



# RRFV CODE

**Code for the Establishment and Implementation of the SADC Regional Register of Fishing Vessels (RRFV) through the Fisheries Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Coordination Centre (MCSCC)**

Approved by the Joint Meeting of SADC Ministers of Agriculture and Food Security, Fisheries and Aquaculture in Harare, Zimbabwe, 30 May 2025



**This RRFV Code document was approved by the SADC Ministers responsible for Agriculture and Food Security, Fisheries and Aquaculture, at the Ministers' Meeting held on 30 May 2025 in Harare, Zimbabwe.**

**The document supports domestication and implementation of the 2001 SADC Protocol on Fisheries and the 2017 Charter Establishing Fisheries Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Coordination Centre (MCSCC).**

**Recommended citation:**

SADC. 2025. Code for the Establishment and Implementation of the SADC Regional Register of Fishing Vessels (RRFV) through the Fisheries Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Coordination Centre (MCSCC). SADC Secretariat, Gaborone, Botswana.

**Disclaimer:**

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The mention of specific companies or products of manufacturers, whether or not these have been patented, does not imply that these have been endorsed or recommended by SADC Secretariat in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned.

ISBN No. 978-99968-76-93-6

Information in this publication may be reproduced, used and shared with full acknowledgement of the publisher, SADC Secretariat.

Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat Plot 54385 CBD Square  
Private/Bag 0095 Gaborone, Botswana Tel: +267 395 1863  
Email: registry@sadc.int Website: www.sadc.int

© SADC, 2025

# Contents

<b>Preamble</b>	<b>4</b>	
<b>Articles</b>	<b>6</b>	
Article 1	Definitions	6
Article 2	Objective	8
Article 3	Scope	8
Article 4	Principles	8
Article 5	RRFV system	9
Article 6	Functions of the MCSCC Secretariat	10
Article 7	States Parties' obligations	11
Article 8	Functions of the MCSCC Board of Directors	11
Article 9	Conditions for RRFV authorisation	12
Article 10	Information required for RRFV authorisation	13
Article 11	Fees for RRFV authorisation	15
Article 12	Public information	15
Article 13	RRFV database	16
Article 14	Authorisation, denial and removal	16
Article 15	Relationship with the Charter Establishing MCSCC	18
Article 16	Amendments	18
Article 17	Depository	18
<b>Annex: RRFV phased implementation approach 2025 to 2028</b>	<b>19</b>	
Step one:	Preparation phase – 2025/2026	19
Step two:	Implementation of grace period – 2026/2027	20
Step three:	Full implementation – 2027/2028	21
Step four:	Ongoing implementation – 2028 onwards	22

# Preamble

**We, the representatives of the Governments of:**

The Republic of Angola	The Republic of Mauritius
The Republic of Botswana	The Republic of Mozambique
The Union of the Comoros	The Republic of Namibia
The Democratic Republic of Congo	The Republic of Seychelles
The Kingdom of Eswatini	The Republic of South Africa
The Kingdom of Lesotho	The United Republic of Tanzania
The Republic of Madagascar	The Republic of Zambia
The Republic of Malawi	The Republic of Zimbabwe

**Having** a common interest in the effective management, long-term preservation and sustainable use of living aquatic resources, in particular fisheries resources, and determined to facilitate the achievement of their objectives through the SADC MCSCC;

**Having regard** to the provisions of the SADC Protocol on Fisheries signed in Blantyre on 11 August 2001 relating to the important role of fisheries in the social and economic well-being of the people of the SADC region;

**Recalling** the Statement of Commitment by the SADC Ministers Responsible for Marine Fisheries on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing made at Windhoek, Namibia, on 4 July 2008, and particularly the concern on their harmful consequences on the sustainability of fisheries, the conservation of living marine resources, marine biodiversity and the entire marine ecosystem;

**Further recalling** the Charter Establishing MCSCC, which objective is to provide a legal framework for the establishment and operationalization of the SADC MCSCC as an institution that will coordinate measures relating to fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) in the SADC region, and which entered into force on 8 April 2023;

**Aware** of our role to ensure the MCSCC reaches its full potential and contributes to advance the global sustainable development goals (SDGs) for conservation and sustainable use of our fisheries, but also to achieve global priority actions linked to poverty, hunger, decent work, responsible consumption and production and partnership, in line with the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (PFRS) and the African Union Agenda 2063;

**Recalling** the Code for Harmonized Fisheries Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Data and Information Sharing Through the Fisheries Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Coordination Centre (MCSCC) approved by the Joint Meeting of SADC Ministers of Agriculture and Food Security, Fisheries and Aquaculture in Lilongwe, Malawi, 13 May 2022 and annexed to the Charter Establishing MCSCC, in which SADC Ministers agreed on fisheries data to be collected and shared by Member States on fishing activities, through the MCSCC and between the MCSCC Secretariat and relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs), Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs), or any Non-SADC participating States in accordance with the confidentiality provision;

**Considering** the relevant provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS-1982), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF-1995), the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA-1995), the FAO's Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas (CA-1993), the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, (IPOA-IUU-2001), the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA-2009), the FAO Global Record of Fishing Vessels and the SADC Regional Fisheries MCS Strategy and Regional Plan of Action (2020-2030), encourage the harmonised collection and sharing of fishing vessel information, for fishing vessels that operate within State Parties' waters, or are flagged by State Parties in a manner consistent with any applicable confidentiality requirements;

**Noting** that as part of regional and global commitments and participation in RFMOs and RFBs, Member States already exchange information on vessels operating in their areas of jurisdiction;

**Emphasising** the function of establishing a harmonised Regional Register of Fishing Vessels (RRFV), as agreed in the Charter Establishing MCSCC, as a key tool to operationalise SADC commitments against IUU fishing and to support the financial sustainability of the MCSCC operations;

**Recalling** the agreement in the Charter Establishing MCSCC that a harmonised Regional Register shall be established for fishing vessels that operate within State Parties' waters, or are flagged by State Parties; and

**Recognising** the need for a phased process to establish a harmonised Regional Register of Fishing Vessels that contributes to this objective,

**Have agreed** as follows:

# Articles

## Article 1 Definitions

1. **Board of Directors** – means the Board established under Article 14 of the Charter Establishing MCSCC.
2. **Fisheries data** – includes catch and effort, landing and discard, observer, registered vessels, vessels authorised or licensed to fish, exclusive economic zone (EEZ) entry and exit, innocent passage in the territorial sea, fisheries monitoring (vessel monitoring system (VMS), automatic identification system (AIS), satellite imagery) and at sea and in port inspection report data.
3. **Fishing** – means all activities directly related to the exploitation of living aquatic resources and includes transshipment, searching for, attracting, locating, catching, taking, or harvesting fish or any support activity which can reasonably be expected to result in the attracting, locating, catching, taking, or harvesting of fish.
4. **Fishing capacity** – is, for a given resource condition, the amount of fish (or fishing effort) that can be produced over a period of time (e.g. a year) by a fishing vessel or a fleet of fishing vessels if fully utilised. That is, if effort and catch were not constrained by restrictive management measures.
5. **Fishing effort** – means the level of fishing, as may be defined, inter alia, by the number of fishing vessels, number of fisheries, amount of fishing gear, and the time spent fishing or searching for fish.
6. **Fishing-related activities** – means any operation in support of, or in preparation for, fishing, including the landing, packaging, processing, transshipping or transporting of fish, as well as the provisioning of personnel, fuel, gear and other supplies at sea or in port.
7. **Fishing vessel** – means any vessel, boat, ship or other craft, which is used for, equipped to be used for or of a type that is normally used for fishing or fishing-related activities, and all its equipment including support ships, carrier vessels and any other vessel directly involved in fishing activities.
8. **Fishing vessel information** – means information related to vessel movement and position, vessel name, UVI, international radio call sign (IRCS), previous vessel names, port of registry, registration number/certificate of registry, RFMO identification numbers, fishing authorisations/licences, previous flags, LOA, GT, name and address of owner(s), name and address of operator(s), name and address of beneficial owners, type of vessel, fishing gear type(s), vessel master name and nationality, photographs of vessel, external markings, marine mobile service identity (MMSI) number, VMS type, AIS details.
9. **Flag State authorisation** – means the official permission granted by a flag State to a fishing vessel allowing it to engage in fishing or fishing-related activities under that State's flag and to operate in areas beyond those under the jurisdiction of the flag State.
10. **Gross tonnage (GT)** – is the total internal volume of the vessel.
11. **Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU fishing)** – means fishing activities considered as illegal, not reported or not regulated.

12. **International Maritime Organization (IMO) number** – means the unique vessel identification number assigned by S&P Global on behalf of IMO. S&P Global maintains a comprehensive database of vessels and through their online platform, IMO numbers can be requested for eligible fishing vessels and existing IMO numbers can be verified.
13. **Inland waters** – means lakes, rivers, brooks, streams, ponds, inland canals, dams, and other land-locked waters.
14. **Information Code** – means the Code for Harmonized Fisheries Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Data and Information Sharing Through the MCSCC approved by the Joint Meeting of SADC Ministers of Agriculture and Food Security, Fisheries and Aquaculture in Lilongwe, Malawi, 13 May 2022 and annexed to the Charter Establishing MCSCC.
15. **INTERPOL notice or alert** – means an official notice issued by the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) to assist in law enforcement cooperation.
16. **Length overall (LOA)** – means the maximum length of a vessel from the foremost point to the aftmost point, including any protrusions.
17. **MCSCC** – means the Fisheries Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Coordination Centre (MCSCC) established under Article 4 of the Charter Establishing MCSCC.
18. **MCSCC Secretariat** – means the Secretariat of MCSCC established under Article 17 of the Charter Establishing MCSCC with functions assigned under Article 18 of the Charter Establishing MCSCC.
19. **Member State** – means a SADC Member State.
20. **Port** – means offshore terminals and other installations for landing, transshipping, packaging, refuelling, or resupplying.
21. **Regional fisheries management organisation (RFMO)** – means an intergovernmental fisheries organisation or arrangement, as appropriate, that has the competence to establish conservation and management measures.
22. **Regional fisheries body (RFB)** – means mechanisms or arrangements with an advisory mandate through which States or organisations that are parties to an international fishery agreement work together towards providing advice, decisions or coordinating mechanisms that are not binding on their members.
23. **Regional Register of Fishing Vessels (RRFV)** – means a formalised database containing information for fishing vessels authorised to conduct fishing or fisheries-related activities in waters of State Parties or flagged by State Parties that have met minimum criteria and conditions agreed by State Parties.
24. **RRFV Code** – means the Code for the Establishment and Implementation of the SADC Regional Register of Fishing Vessels (RRFV) through the MCSCC.
25. **SADC** – means the Southern African Development Community established by Article 2 of the Treaty.
26. **State Party** – means a State that is party to the Charter Establishing MCSCC.
27. **Unique vessel identifier (UVI)** – means a unique number that is assigned to a vessel to for permanent identification during its entire life regardless of changes in flag, ownership, name, usually the IMO number, or other identifier for vessels not eligible for IMO number.

# Article 2

## Objective

The objective of this RRFV Code is to set the framework for the establishment and implementation of the SADC Regional Register of Fishing Vessels (RRFV) as a function of the MCSCC as set out in Article 7 of the Charter Establishing Fisheries Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Coordination Centre (MCSCC).

# Article 3

## Scope

This RRFV Code determines the framework and conditions for RRFV authorisation for fishing vessels conducting fishing or fishing-related activities in industrial, small-scale and artisanal fisheries in marine and inland waters of the SADC region. This includes fishing vessels authorised or licenced to conduct fishing or fishing-related activities within the jurisdiction of at least one State Party and fishing vessels registered (flagged) by a State Party.

# Article 4

## Principles

1. The RRFV shall enable Member States' enhanced monitoring of fishing capacity in their waters to promote responsible, sustainable use and protection of living aquatic resources and marine biodiversity, to enhance food security, generate economic opportunities and alleviate poverty according to the Principles of the SADC Protocol on Fisheries.
2. The RRFV shall facilitate improved regional cooperation and strengthen MCS capacity with a view to eradicating IUU fishing as identified as a priority area requiring urgent attention in the SADC Statement of Commitment on IUU fishing.
3. The RRFV shall provide a mechanism to contribute to the financial sustainability of the MCSCC as required in Article 7 of the Charter Establishing MCSCC.
4. The RRFV shall support the principle of transparency, by enabling non-confidential fishing vessel information to be made publicly available through the MCSCC website as envisioned in Article 9 of the Information Code.
5. The RRFV shall respect confidentiality of fisheries data and fishing vessel information considered commercially sensitive which shall not be disclosed to third parties without prior specific written consent in conformity to the Information Code.

# Article 5

## RRFV system

1. A harmonised regional register of fishing vessels that operate within State Parties' waters or are registered (flagged) by State Parties shall be established by the MCSCC, according to Article 7 of the Charter Establishing MCSCC.
2. The States Parties agree to establish a RRFV following a phased implementation approach with the following criteria for eligibility for authorisation:
  - a. **Foreign fishing vessels** – which include all fishing vessels not registered to a Member State that conduct fishing or fishing-related activities within the jurisdiction of a State Party.
  - b. **Regional fishing vessels** – which include:
    - i. all fishing vessels over 24 m LOA registered to a State Party
    - ii. all motorised inboard fishing vessels over 12 m LOA registered to a Member State and authorised to conduct fishing or fishing-related activities within the jurisdiction of a State Party
    - iii. all motorised inboard fishing vessels over 12 m LOA registered to a State Party and authorised to conduct fishing or fishing-related activities outside of the jurisdiction of the flag State
  - c. **National fishing vessels** – which include all motorised fishing vessels between 24 m and 12 m LOA that are authorised by a State Party to conduct fishing or fishing-related activities.
3. Criteria for eligibility for RRFV authorisation may be updated periodically following recommendation by the Board of Directors for approval by the Committee of Ministers.
4. Conditions for RRFV authorisation are set according to Article 9 of this RRFV Code.
5. Information required for RRFV authorisation is set according to Article 10 of this RRFV Code.
6. RRFV authorisation may be subject to the payment of fees to the MCSCC Secretariat by eligible fishing vessel owners/operators according to Article 11 of this RRFV Code.
7. Transparency and confidentiality of fisheries data and fishing vessel information contained in the RRFV is set according to Articles 12 and 13 of this RRFV Code.
8. The process for authorisation, denial and removal of fishing vessels from the RRFV are set according to Article 14 of this RRFV Code.
9. Details of the RRFV phased implementation approach are set in the Annex to this RRFV Code.
10. Authorisation onto the RRFV, for eligible **foreign fishing vessels** and **regional fishing vessels**, shall be a requirement to conduct fishing or fishing-related activities within State Parties' waters or to be registered by State Parties except in verifiable emergency situations, such as *force majeure*.

# Article 6

## Functions of the MCSCC Secretariat

1. The MCSCC Secretariat shall host the RRFV and manage the day-to-day operations of the RRFV system.
2. The MCSCC Secretariat shall:
  - a. Ensure the RRFV phased implementation approach is supported by the necessary institutional procedures to host and support the establishment and implementation of the RRFV.
  - b. Provide recommendations to the Board of Directors on applicable fees, aligned to the objective and framework agreed in this RRFV Code and the requirements of the Charter Establishing MCSCC.
  - c. Install and manage adequate infrastructure to store fisheries data and fishing vessel information associated to the RRFV system.
  - d. Manage the RRFV online application system according to agreed procedures including receiving and processing applications in a timely manner.
  - e. Validate applications for fishing vessels against the conditions set out in Article 9 of this RRFV Code.
  - f. Maintain an official bank account and validate receipts of fees against applications received.
  - g. Add and remove fishing vessels from the RRFV and inform the stakeholders of decisions to deny or remove fishing vessels following the procedures set out in Article 14 of this RRFV Code.
  - h. Keep an up-to-date public list of vessels authorised on the RRFV.
  - i. Keep an up-to-date internal database with confidential fishing vessel information for fishing vessels authorised on the RRFV with access provided to State Parties.
  - j. Establish a system for systematically assessing the risk of IUU fishing by RRFV authorised fishing vessels including through harmonised inspections of fishing vessels by State Parties and share this information with State Parties.
  - k. Share extracted fisheries data and fishing vessel information from the RRFV with third parties, including but not limited to the FAO Global Record, RFMOs, RFBs, as approved by the Board of Directors.
  - l. Support State Parties to fulfil their obligations under this RRFV Code, as set out in Article 7.
  - m. Engage with relevant flag States, RFMOs, RFBs and other partners in matters relating to the implementation of the RRFV.
  - n. Sensitise and attend to queries from relevant stakeholders on the RRFV and its processes.
  - o. Provide regular reports to the State Parties and Board of Directors on progress with implementation of the RRFV and the needs of the MCSCC Secretariat and State Parties for support to implement their obligations under this RRFV Code.

# Article 7

## States Parties' obligations

1. Taking into cognisance the RRFV phased implementation approach Annexed to this RRFV Code, State Parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure that any **foreign fishing vessel** eligible to be on the RRFV is authorised on the RRFV. This includes fishing vessels already registered to the State Party or authorised to conduct any fishing or fishing-related activities and prior to granting fishing vessel registration or authorising a fishing vessel to conduct any fishing or fishing-related activities within their jurisdiction.
2. Taking into cognisance the RRFV phased implementation approach Annexed to this RRFV Code, State Parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure that any **regional fishing vessel** eligible to be on the RRFV is authorised on the RRFV. This includes fishing vessels already registered to the State Party or authorised to conduct any fishing or fishing-related activities and prior to granting fishing vessel registration or authorising a fishing vessel to conduct any fishing or fishing-related activities within their jurisdiction.
3. State Parties shall ensure that the required information on eligible **national fishing vessels** as specified in Article 10 of this RRFV Code are shared with the MCSCC Secretariat and updated annually and verify that all eligible fishing vessels are authorised on the RRFV.
4. State Parties shall make all necessary effort to inspect all **foreign fishing vessels** and **regional fishing vessels** authorised on the RRFV to which they have granted registration or an authorisation or license to conduct fishing or fishing-related activities in areas under their jurisdiction and share results of inspections with the MCSCC.

# Article 8

## Functions of the MCSCC Board of Directors

1. The MCSCC Board of Directors shall:
  - a. Provide oversight and direction to the MCSCC Secretariat as required for the implementation of the RRFV.
  - b. Review and approve on an annual basis the fees applicable for RRFV authorisation for eligible fishing vessels and adjust when applicable.
  - c. Recommend annual budgets for the use of fees from applications for authorisation on the RRFV to the Committee of Ministers for approval, taking into account the needs of the MCSCC Secretariat and State Parties for support in implementing their obligations under this RRFV Code as a priority use of the remittances.
  - d. Periodically review the criteria and conditions for RRFV authorisation and make recommendations to the Committee of Ministers for updates.
  - e. Approve procedures related to the implementation of the RRFV, including related to processing and management of information.

# Article 9

## Conditions for RRFV authorisation

1. State Parties agree that to support the objectives of the SADC Protocol on Fisheries, authorisation onto the RRFV shall require eligible fishing vessels to meet minimum conditions for authorisation.
2. Fishing vessels not meeting those conditions shall not be authorised onto the RRFV.
3. The State Parties agree that conditions for authorisation will be strengthened overtime.
4. State Parties agree to the following conditions for **foreign fishing vessels** to be authorised on the RRFV:
  - a. The fishing vessel must have a flag State authorisation.
  - b. The fishing vessel must have an official IMO number.
  - c. The fishing vessel must not be listed on any RFMO IUU fishing list.
  - d. The fishing vessel must not be the subject of an INTERPOL notice or alert.
5. State Parties agree to the following conditions for **regional fishing vessels** to be authorised on the RRFV:
  - a. The fishing vessel must have a flag State authorisation.
  - b. The fishing vessel must have an official IMO number.
  - c. The fishing vessel must not be listed on any RFMO IUU fishing list
  - d. The fishing vessel must not be the subject of an INTERPOL notice or alert.
6. State Parties agree to the following conditions for **national fishing vessels** to be authorised on the RRFV:
  - a. The fishing vessel must have an IMO number or a national UVI.
  - b. The fishing vessel must not be listed on an RFMO IUU fishing list.
  - c. The fishing vessel must not be the subject of an INTERPOL notice or alert.

# Article 10

## Information required for RRFV authorisation

1. Eligible **foreign fishing vessel** and **regional fishing vessel** owners/operators shall apply for RRFV authorisation following procedures available on the MCSCC website and the required information shall be submitted through the online RRFV application system.
2. The required information for eligible **national fishing vessels** shall be provided to the MCSCC Secretariat for RRFV authorisation following procedures available on the MCSCC website.
3. Information provided as part of the RRFV application process shall be accurate, authentic, and the truth.
4. The application shall only be processed by the MCSCC Secretariat upon reception of all required information and documents and receipt of the applicable fees from eligible fishing vessels, as described in Article 11 of this RRFV Code.
5. Information to be submitted through the RRFV online application system for **foreign fishing vessels** shall include at the minimum:
  - a. IMO number
  - b. Name of fishing vessel
  - c. Previous name(s), if any
  - d. Port of registry
  - e. Certificate of registry (to be attached)
  - f. Flag State authorisation (to be attached)
  - g. Previous details of deletion from other registries, if any
  - h. RFMO(s) number/authorisations, if any
  - i. Type of vessel
  - j. Vessel stowage plan (to be attached)
  - k. Length overall (LOA)
  - l. Gross tonnage (GT)
  - m. International radio call sign (IRCS)
  - n. Marine mobile service identify (MMSI) number
  - o. VMS type
  - p. AIS details
  - q. Name and address of owner(s), operator(s) and beneficial owner(s)
  - r. Fishing gear(s)
  - s. Engine built/type/size
  - t. Vessel master name and nationality
  - u. Fishing master name and nationality, if any
  - v. Number of crew
  - w. Photographs of the fishing vessel showing external markings from port, starboard, bow and stern angles (to be attached)

6. Information to be submitted through the RRFV online application system for **regional fishing vessels** shall include at the minimum:
- a. IMO number
  - b. National UVI
  - c. Name of fishing vessel
  - d. Previous name(s), if any
  - e. Port of registry
  - f. Certificate of registry (to be attached)
  - g. Flag State authorisation (to be attached)
  - h. Previous details of deletion from other registries, if any
  - i. RFMO(s) number/authorisations, if any
  - j. Type of vessel
  - k. Vessel stowage plan (to be attached)
  - l. Length overall (LOA)
  - m. Gross tonnage (GT)
  - n. International radio call sign (IRCS)
  - o. Marine mobile service identify (MMSI) number
  - p. VMS type
  - q. AIS details
  - r. Name and address of owner(s), operator(s) and beneficial owner(s)
  - s. Fishing gear(s)
  - t. Engine built/type/size
  - u. Vessel master name and nationality
  - v. Fishing master name and nationality, if any
  - w. Number of crew
  - x. Photographs of the fishing vessel showing external markings from port, starboard, bow and stern angles (to be attached)
7. Information to be submitted to the MCSCC Secretariat for RRFV authorisation of **national fishing vessels** shall include, where possible:
- a. IMO number, if eligible
  - b. National UVI
  - c. Name of fishing vessel
  - d. Port of registry/location of operations
  - e. Type of vessel
  - f. Length overall
  - g. Fishing gear(s)
  - h. Inboard or outboard engine
  - i. Number of crew

# Article 11

## Fees for RRFV authorisation

1. Fees for RRFV authorisation will contribute to funding the MCSCC and its operations, including the operations of the RRFV, as per Article 19 of the Charter Establishing MCSCC: '1. MCSCC shall derive its financial and other resources from: (b) charging fees on programmes, projects, operations and services under its portfolio'. Noting that under Article 7 (4) a function of the MCSCC is to 'establish a harmonised RRFV'.
2. RRFV authorisation application fees for eligible fishing vessels shall be deposited into an MCSCC Secretariat official bank account established for the purpose of RRFV application fees, with reference to the fishing vessel UVI and vessel name as specified in the online application.
3. Applicable fee rates for eligible fishing vessels shall be approved by the Board of Directors and reviewed annually.
4. Fees for eligible fishing vessel shall take into account the type of fishing vessel and may take into account the LOA and GT and other specifications as deemed necessary.
5. Fees for fishing vessels flagged by Member States shall be set fifty percent lower than for a similar type and specification of foreign registered fishing vessel.
6. There are no fees for application of a **national fishing vessel**, as defined in Article 5 of this RRFV Code.

# Article 12

## Public information

1. A publicly available list of non-confidential RRFV fishing vessel information shall be made available through the MCSCC website and maintained by the MCSCC Secretariat.
2. The information available should include the following information as a minimum, aligned with RFMO and international systems for **foreign fishing vessels** and **regional fishing vessels**:
  - a. Name of fishing vessel
  - b. Previous name(s), if any
  - c. Flag State and port of registry
  - d. Previous details of deletion from other registries, if any
  - e. IMO number or UVI
  - f. IRCS
  - g. MMSI number
  - h. LOA
  - i. GT
  - j. Type of vessel
  - k. Fishing authorisations/licences, if any
  - l. RFMO authorisations, if any
  - m. Name and address of owner(s) and operator(s)
  - n. Photographs of the vessel
3. Information for **national fishing vessels** should be available in a compiled summary format including fishing vessel numbers, type and capacity.

# Article 13

## RRFV database

1. An RRFV database shall be established and managed by the MCSCC Secretariat to receive and store RRFV applications and to enable the compilation and storing of fishing vessel information by the MCSCC Secretariat.
2. Apart from information shared publicly as specified in Article 12, this RRFV database will be internal to the MCSCC Secretariat and State Parties, and respect confidentiality requirements as set out in the Information Code.
3. Extracted fisheries data and fishing vessel information from the RRFV database may be disclosed by the MCSCC Secretariat:
  - a. For the purpose of investigation or court trial when requested by a public prosecutor or Tribunal.
  - b. To State parties for patrol planning and operations according to agreed terms of access and confidentiality.
  - c. To third parties, including but not limited to the FAO Global Record, RFMOs, RFBs, as approved by the Board of Directors.
4. The RRFV database may include details on catch and effort to support efforts to manage fishing capacity and protect resources against over-exploitation.
5. The RRFV database may include results of risk assessments of fishing vessels performed by the MCSCC Secretariat and inspections made by State Parties.

# Article 14

## Authorisation, denial and removal

1. **Foreign fishing vessels** and regional fishing vessels meeting the applicable conditions and for which the application fees have been remitted shall be authorised onto the RRFV for a period of one year. The MCSCC Secretariat will include the fishing vessel details into the RRFV database and inform the owner/operator that the vessel is authorised. After one year, when the RRFV authorisation expires, a renewal application will be required with associated information requirements and fees.
2. **National fishing vessels** will be authorised onto the RRFV when State Parties have provided the required information, and this has been validated by the MCSCC Secretariat. The MCSCC Secretariat will include the fishing vessel details into the RRFV database and inform the State Party that the vessel is authorised.
3. A fishing vessel will be denied authorisation onto the RRFV if the information provided as part of the registration process is not accurate, authentic, and the truth.
4. A fishing vessel will be denied authorisation onto the RRFV if it does not fulfil the conditions set forth in this RRFV Code.

5. In the case of missing or inadequate information submitted in the application, for a **foreign fishing vessel** or **regional fishing vessel** the owner/operator will be advised and given 30 days to provide missing or further information. If on receipt of this information within the required time period, the fishing vessel is deemed to be compliant to the required conditions and all information is accurate, authentic, and the truth, it will be authorised with no further fees to the owner/operator.
6. In the case of 3 or 4 above, a **foreign fishing vessel** or **regional fishing vessel** will be denied RRFV authorisation. The MCSCC Secretariat will inform the following of the decision to not authorise the fishing vessel and the reason for non-authorisation:
  - a. The fishing vessel owner/operator
  - b. The flag State
  - c. All State Parties
  - d. Relevant RFMOs and RFBs
  - e. The Board of Directors
7. In the case of 4 above for a **national fishing vessel**, the MCSCC Secretariat and the State Party will cooperate to identify the missing or incorrect information and rectify the situation.
8. The owners/operators of a fishing vessel denied authorisation onto the RRFV may make a new application for the fishing vessel with all required information and payment of fees.
9. In the case of RRFV authorised fishing vessels, if it is identified that information provided in respect to an application process was not accurate, authentic, and the truth or that a fishing vessel contravenes the conditions for authorisation, the MCSCC Secretariat will inform the owner/operator and allow them 30 days to provide evidence to rectify the situation. If after 30 days this has not occurred the MCSCC Secretariat will remove the fishing vessel from the RRFV and inform the following of the decision to remove authorisation for the fishing vessel and the reason for removal of authorisation:
  - a. The fishing vessel owner/operator
  - b. The flag State
  - c. All State Parties
  - d. Relevant RFMOs and RFBs
  - e. The Board of Directors

# Article 15

## Relationship with the Charter Establishing MCSCC

The provisions of this RRFV Code shall be incorporated as an Annex to the Charter Establishing MCSCC and interpreted and applied together as a single instrument. In case of incompatibility between the present RRFV Code and the Charter Establishing MCSCC, the provisions of the Charter prevail.

# Article 16

## Amendments

1. Any State Party may, at any time after the entry into force of this RRFV Code, propose amendments to this RRFV Code and its Annexes by communicating the text of its proposal to the Depository, which shall promptly circulate any such proposal to all State Parties.
2. Amendments shall be adopted during a meeting of the State Parties following procedures set in the Charter Establishing MCSCC.

# Article 17

## Depository

1. As soon the State Parties agree, the original document of this RRFV Code shall be deposited with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat, which shall serve as Depository.
2. The Depository shall transmit certified copies of the Code to all State Parties.

# Annex:

## RRFV phased implementation approach 2025 to 2028

After approval of the RRFV Code by the SADC Committee of Ministers the following phased implementation approach will take place:

### Step one:

#### Preparation phase – 2025/2026

#### Development of institutional framework and procedures for the RRFV

The **Board of Directors** will be responsible to:

- Conclude the Host Country Agreement of the MCSCC with the Mozambican government.
- Appoint an Executive Director for the MCSCC Secretariat.
- Approve a RRFV fee structure as proposed by the MCSCC Secretariat.
- Approve procedures related to the implementation of the RRFV.
- Promote awareness on the RRFV.

The **MCSCC Secretariat** will be responsible to:

- Propose a fee structure for eligible fishing vessels.
- Open of dedicated MCSCC bank account for remittances of RRFV fees.
- Develop the procedures for applications for RRFV authorisation.
- Develop procedures for processing and management of applications and information.
- Develop and test the RRFV database and online application process.
- Develop the required capacity in the MCSCC Secretariat to implement the RRFV Code.
- Advise State Parties to implement the RRFV Code.
- Sensitise stakeholders including flag States and industry in respect to the RRFV.

**Step two:**

**Implementation of grace period – 2026/2027**

**Live testing of the RRFV**

The **Board of Directors** will be responsible to:

- Provide oversight and direction to the MCSCC Secretariat for RRFV implementation.
- Recommend annual budgets to the Committee of Ministers for the use of remittances from RRFV applications.
- Review RRFV procedures and documents submitted by the MCSCC Secretariat.

The **MCSCC Secretariat** will be responsible to:

- Process applications for RRFV authorisation for eligible fishing vessels.
- Advise State Parties to facilitate RRFV applications.
- Advise and sensitise stakeholders to apply for RRFV authorisation.
- Review progress of implementation of the RRFV and make adjustments as required.
- Report on the implementation of the RRFV to the Board of Directors and State Parties.

### Step three:

#### Full implementation – 2027/2028

#### Launch of the RRFV

The **Committee of Ministers** will be invited to:

- Launch the RRFV.

The **Board of Directors** will be responsible to:

- Provide oversight and direction to the MCSCC Secretariat for RRFV implementation.
- Recommend annual budgets to the Committee of Ministers for the use of remittances from RRFV applications.
- Review RRFV procedures and documents submitted by the MCSCC Secretariat.

The **MCSCC Secretariat** will be responsible to:

- Process applications for RRFV authorisation from eligible fishing vessel owners/operators and State Parties and include authorised fishing vessels in the RRFV.
- Keep an up-to-date public list of vessels authorised on the RRFV.
- Keep an up-to-date internal database with confidential fishing vessel information for fishing vessels authorised on the RRFV with access provided to State Parties.
- Establish a system for systematically assessing the risk of IUU fishing by RRFV authorised fishing vessels including through harmonised inspections of fishing vessels by State Parties and share this information with State Parties.
- Engage with relevant flag States, RFMOs, RFBs and other partners in matters relating to the implementation of the RRFV.
- Sensitise and attend to queries from stakeholders on the RRFV and its processes.
- Provide regular reports to State Parties and the Board of Directors on progress with implementation of the RRFV and the needs of the MCSCC Secretariat and State Parties for support to implement their obligations under this RRFV Code.

## Step four:

### Ongoing implementation – 2028 onwards

#### Routine operations of the RRFV

The **Committee of Ministers** will be invited to:

- Receive updates on implementation of the RRFV.
- Approve annual budgets related to use of remittances from RRFV applications.
- Periodically approve updates in the criteria and conditions for RRFV authorisation.

The **Board of Directors** will be responsible to:

- Provide oversight and direction to the MCSCC Secretariat for RRFV implementation.
- Recommend annual budgets to the Committee of Ministers for the use of remittances from RRFV applications.
- Review RRFV procedures and documents submitted by the MCSCC Secretariat.
- Periodically review the criteria and conditions for RRFV authorisation and make recommendations to the Committee of Ministers for updates.

The **MCSCC Secretariat** will be responsible to:

- Process applications for RRFV authorisation from eligible fishing vessel owners/operators and State Parties and include authorised fishing vessels in the RRFV.
- Inform relevant stakeholders of decisions to deny or remove fishing vessels from the RRFV.
- Keep an up-to-date public list of vessels authorised on the RRFV.
- Keep an up-to-date internal database with confidential fishing vessel information for fishing vessels authorised on the RRFV with access provided to State Parties.
- Implement systematic assessment of the risk of IUU fishing by RRFV authorised fishing vessels including through harmonised inspections of fishing vessels by State Parties and share this information with State Parties.
- Engage with relevant flag States, RFMOs, RFBs and other partners in matters relating to the implementation of the RRFV.
- Sensitise and attend to queries from stakeholders on the RRFV and its processes.
- Provide regular reports to State Parties and the Board of Directors on progress with implementation of the RRFV and the needs of the MCSCC Secretariat and State Parties for support to implement their obligations under this RRFV Code.
- Provide recommendations to the Board of Directors on adjustments to fees for RRFV authorisation.
- Share extracted fisheries data and fishing vessel information from the RRFV with third parties as approved by the Board of Directors.



