an on-board catch reporting system for which an app has been developed. SMS and email alerts are sent to the regulatory authority in case of infringements to ensure timely reaction by law enforcement units.
- adoption of the Lake Kariba Inshore Fisheries Management plan, which is yet to be implemented. Under this, core management structures at the district (two at district level), and sub-area levels (8 sub-area fisheries associations) have been established.
- Development of the national Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy, which is yet to be passed and the Wildlife Management Authority developed a Fisheries and Aquaculture Strategy, focusing a lot on IUU fishing and MCS issues.
- There has been major progress towards finalising the signing of the MCSCC Charter.

Challenges include:

- increased collusion between illegal fishers with law enforcement officers, concerned officers are being apprehended and relieved of their duties.
- lack of joint patrols with Zambia, highlighting the need for a coordinated approach to MCS to combat illegal fishing.

IUU issues and incidents

There is an increase in IUU fishing cases – which can also be attributed to increased MCS coverage of the lake and other water bodies and availability of intelligence. A survey of kapenta fishing rigs on Lake Kariba involving counting all the fishing grids along the 281-kilometer lake, utilising two aircraft and patrol boats resulted in 60 illegal fishing vessels being apprehended, and their rigs were impounded. Procedures are now in place for ceasing and decommissioning illegal rigs.

Needs and suggestions

Zimbabwe's needs and suggestions include:

- need for an urgent combined lake-wide census on Lake Kariba, together with Zambia, to stem IUU fishing, as catches are on a downward trajectory.
- assistance to reconvene the Technical Consultation and Joint Fisheries Management Committee (JFMC) with Zambia to discuss issues affecting fisheries in Lake Kariba, especially IUU fishing.

Itai Tendaupenyu
*Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife
Management Authority,
Zimbabwe*

3. Presentations by MCSCC Partners

The SADC MCSCC has been working with partners to advance its objectives and the partners were invited to provide an overview of their activities supporting the MCSCC.

3.1 FishFORCE

The FishFORCE Academy, established in 2016 at the Nelson Mandela University actively collaborates with the SADC to promote research and innovation in the field of fisheries crime law enforcement. Activities of FishFORCE and updates since the last OTF meeting included:

Opposite:

Michael De Lange
FishFORCE, South Africa

Courses and trainings:

- specialised cross-border trainings, which will be extended to inland fisheries countries Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, and South Africa.
- registration of new courses including crime scene protection, evidence collection, basic crime scene photography using drone technology, detection of forced labour on fishing vessels, and inspection of commercial fishing vessels and training on Skylight.
- honorary Marine Conservation Officers program for coastal protection.
- workshops for the judiciary and/or prosecutors to support the effectiveness of fisheries prosecutions in Mozambique and South Africa. Further workshops planned for Namibia and Kenya.
- cross-border information sessions with communities to raise awareness about the impact of illegal fishing on society, the economy, sustainability, and the environment. The Impact of wildlife crime research report developed by FishFORCE will be used as a guide/training material.

- increased focus on inland fisheries since 2024, with Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to be signed with Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.
- increased work to address cross-border movement of marine resources into neighbouring countries, such as abalone, and on how to prosecute crimes in the country of transit. This is currently a challenge as the possession of these resources is often not considered a crime in transit countries, despite the fact that the crimes are committed in the country of origin. To address this issue, the Academy proposes the inclusion of Lacey-type provisions in the legislation of transit countries within the SADC to enable prosecution of actions that are crimes in the country of origin, even if not considered crimes in the transit country.

The Academy proposes the inclusion of Lacey-type provisions in the legislation of transit countries within the SADC to enable prosecution of actions that are crimes in the country of origin.

3.2   Stop Illegal Fishing

Stop Illegal Fishing (SIF) has supported SADC Member States for over two decades, including facilitating the Statement of Commitment (2008). It now works closely with the MCSCC, implementing several projects. Key updates since the last OTF meeting:

- **SADC Atlantic Project** (Angola, Namibia, South Africa, MCSCC – funded by the U.S. State Department):
  - **Angola:** High-level launch (February 2024) and two risk assessment trainings in Luanda and Lobito. Coaching sessions were subsequently held in Luanda in June 2024.
  - **Namibia:** Remote coaching and monitoring of inspectors were conducted, and physical training sessions were held in Walvis Bay and Lüderitz (March 2024), improving MCS and safety practices.
  - **South Africa:** Training in Durban (January 2024), strengthening inspection capacity.
  - **Outlook:** Continues under a no-cost extension until new funding is secured.

- **Oceans Vigilance Project** (all SADC coastal states, funded by Oceans 5):
  - Supporting the Regional Register of Fishing Vessels (RRFV) as per MCSCC Charter.
    - Agreement on four core RRFV requirements; endorsement pending Board approval.
    - Capacity-building workshops held; second phase pending approval.
  - Regional training on IUU fishing, safety and labour abuse (April 2024, with Pew in South Africa).
  - WWF collaboration to operationalise MCSCC functions and communication materials.
  - FAO partnership to review implementation of the IPOA-Capacity, analysing actions and overcapacity drivers.

Overall, SIF activities strengthen MCSCC operations, national capacities, and regional cooperation to combat IUU fishing.

Stop Illegal Fishing team
Botswana

3.3   World Wild Fund for Nature

Since 2017, WWF has been collaborating with the SADC Secretariat to operationalise the MCSCC Charter. They have provided technical and financial support to the IPMU and have mobilised resources for the equipment of the MCSCC. Their projects have played a role in supporting the MCSCC, including assistance in establishing services, organising meetings, building capacity, and developing relevant policy instruments. WWF's Africa Strategy impact areas between 2021-2025 include critical biodiversity areas, living landscapes, climate solutions, priority species, nature-positive finance, greening development, and engaged society.

Vincente Cossa
*WWF,
Mozambique*

Activities of WWF and updates since the last OTF meeting included:

- **Southwest Indian Ocean (SWIO) Programme** – Funded by BMZ (€1.8 million, 2019–2024), the project aims to enhance governance, livelihoods and ecosystems, and to make the SWIOFC operational and financially sustainable. Key activities include charter signing, development of the SADC MCS Regional Strategy, and establishment of priority MCS services in the region.
- **Support to SWIOFC on Regional MCS** – Funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies' Vibrant Oceans Initiative (US $300,000), this project supports the entry into force of the MCSCC and promotes fisheries transparency in Mozambique, Tanzania and Madagascar, including procurement of MCSCC office equipment and organisation of transparency dialogues.
- **PROFISHBLUE Project** – Implemented with WWF and funded by the AfDB and SADC Secretariat (US $384,000, August 2022–August 2024). The project supports VMS installation in inland countries around Lakes Malawi/Nyasa/Niassa and Kariba, providing rugged laptops and printers, and producing detailed reports on vessel activity and fishing patterns.

3.4   TRAFFIC

TRAFFIC's work aligns with the MCSCC's goals of coordinating and supporting fishery law enforcement activities, as well as enhancing national fisheries MCS capabilities.

Markus Burgener
*TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa,
South Africa*

Activities of TRAFFIC and updates since the last OTF meeting include:

- support to the MCSCC in analysing trade data: building capacity and tools for analysing fisheries trade data, supporting inter-agency collaboration and information sharing, providing information on fish product trade, and assisting with fisheries product identification.
- publication of a recent report focusing on trade in high-value marine products originating from Africa, including abalone, shark fins, fish swim bladder, and sea cucumber. This report aims to combat illegal fishing and trade practices.
- development of the SADC Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange (TWIX): TWIX, facilitated by GIZ and WWF, consists of tools to guide investigations. It supports efforts to combat illegal wildlife trade and enforce the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). TWIX has established secure mailing lists and an access-controlled database for law enforcement agencies dealing with CITES. This exchange platform currently connects fisheries focal points from Madagascar, Mauritius, and South Africa, as well as over 550 enforcement officers and 43 government agencies from 13 countries. It provides real-time information sharing, rapid assistance with identification, and facilitates networking for investigations.
- Elaboration of 3D replica shark fins for use as identification tools to combat the global issue of illegal trade in shark fins: these replicas, created from 3D scans of CITES-listed shark fins, are used to aid enforcement officials in identifying illegal shark fin trade, thus supporting efforts to combat this illegal activity.

3.5 Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre

The Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC), established in Antananarivo, Madagascar in 2016 under the EU Maritime Security Programme, addresses Somali-based piracy and broader maritime security threats in the Western Indian Ocean. It collects and shares information on violence at sea, illegal fishing, smuggling, contraband, irregular migration, and maritime safety incidents.

The Centre forms part of the Maritime Security (MASE) Programme, led by the IOC, which strengthens regional capacity to implement the Regional Strategy and Action Plan against Piracy and for Maritime Security. The RMIFC's core functions include collecting and analysing maritime data, producing safety and security reports, and supporting National Maritime Information Fusion Centres (NMIFCs) and the Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC).

The RMIFC currently has seven signatory states, with agreements open to others. It facilitates regional information exchange and joint operations with both regional and international partners.

Key recommendations from the RMIFC include:

- to develop information sharing.
- to support regional coordination efforts.
- to publish lists of licensed vessels.
- to establish joint regional patrols.
- to improve access to new technology.
- to train law enforcement agencies to inspect and prosecute fishing activities.

Although the RMIFC currently informally exchanges information with the SADC MCSCC, the establishment of a formal partnership was recommended.

Lieutenant Said Lavani
Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre, Madagascar

3.6 Benguela Current Convention

The Benguela Current Convention (BCC) Secretariat is implementing several key projects to strengthen sustainable blue economy development and marine ecosystem resilience in Angola, Namibia and South Africa:

- **Climate-Resilient Blue Economy Project** – Funded by GEF-UNDP and executed by UNDP, BCC and national ministries, this initiative promotes climate-resilient marine and coastal management, sustainable use of living resources, improved pollution control, sustainable finance, and knowledge sharing.
- **Integrated Conservation and Sustainable Use Project** – Co-financed by the EU and GIZ, this project strengthens institutional capacity, diversifies livelihoods, enhances coastal community resilience, and develops innovative financing for MPAs and conservation measures.

- **Blue Resilience Project** – Funded by UNEP-GEF and executed by BCC, GIZ and ministries, this project enhances climate resilience of coastal ecosystems through conservation, restoration, and sustainable use, supported by monitoring systems, early warning, and integrated climate adaptation.
- **Blue Benguela Partnership** – Co-financed by The Nature Conservancy and Blue Nature Alliance, this project supports marine biodiversity protection, Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), MPA network development, IUU fishing MCS, and capacity building to advance a sustainable blue economy across the BCLME region.

Xolela Wellem
Benguela Current Commission, Namibia

4   Agenda items

4.1   MCSCC IUU fishing incidents and cases 2024

Per Erik Bergh and JD Kotze (SIF) presented an in-depth analysis of IUU fishing incidents that occurred in 2024 to foster discussions and reflections on issues and risks. Most of these risks were identified during risk assessments and inspections of fishing vessels, and included:

Per Erik Bergh
Stop Illegal Fishing,
Botswana

- **Opaque beneficial ownership** which has been a reoccurring issue, for instance for RINASCENTE No 9. causing problems if an IUU fishing offence is committed, as MCS authorities are unable to hold anyone liable.

- **Unregulated fishing** with foreign fishing vessels operating in the region targeting species that are managed by an RFMO under licence to a SADC Member State that is not a Member to this RFMO. Although the vessel is authorised to fish, this is unregulated fishing as the State is not an RFMO member, therefore it is likely that the vessel targeted the coastal State to take advantage of the lack of enforcement of management measures relevant to the RFMO. This also entails that the coastal State has no obligation to report catches of species under the mandate of the RFMO, which is a concern for the sustainability of the stocks.

- **Insurance** there have been incidents of foreign fishing vessels operating without insurance, which may have detrimental effects if the vessel has problems for the coastal States.

- **Unsettled fines** the vessels that engaged in IUU fishing activities could leave the country and region without settling their fine.

- **AIS anomalies** many incidents entailed issues related to AIS transmissions. For example, in Angola, vessels were identified as fishing without transmitting AIS.

- **Risks associated with reefers** there is a low level of understanding by reefer captains regarding the fish they carry on behalf of donor vessels, this was identified during inspections. When asked about the fish transported, reefer captains could not provide answers on the exact content of the boxes transported. This was in particular the case with fish labelled "African mix", for which the captain could not give any details.

JD Kotze
Stop Illegal Fishing,
Cape Town

DISCUSSIONS

- Some participants reported that vessels with opaque beneficial ownership as presented in the case study would not have been allowed to operate in their country, showing that requirements in terms of beneficial ownership are already in place in some SADC countries.

- It was stressed that when a risk is found on a vessel, information should be shared by countries through Basecamp.

- It was recommended to set up a group to elaborate a set of conditions to define when vessels should be considered at risk. This recommendation links to discussions on the RRFV.

Sandy Davies
Stop Illegal Fishing, and

Motseki Hlatshwayo
*SADC Secretariat,
Botswana*

4.2 Terms of reference for the MCSCC Task Force

To formalise the MCSCC Task Force, the draft Terms of Reference (ToR) developed in OTF 1 were discussed. In addition to the previous recommendations, the OTF participants agreed that meeting frequency should not be capped, and that additional meetings could be organised based on needs. The ToR were unanimously adopted and will be presented to the Board of Directors for endorsement.

4.3 MCS capacity baseline

One of the objectives of the MCSCC is to "establish common operational standards and policies for fisheries MCS throughout SADC Members Countries". Harmonisation of MCS across the region will assist in closing gaps for illegal operators in marine and inland fisheries.

The MCSCC is a mechanism to support this in different ways, one being MCS capacity building through projects and technical support and inter-country collaboration and support. To achieve this, a baseline of MCS capacity and resources in place would allow the identification of gaps to help focus capacity building efforts and to monitor progress.

Sandy Davies presented a MCS Capacity Assessment tool which was developed by SIF and already used in other regions to establish MCS capacity baselines. This methodology evaluates MCS capacity based on three dimensions: human, institutional and infrastructural.

It was agreed to use this methodology to conduct an MCS capacity baseline in all SADC Member States, to be validated through national processes.

A preliminary assessment was conducted by SIF for 2023 in both industrial and artisanal fisheries, based on existing reports and exchanges with the countries.

In implementing the methodology, the following elements should be considered:

- the original methodology only addresses marine fisheries. There would be a need to revise the indicators to adapt them to inland fisheries.
- the current methodology divides industrial and artisanal fisheries in the assessment.
- the definition of "artisanal" and "small-scale" will vary according to the different countries' legislations.

Sandy Davies
*Stop Illegal Fishing,
Botswana*

DISCUSSIONS

- All OTF members agreed that such assessment would be a useful tool and decided that all Members should update and validate nationally a MCS baseline for 2024 by the end of 2024.
- It was agreed that inland fisheries should also be included in the MCS assessment, considering:
  - a division between "commercial" vs. "artisanal" fisheries (instead of artisanal/industrial for marine fisheries)
  - tailored indicators – focal points were identified within the OTF to agree on those indicators: Zimbabwe as a lead + all inland countries
- It was agreed that State Parties to the MCSCC should be assessed as a priority.
- The draft matrices will be circulated to the OTF participants for comments to ensure that all indicators are clear.

4.4 SADC Regional Register of Fishing Vessels

With the adoption of the 2017 MCSCC Charter, SADC Member States have committed to developing the RRFV through the MCSCC. However, details on the requirements and the process to operate the RRFV have so far not been defined.

OTF1 meeting made significant steps forward by recommending initial conditions, which would constitute minimum requirements to be on the Register (or "eligibility conditions"). These are:

1 The fishing vessel must have a flag State authorisation.
2 The fishing vessel must have an official IMO number.
3 The fishing vessel must not be listed on any RFMO IUU fishing list.

4 The fishing vessel must not be the subject of an INTERPOL notice or alert.

As recommended by OTF 1 that the MCSCC should prepare a plan for implementation to be discussed at OTF 2, the following discussions took place.

4.4.1 SADC RRFV implementation plan

A technical brief was presented to the participants on possible steps for implementing the RRFVs.

Sandy Davies
and Andréa Durighello
*Stop Illegal Fishing,
Botswana*

The discussion indicated that priorities should include building the capacity of national MCS officers to conduct risk assessments, and to develop procedures to standardise the process amongst Member States through the MCSCC. It was therefore agreed that:

• the proposed methodology for risk assessment promoted through the MCSCC should be tested in as many countries as possible, with associated trainings; and

• SOPs for procedures on conducting risk assessments should be considered as one of the priorities.

4.4.2 Reflections for further RRFV conditions

The initial conditions agreed by the MCSCC Task Force constitute minimum requirements to be on the RRFV.

All four requirements are considered in existing mandatory or voluntary instruments of which SADC States are Parties, including the IOTC, the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA), the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), the South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO), the Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC) and the BCC. They are also central to global mechanisms, in particular the PSMA – the first legally binding international treaty dedicated to globally tackle IUU fishing, which is key to fulfil the commitments of the 2008 SADC Statement of Commitment on IUU fishing – and the FAO Global Record of Fishing Vessels.

OTF participants exchanged on further conditions that could be considered when allowing a fishing vessels access to the region or not, in terms of potential eligibility and risk criteria. Examples of risk indicators used in the assessment methodology, include:

• vessel and operator IUU history

• vessel authorisations

• vessel operations including use of flags/ports of convenience

• labour and safety risks (for fisheries-related risks)

Other conditions could also be derived from existing standards and initiatives, such as the Global Transparency Charter. The Principles of the Global Transparency Charter had already been discussed at OTF1, and all Principles deemed of relevance by the OTF participants. Further conditions were discussed based on experience, case studies on IUU fishing incidents, existing reports on IUU fishing, discussions and recommendations made by MCS officers during previous trainings, and reflections brought up during the OTF meeting. Those conditions were clustered into the following categories:

• history of vessels and risks of IUU fishing and associated crimes

• vessel operations

• labour and safety

• verification of information

The participants assessed the relevance of those conditions for both marine and inland fisheries during a voting exercise.

They are also central to global mechanisms, in particular the PSMA – the first legally binding international treaty dedicated to globally tackle IUU fishing, which is key to fulfil the commitments of the 2008 SADC Statement of Commitment on IUU fishing – and the FAO Global Record of Fishing Vessels.

Task Force Members identifying further potential requirements for the SADC RRFV

All indicators were considered of relevance by participants.

The indicators that received most votes in the context of marine fisheries included:

- the vessel has an unsettled fine in one of the SADC Member States, which has not been paid with the time allocated.
- owner, operator, master, or agent have any IUU fishing history in the last five years.
- the vessel is not equipped with a fully functioning VMS system and maintain VMS transmission when they move into the EEZ of SADC Member State.
- the flag state repeatedly does not cooperate to requests of MCSCC to verify information on fishing vessels.
- reports of abuse from crew via social media or through official calls for help.

With regards to inland fisheries, priority risks identified included:

- the vessel has an unsettled fine in one of the SADC Member States, which has not been paid with the time allocated.
- owner, operator, master, or agent have any IUU fishing history in the last five years.
- unsettled incidents related to IUU fishing and associated crimes in the region.
- vessel, owner, or operator is linked to crew abuse in last 3-5 years (including not paying wages).
- reports of abuse from crew via social media or through official calls for help.

Some concerns were raised on the indicator "the flag state repeatedly does not cooperate to requests of MCSCC to verify information on fishing vessels." on the grounds that communication with the flag state can be a long process and that such a condition could have diplomatic consequences. One argument in favour of this indicator is that it would allow the MCSCC to ensure that flag states show responsibility and liability for the vessels which fly their flag, in line with the 1993 FAO Compliance Agreement, which is one of the international binding instruments that underpin the Protocol on Fisheries. It could be considered for the MCSCC RRFV to verify information provided by fishing vessels during the application, as part of the verification process conducted by the MCSCC.

It was recommended to create a sub-committee within the Task Force in charge of coordinating technical reflections on further conditions, which would work with the technical team to prepare technical input to be discussed at the OTF meetings.

4.4.3 Assessing the potential income from the RRFV

The OTF1 meeting highlighted that the RRFV is a powerful tool that can bring revenue into the Centre through registration fees, while also protecting the region from IUU fishing vessels and activity through harmonised minimum entry requirements to operate in the region.

It had been agreed at the meeting that the MCSCC would prepare predictions about the potential income from the Regional Register based on fees for vessels operating in the SADC region. To support this, OTF members were invited to participate in a survey through the MCSCC, with the objective to present figures at the OTF 2 meeting. This survey concerns both vessels operating in marine and freshwater bodies (when applicable) and includes national, regional and foreign fishing vessels (including reefers and supply vessels).

External efforts focus on raising visibility through a dedicated website, regional IUU news, and case studies.

4.5 Communications and information sharing

Communication and information sharing are core MCSCC functions in coordinating regional MCS. The Basecamp platform enables Member States to exchange information on IUU fishing and related regional cooperation issues.

With support from WWF and SIF, the MCSCC also strengthens internal and external communication. External efforts focus on raising visibility through a dedicated website, regional IUU news, and case studies, while internal communication includes sensitisation materials and technical briefings to support Member States.

With support from WWF and SIF, the MCSCC also strengthens internal and external communication.

4.5.1 Information-sharing through the Basecamp platform

The Basecamp platform plays a vital role in fostering collaboration between Member States and the MCSCC. States are encouraged to review and update their national focal points on Basecamp to ensure inclusivity, including representation from different ports and, where possible, gender diversity. Updated information should be shared with the MCSCC.

To make full use of the platform, States should actively follow up on cases and provide feedback after information or intelligence is shared. Online Basecamp training can be requested, and there is a recognised need to extend this training to inland fisheries countries.

The importance of regularly sharing lists of vessels licensed, flagged, and utilising SADC ports has been emphasised, as outlined in the 2022 Code on Information Sharing.

States are encouraged to review and update their national focal points on Basecamp to ensure inclusivity, including representation from different ports and, where possible, gender diversity.

4.5.2 Visibility of the MCSCC

4.5.2.1 The MCSCC graphic/video and website

Hélder Chamba presented an update of the MCSCC website, which was launched just before the OTF1: **https://sadcmcscc.org/**. The MCSCC website is the face of the MCSCC. It provides a unique occasion to showcase the work conducted at national and regional levels to combat IUU fishing. However, currently the front page looks very static, and activities conducted by Member States are not reflected on the website.

It was emphasised that all OTF participants share responsibility for keeping the MCSCC website dynamic, current, and well-promoted. Participants were invited to provide WWF with regular updates and materials for upload, and to draw content from existing reports and publications. They were also encouraged to use MCSCC resources – including reports, infographics, and branding – when attending meetings.

Website traffic has increased significantly, from 1,000 views in December to over 4,000 in June, with more than half of visitors accessing it directly and 39% via organic search, reflecting growing public interest.

To further enhance visibility, participants were encouraged to increase MCSCC social media activity. Pages have been created on LinkedIn (SADCMCSCC) and X (sadc_mcscc), and members are requested to include links to these pages when sharing relevant information.

The website also aims to serve as the main platform for information exchange, with a secure Members' Area linked to the Basecamp platform to facilitate internal collaboration.

Hélder Chamba
WWF,
Mozambique

4.5.2.1 Monthly media updates

The MCSCC, via SIF compiles a monthly summary of fisheries news relevant to the SADC region. This includes updates from Member States and beyond, highlighting current issues and debates on sustainable fisheries. The objective is to keep MCSCC members informed, promote regional information sharing, and raise awareness.

The media summary is produced by reviewing English, French, and Portuguese sources, selecting articles based on relevance, topic diversity, and regional balance. Each issue includes links to full stories and an international section covering broader debates such as the blue economy.

Looking ahead, selected news items will be featured on the MCSCC and SIF websites and shared through MCSCC social media. Key news will also be distributed weekly, with major events shared via Basecamp. SIF encourages Member States to contribute national fisheries stories, including vessel arrests, new initiatives, reports, or notable media coverage.

DISCUSSIONS

- The RMIFC offered to share articles on IUU fishing with the MCSCC to be posted on the website.
- Each Member State should provide content for the website on a rotational basis.
- The branding guidelines and templates should be made available on the MCSCC website.
- The MCSCC could organise in-depth discussions for webinars to share the region's experiences with a wider network.

Regina Dithapo
Stop Illegal Fishing,
Botswana

4.5.3 Internal communication resources

Several possible formats were discussed:

- **Incident cases and case studies** (external and internal communication) – analysis of IUU cases and associated risks, identification of issues for lessons learnt, reflections on role of regional cooperation and of MCSCC processes, recommendations for future cases.
- **Policy Briefs** – short, concrete recommendations based on most relevant arguments, not a scientific paper, but a tool for decision-making that requires endorsement.
- **Summary papers** – short, focussed on explaining and popularising existing agreements and protocols, tools available to the Task Force to sensitise MCS managers and officers.
- **Technical briefs** – more exhaustive, technical input, to inform Task Force discussions and decisions at and in-between meetings based on recommendations by OTF Members.

4.5.4 Summary paper on the MCSCC Information Code

The Code for Harmonised Fisheries Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Data and Information Sharing through the Regional Fisheries MCS Coordination Centre (MCSCC) – referred to as the "Information Code" has implications for SADC Member States with regards to the collection and sharing of information. Adhering to these provisions will be a major step towards the operationalisation of the MCSCC and underpin the RRFV.

The summary recalls background information and explains the provisions that underpin the RRFV, and outlines implications for Member States. It also provides recommendations on aspects to consider and on further steps to take to achieve its full operationalisation. OTF participants were encouraged to use this brief to sensitise national policy makers in their respective countries as well as other relevant stakeholders. This summary will be published on the MCSCC website.

Noa Senete
*Stop Illegal Fishing,
Mozambique*

Jean-Louis Rabe
*Stop Illegal Fishing,
Madagascar*

4.5.5 Policy Brief "Protecting our inland fisheries"

The most recent policy brief in concerns inland fisheries. It recalls the fact that SADC inland fisheries are important for many of the region's people, and that this importance must be reflected in the priorities of national and regional MCS strategies, including in the priority actions of the new MCS Centre. Equally, it recommends ensuring adequate resources are given to ensure the protection of these fisheries and those who depend on them.

This brief provides information on SADC's inland fisheries, the challenges they face and the opportunities that the new MCSCC provides for overcoming these challenges in a regionally coordinated manner. This includes reflections on applying MCS in inland fisheries, with key considerations for tailored MCS systems and a selection of most relevant recommendations with concrete tools for implementation. Amongst those is the recommendation to replicate previous efforts in the region to move towards an approach based on the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries, favouring voluntary compliance through increased participation.

The policy brief will be available on the MCSCC website.

Andréa Durighello
Stop Illegal Fishing

DISCUSSIONS

- It was agreed by the OTF participants that there is a need to reflect on the material available and on how to make most efficient use of it.
- It was also agreed to set up a team to work on MCSCC information and communications, composed of at least one representative from inland fisheries (Zimbabwe) and marine fisheries (U.R. Tanzania).

5. Decisions and recommendations of the Task Force

5.1 Recommendations to the MCSCC Board of Directors

Strengthening regional institutional capacity to combat IUU fishing:

- to urge SADC Member States that are not MCSCC State Parties to sign the MCSCC Charter to enable full SADC cooperation and collaboration to fight IUU fishing and achieve the objectives of the SADC's Common Agenda, Protocol on Fisheries and related instruments.
- to sensitise MCSCC State Parties on the importance to fulfil their commitments, including by implementing recommendations and decisions made by the MCSCC institutions.

Advancing the operationalisation of the MCSCC and its institutions:

- to adopt the draft MCSCC Operational Task Force Terms of Reference validated by OTF 2 on 17 June 2024 in Maputo, Mozambique.
- to consider for endorsement the four minimum eligibility conditions for foreign (non-SADC MCSCC State Party flagged) and regional (SADC MCSCC State Party flagged and authorised to fish beyond the flag State jurisdiction) fishing vessels to be authorised to operate in the region through acceptance on the SADC RRFV, hence starting the process towards the development of the SADC RRFV.
- to create a sub-committee within the Task Force in charge of coordinating technical reflections on further conditions for the RRFV, which would work with the technical team to prepare technical input to be discussed at the OTF meetings.

5.2 Decisions of the Task Force

Strengthening regional institutional capacity to combat IUU fishing:

- to welcome the RMIFC as a formalised partner of the MCSCC so as to strengthen exchange of intelligence related to IUU fishing in the region and to explore RMIFC's offer to the MCSCC to become an Observer to the Fusion Centre.

Addressing identified risks of IUU fishing:

- to share information on IUU fishing in marine and inland waters through the MCSCC communication mechanism to enable documentation and lesson learning about IUU fishing incidents and MCS actions. In the case that a vessel is identified as being high risk the information should be shared as soon as possible through the communication mechanism.
- for inland States, to proactively share challenges in terms of IUU fishing as well as achievements from relevant projects, in particular the PROFISH BLUE project and its initiative to equip small-scale and commercial fishing vessels with VMS on inland water bodies.
- to consider risks highlighted by IUU fishing cases, and to use lessons from risk analysis and investigations conducted on high-risk vessels to inform decisions for foreign fishing vessel access into the SADC region.

  Major risks identified include:
  - challenges with opaque beneficial ownership and the difficulties to make fishing vessel operators accountable when offences are detected;
  - evidence that some fishing operators target species managed by RFMOs through States of the region that are not parties to those RFMOs, therefore engaging in unregulated fishing activities.

MCS Capacity Baseline for 2023:

- to develop and validate a MCS capacity baseline of MCSCC State Parties for 2023 by the third meeting of the MCSCC Task Force. These national matrices will be used to define capacity building plans and serve as a baseline to monitor progress:
  - Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe to work with the Technical Team to adjust the MCS capacity assessment methodology to the characteristics of inland fisheries, dividing the analysis into commercial (including both large-scale and small-scale) and non-commercial fisheries.
  - to separate large-scale/industrial from small-scale/artisanal fisheries in the assessment, to highlight the different capacity needs in MCS activities for all fisheries segments.
  - all countries to complete and validate the capacity assessment by end of 2024.

On Communications and Information:

- to provide to the MCSCC regular information and news about national fisheries and other related issues that are relevant to the work of the MCSCC, to help make the website dynamic and attract more engagement. In addition, there will be a monthly focus on a State Party to highlight their fisheries sector and MCS issues.
- to provide feedback on sensitisation material formats developed by the MCSCC and recommendations on how to ensure they are used and support sensitisation.
- to set up a team to work on MCSCC information and communications, composed of at least one representative from inland fisheries (Zimbabwe) and marine fisheries (U.R. Tanzania).
- to share information from State Parties relevant for the monthly media updates with Regina Dithapo rdithapo@nfds.info for ENGLISH articles, Jean Louis Rabe rabejeanlouis@gmail.com for FRENCH articles and Noa Senete jsenete@gmail.com for PORTUGUESE articles.
- to submit the completed survey on fishing vessels for calculation of potential fees to the MCSCC from the RRFV by 18 July 2024.

to consider risks highlighted by IUU fishing cases, and to use lessons from risk analysis and investigations conducted on high-risk vessels to inform decisions for foreign fishing vessel access into the SADC region.

5.3   Requests to the MCSCC and technical team

On addressing identified risks of IUU fishing:

- to continue providing information to the State Parties via the communications mechanism on suspicion of IUU fishing or related information as requested.
- to continue documenting cases of IUU fishing, as well as analysis of risks for lesson learning.
- to share the RIMIFC weekly IUU update on the communications mechanism.

On the elaboration of a MCS capacity assessment for SADC Member States:

- to support in elaborating national MCS capacity assessments based on a standardised methodology, and to assist the landlocked countries to adjust the methodology to inland fisheries and to consolidate the results for presentation at the third MCSCC Task Force meeting.

On the RRFV:

- to provide a brief to the BOD on the four eligibility conditions for the RRFV.
- to prepare and share a technical brief with State Parties on the steps required and priorities for the RRFV and continue development of priority actions towards the RRFV.

- to provide capacity building in State Parties for implementing and developing risk assessments and inspections of fishing vessels and develop SOPs for harmonised processes.
- to work with inland States to identify potential risk indicators for inland fisheries.

On requiring more accountability from flag States:

- to engage discussions with flag States of fleets for which patterns of IUU fishing activities have been identified in the region. This includes the recent example of Sri Lanka, whose vessels have been found guilty of IUU fishing offences by several States in the region, and which have been associated with risks of IUU fishing based on remote monitoring activities.
- to establish a list of contact points and addresses of flag States to remedy the challenge of establishing communication with certain of those States (e.g., Russia).

On Communications and Information:

- to make guidelines and templates available to Task Force Members and on the MCSCC website to facilitate use of the MCSCC's branding by the Task Force when referring to the Centre.

6. Closing remarks

The Chair of the OTF, Manuel Bengui Tungu, expressed his appreciation for the active contributions of the participants during the meeting and emphasised the significant progress made towards the operationalisation of the MCSCC. The Chair stressed the importance of information sharing and he encouraged each Task Force participant to continue driving forward the operationalisation of the MCSCC from their respective country.

The Chair also conveyed gratitude to Mozambique for their hospitality, the IPMU for the visit organised for the participants to the MCSCC offices, and the MCSCC partners and technical team for their crucial support in making the meeting and work of the Centre possible.

Field visit in the provisional MCSCC

7. Annexes

7.1 Acronyms and abbreviations

AIS	automatic identification system
AREP	advance request for port into entry
BCC	Benguela Current Convention
BCLME	Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem
BMA	Border Management Authority
CDM	Catch Data Monitor
DFFE	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment
EEZ	exclusive economic zone
EM	electronic monitoring
EMI	Environmental Management Inspectorate
ESA-IO	Eastern and Southern Africa and Indian Ocean Region
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FMA	Fisheries Management Area
FMC	Fisheries Management Committee
GEF	Global Environment Fund
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GT	Gross tonnage
HMCO	Honorary Marine Conservation Officer
IMO	International Maritime Organization
INAMAR	Instituto Nacional do Mar, Mozambique
IOC	Indian Ocean Commission
IOC-PRSP	Regional Plan for Fisheries Surveillance
IPMU	Interim Project Management Unit
IUU	illegal, unreported and unregulated
Km	kilometre
LTA	Lake Tanganyika Authority
MASE	Program for the Promotion of Maritime Safety
MCS	monitoring, control and surveillance
MCSCC	Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Coordination Centre
MFMR	Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (Namibia)
MLRA	Marine Living Resources Act
MONICAP	Monitorização das Actividades de Pesca, Angola
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MSP	Marine Spatial Planning
OTF	MCSCC Operational Task Force
RFMO	regional fisheries management organisation
RMIFC	Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre
RRFV	SADC Regional Register of Fishing Vessels
RTT	Regional Technical Team
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SFA	Seychelles Fishing Authority
SIF	Stop Illegal Fishing
SOP	standing operating procedure
SAIMI	South African International Maritime Institute
TMT	Trygg Mat Tracking
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
USD	United States Dollar
VMS	vessel monitoring system
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

7.2 Attendance list

7.2.1 State Parties to the MCSCC

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Strengthening cooperation and capacity to stop illegal fishing: working towards a common future

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) prioritises fighting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing to protect the region's people, oceans and economy from its devastating impacts. The SADC is coordinating and driving regional monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) collaboration through the SADC Regional Fisheries MCS Coordination Centre (MCSCC).

For more information go to:
www.sadc.int
www.sadcmcscc.org

The Supporting Partners of the MCSCC are greatly appreciated, and they include:

The Technical Partners of the MCSCC are greatly appreciated, and they include: