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Fourth meeting of the PSMA Technical Working Group on Information Exchange (TWG-IE4)¹

Panama city, Panama², 18-22 March 2024

THE GIES IN OPERATION

I. SUMMARY OF THE OUTCOMES OF RELEVANT PSMA MEETINGS

a. GRWG6

Recommendations from the Sixth meeting of the Global Record Informal open-ended technical and advisory Working Group (GRWG6), held in Rome on 12 December 2022, of relevance to this meeting:

- The GRWG considered that it would be useful to have a feedback system between the GIES and Global Record for the purpose of data conflict notification.
- The GRWG emphasised the importance of the Global Record as a tool to tackle IUU fishing, such as through its key role in supporting the implementation of various international instruments.

b. TWG-IE3

At the Third meeting of the Technical Working Group on Information Exchange (TWG-IE3), held in Rome on 13-14 December 2022, Parties stressed the importance of supplying and keeping updated information on National Contact Points (NCPs) and Designated Ports (DPs) for PSMA implementation. They agreed with integrating the PSMA application into the Global Information Exchange System (GIES) for better information sharing. Security enhancements in GIES, like user authentication and data protection, were also highlighted.

The discussion also focused on practical aspects, proposing a deadline for technical comments on GIES and the operationalisation in 2023 following the approval by the next meeting of the Parties. In anticipation of this launch, the TWG-IE3 made several recommendations for improving the current features of the system. Whilst the TWG-IE3 stressed that focus should remain on operationalisation, the group also provided guidance on future developments in the GIES.

Furthermore, participants recognized the crucial role of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) in supporting PSMA implementation including information exchange and hence the importance of interoperability between systems. Lastly, the TWG-IE recognized the need for terms of reference for the working group.

¹ To be held in Arabic, Chinese English, French, Russian and Spanish.

² To be held at the Hotel el Panama, Panama City, Panama.

c. STRATEGY WORKING GROUP

At the First meeting of the Strategy Ad Hoc Working Group in Rome, April 3-7, 2023, the group drafted a strategy to improve PSMA effectiveness. It was considered at MoP4, aiming to boost adherence to the PSMA and combat illegal fishing. Key points include:

- Encouraging more states to join the PSMA through awareness-raising and capacity-building efforts.
- Strengthening national and regional frameworks for PSMA implementation, including inter-agency cooperation and sharing best practices.
- Enhancing cooperation and information exchange among parties, including the establishment of a Global Information Exchange System (GIES).
- Improving port entry procedures and inspections to prevent illegal fishing activities.
- Encouraging flag States to cooperate with port states in enforcing PSMA measures.
- Prioritizing capacity development and considering financial and resource challenges for effective implementation.
- Establishing mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing PSMA implementation, with periodic updates to the strategy.

d. MOP4

The Fourth Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, held in Bali, Indonesia, from 8 to 12 May, concluded that:

- The Secretariat introduced document PSMA/2023/Inf.6 and provided further clarifications regarding security, confidentiality and interoperability of the GIES.
- Parties reiterated the importance of the GIES as a key element for the effective implementation of the Agreement and commended the Secretariat for developing the GIES.
- The Parties agreed on the operationalization of the GIES by the end of 2023. The use of GIES by Parties will be on a voluntary basis until the Parties decide otherwise. A “test version” of the GIES will continue being available for the Parties.
- Parties requested the Secretariat to continue raising awareness on the GIES and to deliver further technical assistance and capacity development to Parties and non-Party FAO Members intending to become a Party.
- Parties also requested the Secretariat to continue addressing possible data protection, data security and confidentiality issues, and ensuring the compatibility and interoperability of the GIES with other mechanisms and procedures for information exchange, including those of RFMOs and the United Nations Fisheries Language for Universal Exchange (UN/FLUX) standard, in cooperation with relevant multilateral and intergovernmental initiatives.
- Parties expressed their gratitude to the Government of Iceland for funding the development of the GIES and welcomed its intention to continue supporting the further development of the GIES.
- Parties adopted Terms of Reference for the Technical Working Group on Information Exchange (TWG-IE) (see Annex 1).
- The Parties agreed to adopt the Bali Strategy as a tool to provide guidance to the Parties moving forward in strengthening the implementation of the Agreement at national, regional and global level.

II. STATE OF AFFAIRS OF NATIONAL CONTACT POINTS AND DESIGNATED PORTS

Information on National Contact Points (NCPs) and Designated Ports (DPs) for the PSMA are provided by States to the FAO through a dedicated application, the PSMA Application for National Contact Point and Designate Ports³ (PSMA APP). The provision of this information by Parties to FAO, is not only required under the Agreement but is also key to the functioning of the GIES. Whilst the provision of information on DPs is limited to Parties to the PSMA, non-Parties may if they choose provide information on their NCP for PSMA related matter. To receive credentials in order to input information into the PSMA APP, States should contact the GIES Helpdesk at PSMA-GIES@fao.org.

The PSMA Secretariat, through its Help Desk, has been actively reaching out to States to encourage the submission of the information on NCPs and DPs and ensuring that this information remains updated.

The PSMA APP including the data fields related to the provision of information on NCPs and DPs were adopted at the Second Meeting of the Parties (MOP2), held in Santiago de Chile in 2019. The forms within the application are as follows:

Table 1 – National Authority and National Contact Point data fields

The form is titled "National Authority And Contact Point Registration Art.16(3)". It contains the following fields and sections:

- COUNTRY:** A dropdown menu.
- NATIONAL AUTHORITY TYPE:** A dropdown menu with the text "Select a type..." and a downward arrow.
- NATIONAL AUTHORITY NAME:** A text input field.
- PHONE:** A text input field with a "+" sign and a small box for the country code.
- FAX:** A text input field with a "+" sign and a small box for the country code.
- EMAIL:** A text input field.
- ADDRESS:** A large text input field.
- AUTHORITY WEB SITE:** A text input field.
- MAIN CONTACT:** A section containing:
 - FIRST NAME:** A text input field.
 - LAST NAME:** A text input field.
 - TITLE / POSITION:** A text input field.
 - PHONE:** A text input field with a "+" sign and a small box for the country code.
 - FAX:** A text input field with a "+" sign and a small box for the country code.
 - EMAIL:** A text input field.
- NOTES:** A large text input field.
- MANDATORY FIELDS:** A red label indicating which fields are required.
- Buttons:** "Cancel" and "Submit" buttons at the bottom right.

This form requests two contacts within the country, one related to the national authority and the other being the main contact (person), together being designated as the National Contact Points for PSMA related matters under the Agreement.

³ www.fao.org/port-state-measures/operational-resources/psma-app/en/

Table 2 – Designated Ports data fields

Registration Of Designated Ports (Article 7)			
Record id		New Record	
COUNTRY: *	PORT LOCATION *		
	<input type="text"/>		
PORT NAME *			
<input type="text"/>			
LOCAL PORT NAME (IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE)			
<input type="text"/>			
PORT MAIN AUTHORITY			
<input type="text"/>			
ADDRESS			
<input type="text"/>			
PHONE	FAX	EMAIL:	
+ <input type="text"/>	+ <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
PORT WEB SITE			
<input type="text"/>			
ADVANCE REQUEST FOR PORT ENTRY (ART. 8)		OPENING HOURS FOR PORT SERVICES	
DD	HH	MM	
0	0	0	
LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		UN/LOCODE
° ' "	° ' "		
...
NOTES			MANDATORY FIELDS
<input type="text"/>			
<input type="button" value="Cancel"/>		<input type="button" value="Submit"/>	

Regarding the designation of ports, each Party shall designate and publicize the ports to which vessels may request access in accordance with the PSMA Agreement, and provide this list to FAO which shall give it due publicity.

a. STATUS OF NATIONAL CONTACT POINTS

The provision of NCPs is key to the effective implementation of the PSMA, including for the functioning of the GIES. As stressed by MOP and the TWG-IE as several meetings, Parties are called on to ensure that information on their NCPs are provided to FAO and kept updated.

As of 20 February 2024, information on **86 National Contact Points** have been provided to FAO through the PSMA APP. This information can be viewed on the PSMA website through the PSMA APP viewer⁴. Table 3 below lists the Parties that have yet to upload information on their National Contact Point into the PSMA application, as of 20 February 2024.

⁴ www.fao.org/fishery/port-state-measures/psmaapp/?locale=en&action=qry.

Table 3: Parties that have yet to upload NCPs

Parties that haven't uploaded National Contact Points (NCPs) (14 Parties /23 States)	
Barbados	Mauritania
Djibouti	Montenegro
Dominica	Namibia
Eritrea	Russian Federation
European Union*	Saint Kitts and Nevis
Grenada	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Maldives	Sudan

*The following European Union Member States have not provided information on their NCPs: Austria, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Non-Parties are also encouraged to designate a NCPs to receive notifications from the GIES. Table 4 below lists the Non-Parties that have uploaded information on their National Contact Point into the PSMA application, as of 20 February 2024.

Table 4: Non-Parties that have designated Its National Contact Points

Non-Parties that have provided NCPs	
Belize	Marshall Islands
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Papua New Guinea
Colombia	Switzerland
Guatemala	Uganda
Malaysia	

b. STATUS OF DESIGNATED PORTS

As of 20 February 2024, **610 Ports** by 70 States have been designated through the PSMA APP. This information can be viewed on the PSMA website through the PSMA APP viewer⁵. Table 5 below lists the Parties that have yet to upload information on DPs into the PSMA application, as of 20 February 2024. It should be noted however that no functionality has at present been provided for Parties to specify that they do not have designated ports under the PSMA, due to not allowing vessels of relevance to the PSMA to access or use their ports or being landlocked.

⁵ www.fao.org/fishery/port-state-measures/psmaapp/?locale=en&action=qry

Table 5: Parties that have not uploaded DPs

Parties that haven't uploaded their list of designated ports (DPs) (24 Parties /30 States)	
Albania	Mauritania
Bahamas	Montenegro
Barbados	Namibia
Cambodia	Nicaragua
Cote d'Ivoire	Palau
Djibouti	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Dominica	Sierra Leone
Eritrea	Sudan
European Union*	Timor-Leste
Grenada	Tonga
Guyana	Turkey
Liberia	United States of America

*The following European Union Member States have not provided their list of DPs: Austria, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Luxemburg, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

III. STATE OF AFFAIRS OF THE OPERATIONAL GLOBAL INFORMATION EXCHANGE SYSTEM (GIES)

In May 2023 at MOP4 the Parties agreed to the operationalization of the GIES by the end of 2023, with the use of GIES being voluntary until Parties decide otherwise.

The first operational version of the GIES was launched⁶ by FAO on 18 December 2023. This first operational version included, as agreed by the Parties, the denials of entry or use of port (DEN) and the port inspection report (PIR) following Annex C of the Agreement, as well as notifications to those involved as per Articles 9, 11, and 15.

The DEN and PIR forms are structured (fully electronic) forms using international reference lists (code lists), where available including those listed in Annex D and follow common practice in other relevant systems like the FAO Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (Global Record) and those of RFMOs.

Since its launch, several Parties have started populating the GIES with information and consequently notifications have been sent out to relevant recipients. A new dedicated webpage⁷ has been launched in December 2023 to provide background information on the GIES and a link to the application.

a. ACCESS AND DATA ON THE GIES

The GIES is currently only accessible to Parties. The first step for a Party to gain access to the GIES is providing information on the NCP. Once this has been provided, Parties are requested to provide their list of users to for the system.

As at 23 February 2024, 56 Parties (68 States) have been provided access to the GIES with the remaining 14 Parties (23 States) not having communicated information on their NCP to FAO through the PSMA APP.

⁶ www.fao.org/port-state-measures/news-events/detail/en/c/1673989/

⁷ www.fao.org/port-state-measures/operational-resources/gies/en/

Access to the GIES will also be provided to the Secretariats of regional fishery management organisations, these account types are expected to be finalised prior to TWG-IE4.

As at 23 February 2024, 92 inspection reports have been submitted through the GIES. No denials of entry into port or denials of use of port have been submitted through the system.

b. GIES NOTIFICATIONS, USE OF NCPs AND ACCESS TO REPORTS

Depending on the information compiled in a form on the GIES, the system automatically selects certain entities to be notified once that form is submitted.

In the case of denials of entry or use of port, the system automatically selects the port State and the flag State of the vessel in question. The same applies to inspection reports, with the additional inclusion of the State of which the vessel's master is a national (as per Article 15 of the Agreement), assuming this information has been included in the report. Any additional relevant entities to be notified need to be selected manually by the user compiling the report, such as any relevant coastal State or RFMO.

Notifications to States are sent to the email addresses provided as NCP in the PSMA APP⁸. Email address for other entities not considered by the system or for States not having provided an NCP can be added manually by the user. However, to ensure receipt of relevant reports to the relevant authorities, provision and update of NCP information through the PSMA APP is necessary.

Notifications consist of an email message with limited descriptive information about the form submitted in the GIES and a link to the GIES for full access to the complete form through use of access credentials. Any data fields that may contain sensitive or private data is not included in the email. Only those entities that have been listed to be notified within a form will be able to view the form, assuming that they have credentials to access the system.

c. Use of Designated Ports within the system

As per Article 7(1) of the Agreement, Parties are required to submit their list of designated ports to FAO. The submission of this list of ports should be conducted through the PSMA APP. These designated ports are then required at several instances within the GIES. Data fields 'Intended port of call' within the denial forms and 'Port of inspection' within the inspection report form require the user to select from their country's list of designated ports, calling upon the list submitted in the PSMA APP. The 'Port of last call' field within the inspection report form also allows users to select from the designated port list of the selected State of last port call, should this list be available on the system. However in this case the system also allows free entry of the port name, allowing for scenarios where for example the vessels last port call was not covered under the PSMA.

As with any structured system translated to several languages and sharing information among numerous different players, the key information to be shared needs to the extent possible limit the use of free entry text. Using reference list, even custom ones such as those of the designated ports, enhances data quality and facilitates the task of data matching between two systems and is hence essential for interoperability between the GIES and national and regional ePSM systems. Furthermore, the use of structured data as opposed to free entry text, allows for searchability of data and hence the potential for added value down the line such as data filtering or processing.

A key advantage for example is that it is readable by all such systems in use by the different users and recipients by means of using agreed reference lists including international codes. In this line, the TWG-IE has often referred to the United Nations Location Code (UNLOCODE) as the preferred code list for fields related to ports.

⁸ www.fao.org/port-state-measures/operational-resources/psma-app/en/

d. ROLE OF NON-PARTIES

The role of non-Parties to the PSMA within the GIES has not been discussed at this stage, with the GIES for now only being accessible to Parties. Nonetheless, non-Parties may receive notifications of denial or inspections report forms being submitted onto the GIES, for example in the case that the form is concerning a vessel flagged to their State. Indeed, the PSMA does not distinguish between Parties or non-Parties with regard the relevant States that should be notified in the case of a denial or port inspection.

At present however, non-Parties would only receive the email notification with no way of seeing the complete form and therefore would not be able to take any follow up action as may be relevant. Whilst attaching a PDF of the form within the email would be the simplest solution, this would present data security risks. View-only access to relevant reports could however be provided to non-Parties through personalised accounts.

e. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA SECURITY

Confidentiality and data security were the subjects of detailed and exhaustive discussions during the third meeting of the TWG-IE, as noted in the report of the meeting (available at TWG-IE/4/2024/Inf.6).

The operational version of GIES observes strict confidentiality rules and high data security standards, in consideration of sensitive data being exchanged in the system. Restricted access is secured through password protected login and authentication and only summary non-sensitive information is shared through the notifications.

To ensure a high level of account security, accounts were not carried over from the GIES pilot phase and a rule was implemented not allowing the use of generic email addresses (which can be accessed by multiple persons), as this would increase risks related to, sharing of passwords, data leaks and a loss of traceability.

Beyond this, data sensitivity was also taken into consideration with regard to the email notifications sent out by the system, ensuring that they do not contain any sensitive information.

IV. REVIEW OF REGIONAL INFORMATION EXCHANGE SYSTEMS AND CONNECTIONS TO GIES

a. RFMO ACCESS TO THE GIES

As of 23 February 2024, accounts for RFMOs to access the GIES have not yet been implemented, however they are planned to be introduced prior to the holding of the TWG-IE4. As described in section 3b of this document, RFMOs can be selected as relevant entities by port States when compiling a form. Such forms, when submitted, have been sending notification to RFMOs. Once accounts are provided to RFMO Secretariats, they will be able to view all submitted reports in the GIES from which they were selected as relevant entities. These accounts however will not have the functionality to draft, edit or submit reports.

b. BACKGROUND AND CURRENT STATUS WITH REGARD TO CONNECTING WITH RFMOs

During the development phase and pilot phase of the GIES the PSMA Secretariat approached a number of Parties and regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements (RFMO/As) to gather information about the current status of exchange of fisheries control information.

Parties, through the MOP, repeatedly called for cooperation with RFMO/As for the development and implementation of GIES, and for FAO to develop the GIES taking into account the interoperability of the system with other systems.

The PSMA Secretariat organized an RFMO/As informal meeting back-to-back with the third meeting of the TWG-IE, several bilateral meetings with Secretariats of RFMO/As, participated to some annual meetings of RFMO/As and conducted assessment missions to 5 Parties to assess the status of preparedness for automatic connections of regional and national systems to the GIES.

Few instances of electronic and compliant systems were found for automatic connections to take place.

c. REGIONAL PSM INFORMATION SYSTEMS

The most advanced of the regional e-PSM systems being the fully electronic and operational e-PSM of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and the partially electronic and operational e-PSC of the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC). Work is currently underway to connect both systems to the GIES and make them fully compliant in terms of data fields and standards. Most other RFMO/As approached either do not currently have a system in place or rely on inspection forms in PDF format being exchanged through email attachments with the Secretariats. The latter mechanism presents several shortcomings including:

- 1) security risk as emails can be hacked and DENs and PIRs contain confidential information;
- 2) Secretariats intervening in inputting metadata from PDF forms into a regional system with the subsequent cost incurred to the Secretariats and risk of introducing errors in the data; and
- 3) the inability to make full use of the information collected and shared due to the fact that the data is not structured/electronic (limited analysis possible) and possibly not fully compatible with international standards and mechanisms for information exchange making the sharing of that data with other regions and the global systems not possible in an automatic way.

d. NATIONAL PSM INFORMATION SYSTEMS

With regards to Parties, and following assessment missions by FAO, Panamá and Thailand have respective electronic systems and work is very advanced for automatic connections to be fully operationalized with GIES. Other Parties approached have systems capable of connecting in a short to medium timeframe (with the target being MOP5) such as Uruguay and Ecuador and other Parties programmed for assessment missions, such as Fiji, gave preliminary indications of being well positioned for a medium term connection.

TWG-IE/4/2024/4 summarizes the most recent status of development and implementation of information exchange systems and mechanisms developed by RFMO/As (table 1) and Parties (table 2) found to date. Although this is not an exhaustive list but it provides a general overview of the status quo of global information exchange of fisheries control data and information.

The information presented has been cross-checked with those RFMO/As listed on the tables.

Additionally, table 3 and 4 of TWG-IE/4/2024/4 provide a tentative work plan to continue advancing the connections. All current connections are being implemented through Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) purportedly developed. Connections through the Fisheries Language for Universal eXchange (FLUX) standard and transportation layer (TL) are not foreseen during 2024, although preparations are underway.

The summary table of status of connections will:

- a) raise awareness of the status of readiness for automatic connections with GIES, which is essential for a fully operational GIES and an adequate level of implementation of electronic

exchange of information as per the provisions of PSMA, as well as to alleviate the burden of double reporting for Parties, in particular for developing State Parties with small administrations;

- b) provide overall appraisal of e-PSM systems for Parties that are Contracting Parties or Members of several RFMO/As, to better understand and assess the best way to fulfil their obligations in relation to information sharing as Parties to the PSMA;
- c) facilitate monitoring the advancement of implementation of the GIES through its operational connections with regional and national systems;
- d) facilitate the monitoring and effectiveness of the PSMA.

The PSMA Secretariat maintains a close working relationship with the NEAFC Secretariat and IOTC Secretariats and has reached out to the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), the ICCAT, the WCPFC, the FFA, the SPRFMO, and the SPC and is planning to reach out to NAFO, IATTC, CCMLAR, NPFC, etc. during the course of 2024 to be able to update the summary table and the connection work plans to report to the fifth meeting of the TWG-IE (TWG-IE5) planned for early 2025, prior to MOP5.

V. GIES ROLE IN THE INTEGRATION OF PORT STATE MEASURES WITH THE BROADER FRAMEWORK OF PORT STATE CONTROL

Article 5 of the Agreement on Integration and coordination at the national level states that “*Each Party shall, to the greatest extent possible: (a) integrate or coordinate fisheries related port State measures with the broader system of port State controls; (b) integrate port State measures with other measures to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing and fishing related activities in support of such fishing, [...]; (c) take measures to exchange information among relevant national agencies and to coordinate the activities of such agencies in the implementation of this Agreement.*”

As for point (a),

the FAO/ILO/IMO ad hoc Joint Working Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing and Related Matters (JWG) through its fifth session (JWG5) held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 8-12 January 2024 addressed the matter of the integration or coordination of port State measures with the broader framework of port State control.

The JWG5 recommended in section 5.1 (Agreement on Port State Measures) paragraph 3, that “*FAO, ILO and IMO to continue advancing the development of guidance documents to increase coordination and information exchange among fisheries, maritime and labour authorities of Parties for effective implementation of international instruments of the three Organizations.*” And on paragraph 4, that “*FAO, ILO and IMO Members to consider ways to enhance integrating existing information systems at national level for efficient coordination, cooperation and information exchange among fisheries, maritime, labour and other relevant authorities of Parties to the relevant agreements*”.

In it section 7.1 (PSMA Global Information Exchange System) the JWG5 recommended in paragraph 32 that “*FAO, ILO and IMO Members that are Parties to the PSMA to further utilize GIES to improve their risk analysis particularly when processing advanced requests for port entry and making decisions on which vessels should be inspected.*” And on paragraph 33 that “*FAO, ILO and IMO to explore ways to facilitate information exchange from the GIES to inform risk analysis of maritime and labour matters, and from IMO and ILO information systems to further inform risk analysis in the fisheries sector.*”

In paragraph 35, the JWG 5 recommends that “*FAO and IMO to re-establish the hyperlink between the FAO Global Record and IMO GISIS, as well as other relevant systems, as an efficient way of accessing additional relevant information about the vessel.*”

Additionally, on section 7.4 (Data information systems) paragraph 39, the JWG 5 recommends that “*FAO, IMO and other relevant organizations to promote the implementation of relevant international standards and instruments, such as UN/LOCODE and UN/FLUX, to enhance communication and electronic exchange of data for sustainable fisheries management.*”

Finally on section 7.6 (Compliance information and intelligence exchange) the JWG5 recommends in its paragraph 42 that “*FAO, IMO, ILO to strengthen international cooperation on compliance information exchange, including considering the potential use of the GIES, as appropriate, to develop indicators of compliance of fishing vessels.*”

Point (b),

was well addressed in the working document⁹ presented to TWG-IE3 although from the global perspective, in its section VIII titled “Role of the GIES in support of the implementation of international instruments and related tools”.

Point (c),

Refers to the single window that is present in many Parties and non-Parties.

The subcommittee on fisheries management in its first session held virtually from 15-18 January 2024, in its paragraph 36 “*commended FAO for developing the necessary tools to facilitate information exchange, such as the Global Information Exchange System (GIES), supporting the implementation of the PSMA and complementary instruments, and requested FAO to continue raising awareness on the GIES and to deliver further technical assistance and capacity development to parties*”.

The GIES is called to play a key role in the fight against IUU fishing through an adequate and effective implementation of port State measures and likely also in support of IMO and ILO objectives with regards to the safety and labour matters on fishing vessels. Further collaboration at national, regional and global levels can support the mandate of the three organizations. Parties could advice on ways to progress on the above.

VI. REVIEW OF THE FUNCTIONALITIES OF THE CURRENT VERSION OF THE GIES AND ADDITIONAL FUNCTIONS TO BE DEVELOPED

a. Current functionalities of the GIES

The GIES includes a number of features apart from the DEN and PIR forms and automatic notifications.

The GIES is connected to the FAO Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels¹⁰ (Global Record) allowing for the pre-fill of relevant information included in the Global Record about the foreign vessel being denied entry or use of port, or inspected.

This feature facilitates the verification of information provided by the vessel in the advanced request of port entry (article 8, Annex A), highlighting any possible changes executed by the user.

This first version of GIES is not only multi-device compatible but also includes a dark mode feature, permitting the use of the system in differing environments and lighting situations, such as during a nighttime port inspection, reducing eye strain and improving battery life.

⁹ www.fao.org/3/cc3044en/cc3044en.pdf

¹⁰ www.fao.org/global-record/information-system/en/

The GIES operates in the six official languages of the FAO and users can set up their preferences for languages, working hours and other matters in a dedicated section within the account settings.

The GIES offers a simple but practical filtering and search functionality allowing users to quickly identify PIRs or DENs submitted on their vessels, reported within their ports or still in draft.

In addition to the ability to save and edit draft forms, the GIES also uses an advanced caching mechanism allowing users to restore unsaved drafts and thus work in (remote) environments with poor internet connectivity.

Additionally, the current operational version of the GIES permits the upload of several file attachments types and formats (e.g., PDF, JPEG, JPG and PNG) relative to the use case, such as the advanced request of port entry (ARPE), DEN or PIR, as required by the user.

Contacts for notification, including the State of nationality of the captain, the flag State of the vessel and the port State, are automatically inferred by the system according to the data inserted by the user. Other relevant entities or individuals, such as coastal States, RFMOs or vessel agents, can be added manually, as required. Future versions of the GIES will focus on automatizing this process to the extent possible.

Security-wise, in addition to robust password protection and authentication checks, the GIES enforces a mandatory time-out preventing unauthorized access to accounts left idle.

When populating a PIR or DEN, the GIES automatically detects and allows for input of the user-specific time zone. By default, this is set to UTC. A series of standardized reference lists are used (and updated) to ensure coherence with internationally recognized coding systems (including those specified in Annex D of the Agreement), such as:

- Countries/territories: ISO-3166 3-alpha Country Code
- Species: ASFIS 3-alpha code (known as FAO 3-alpha code)
- Vessel types: ISSCFV code (known as FAO alpha code)
- Gear types: ISSCFG code (known as FAO alpha code)
- Areas: FAO Major Fishing Areas, Divisions and Subdivisions

Through the interactive user interface, GIES users are automatically guided in the completion of the PIR and DEN forms, through color-coded indicators and feedback illustrating incomplete fields and / or modules required to complete the form.

b. FEEDBACK FROM PARTIES

Since the TWG-IE3, in following with the recommendations of the Parties the Secretariat has focused on perfecting the base features of the GIES and ensure its operationalisation by the end of 2023. Many aspects were addressed in the intersessional period, this includes specific requests made at the TWG-IE3, including:

- Added the functionality to allow for multiple fishing areas and species within fields of the authorisation module;
- Reviewed the reference list of RFMOs within the GIES and ensured that it is comprehensive;
- Allowed for an option for free entry for port related fields within GIES reports;
- Removed the list of “Actions taken” within inspection result module, instead it is free entry of information;
- Added the functionality to allow for multiple entries for fishing areas within catch inspection section of the inspection report;
- Removed data field “evidence of IUU fishing”;
- Increased the number and type attachments that can be attached to reports in the application;

- Included RFMO and MMSI vessel identifiers and allowed States to use any of the identifiers when the vessel has no IMO number; and
- Further improvements to security within the application.

Other requests are in the workplan including:

- Ability to download published reports notified to the State within the application in PDF format; and
- A feedback mechanism whereby Global Record NFPs of the flag State would be notified when a vessel entered within the GIES is not in the Global Record, or the information on a vessel is outdated.

Whilst another request for the inclusion of an alert system in the application so that NCPs of neighbouring states could be notified when a vessel has been suspected of having conducted IUU fishing activity would need further consideration. Specifically, on how the system would define a neighbouring State, and to what extent information could be shared with those States.

c. PLANS FOR THE PSMA APP MIGRATION

The PSMA APP is an online tool launched by FAO in June 2018 to collect information from States about National Contact Points (NCP) and Designated Ports (DP), then make this information publicly available. It uses an obsolete technology so it must be rewritten entirely and causes complications for States and the Secretariat with the need to manage and use different applications and credentials for sharing information related to PSMA implementation. As agreed during the TWG-IE3, the functions within the PSMA App will be integrated into the GIES with special attention to these aspects:

- No new mandatory data fields will be added;
- data in PSMA APP will be migrated to GIES;
- private data will be clearly identified as such in the data encoding forms so as to comply with private data protection regulations;
- existing advanced search and data export functions will be reimplemented as is with NCP and DP information being publicly searchable and accessible, with the exception of any private data fields which would require a user to be logged for them to be visible;
- consideration will be taken to allow for non-Party to input NCP information;
- facilitate bulk upload of DPs;
- on top of the existing authority and main contact, the option to add additional alternate contacts
- optional data fields within the DP form, whereby Parties can specify which services are available to vessels in those port

A fully working implementation containing at least the key functions of this migration is expected to be available in the GIES in mid-2024.

Depending on the usefulness and interest, a new API could also be developed down the line to allow for automated submission or retrieval of NCP and DP information, as well as a FLUX version.

d. ADVANCED USER MANAGEMENT

As the GIES user community keeps growing, a centralized approach to user management becomes problematic. Also, some Parties expressed their interest in creating and maintaining GIES user accounts by themselves in a decentralized way. Also, Parties requested the possibility to have finer-grained user access control to allow for different user profiles within the GIES.

This development would include the creation of the profiles with each having specific permissions within the system, also allowing States to observe a need-to-know principle with regard to user accounts. A set of new screens will need to be implemented on the user interface to allow for creation

of user account by States and the selection and editing of profiles for each account. Documentation will also need to be created to explain the functioning of this feature in the GIES. At this stage, the expected profiles to be included are reflected in Table 6 below, however these could be modified or expanded upon at a later date, especially with the additions of new functionalities in the application down the line.

Table 6: projected profiles expected to be implemented together with the development of the advanced user management functionality.

Permission	GIES Profiles			
	Admin	Reader	Approver	Drafter
Can draft new forms	X		X	X
Can submit and view all forms created by own country	X		X	
Can view forms relevant to user State submitted by own State or other States	X	X	X	
Can create and edit accounts within own country	X			
Notes	Profile type can only be created by PSMA Helpdesk			

e. Advanced request for port entry

With the two main forms needed for the GIES have been completed, namely the DEN and PIR, the next form planned for development would be the advanced request for port entry (ARPE), a feature positively considered at both the TWG-IE3 and MOP3. The data fields of this form would be in line with Annex A of the Agreement and would be expected to be fairly straightforward, as it would use the same reference lists and functionalities as found within the DEN and PIR forms, and therefore would essentially be an adaptation of something that is already present in the system.

The main difference is that in the case of the ARPE the system would need to consider new types of users, as this form would be expected to be compiled by vessel representatives. Moving the reporting burden onto vessel representatives for the compilation of the ARPE directly in the GIES, could have significant beneficial impact on Parties actively using the GIES. The creation of the ARPE in the GIES would initiate a workflow, whereby the State would need to approve or reject entry and/or use of port. To report on follow-up action following the ARPE, the system could auto-compile all relevant fields from the ARPE into the DEN or PIR thereby reducing substantially the compilation effort by the State with the data only needing to be reviewed by the State user.

This feature could also play a key role in improving the workflow of the system, providing the first entry point from which to link the other reports. Furthermore, any risk analysis carried out by the system would likely be provided at the stage when the port State receives the ARPE.

f. UN/FLUX

A UN Fisheries Language for Universal eXchange (UN/FLUX) interface for the port inspection report domain will be developed which will allow for the exchange of PIRs. Parties that have been added as Contact to a report will be able to search or retrieve PIRs using the FLUX interface. This entails the

design, development, and implementation of the UN/FLUX standard within the GIES as an alternative to the already available API for machine-to-machine exchange of information.

At a later date, following considerations for the need of a new domain to be created at UN/CEFACT for this purpose, a similar FLUX interface can also be developed for the port denials.

VII. USE OF THE GIES IN THE MONITORING OF EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE “BALI STRATEGY”

Article 24 of the Agreement (Monitoring, review and assessment) indicates in its paragraph 1 the following: *“Parties shall, within the framework of FAO and its relevant bodies, ensure the regular and systematic monitoring and review of the implementation of this Agreement, as well as the assessment of progress made towards achieving its objective”*.

Additionally, paragraph 2 states that *“Four years after the entry into force of this Agreement, FAO shall convene a meeting of the Parties to review and assess the effectiveness of this Agreement in achieving its objective. The Parties shall decide on further such meetings as necessary.”*

The first paragraph thus refers to the implementation of the Agreement (by Parties) and the second part to its effectiveness.

The effectiveness of the Agreement is to be reviewed through the Strategy working group and Review Sessions of MOP, every 4 years and possibly decisions to be taken on actions to be implemented by Parties to improve the effectiveness of the Agreement.

The implementation of the Agreement would now also be monitored and reviewed through the Strategy and Monitoring Working Group (SMWG) with new TORs to be developed by Parties, and the MOP at every regular session (every two years).

Furthermore, the Bali Strategy states in its paragraph 20 that *“Parties should continue using the PSMA Questionnaire for self-assessment of their implementation of the Agreement. Parties should consider additional means for monitoring the implementation of the Agreement.”* And in its paragraph 22 that *“Parties should consider regular monitoring of the implementation of the Agreement, through consideration of all relevant data, including in particular aggregated data provided by the Secretariat based on questionnaires, on the GIES use, on the outcome of the regional coordination meetings, through a working group on effective implementation [...]”*.

Parties have thus agreed to monitor the implementation of the Agreement and to assess its effectiveness in reducing IUU fishing.

Two tools developed by the Parties can play a key role in the monitoring of PSMA: the PSMA questionnaires and the GIES. Used in conjunction they could help get metrics about the level of implementation of PSMA and by individual Parties.

a. PARTIES' IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PSMA

Currently there is no precise and detailed assessment of the level of implementation of the PSMA by the Parties.

As an initial approach, information from the questionnaires and GIES can be analysed on a Party-by-Party basis to extract metrics on the level of implementation by individual Parties.

As an example, annual aggregated (total) numbers of foreign vessels requesting access to designated ports can be compiled (TOT # ARPE) from the questionnaire for now, although it is based on self-

reporting, and eventually through the GIES. Same for the total number of denials (TOT # DEN) reported through GIES. This will give an initial indication of the level of IUU detection through risk analysis. Then the total number of annual inspections reported through the GIES and the total number of annual inspections having detected an apparent infringement (AI) can also be compiled from the GIES.

Example:

TOT #ARPE = 5000 (this would represent the **baseline** for foreign vessel activity in PSMA Parties ports)

TOT #DEN = 50

Ratio TOT #DEN/TOT #ARPE = 0.01 (**1% of denied entries**)

TOT #PIR = 500

Ratio TOT #PIR / (TOT # ARPE – TOT#DEN) = 0.101 (10.1 % would be the **average level of inspection** applied by Parties)

TOT #PIR-AI = 100

Ratio TOT #PIR-AI / TOT #PIR = 0.2 (**20 % of inspections with apparent infringement**)

Due consideration has then to be given to interpretation of results, for example, whether an increased level of detection in subsequent years can be allocated to a global increase in IUU fishing or to an increase in the effectiveness of its detection by Parties.

These metrics would also allow Parties to take action and adjust the level and priorities for inspections (Article 12) to be sufficient to achieve the objective of the Agreement.

Additionally, information provided through the responses to the questionnaire could be checked against information submitted through the GIES (i.e., number of foreign vessels received per year, number of ARPE, number of inspections, etc).

For example, a Party reporting through the questionnaire having received 1000 foreign vessels annually, and having submitted through the GIES 5 inspections (0.005 ratio, i.e., inspecting 0.5% of vessels entering its DPs), might not be very effective in contributing to the global goal of the Agreement and might need to adjust the level of inspections. Similarly, a Party receiving 1000 foreign vessels per year, having inspected 10% of them (i.e., 100 PIR) and having found no apparent infringement (AI) year after year, might be an indicator that, either the Party is not implementing PSMA adequately, or is receiving only vessels from very responsible flag States, or the levels of IUU fishing have dramatically dropped and worldwide compliance has increased.

The PSMA Secretariat would compile the quantitative metrics and its interpretation would be delegated to the SMWG and MOP.

b. LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PSMA

Number of Parties have exponentially increased, which is a good indicator of intentions, and many have reported (through the PSMA questionnaire and other means) on their implementation measures (including legislative reviews, strengthening of institutional set up, streamlining and coordinating operational procedures, collaborating with other Parties, non-Parties and RFMO/As, etc.). However, there is no quantitative and objective baseline for measuring the implementation of the Agreement as a whole.

Through the responses to the questionnaires and the use of the GIES by Parties, a baseline measure can be established against which to gauge progress through time.

However, for this to be representative, all Parties should be using the GIES.

Quantitative trends can be assessed annually through the SMWG and presented to MOP.

For both options, it is essential to ensure high participation to the GIES, as there are currently no other means to compile or analyse the overall level of implementation of the Agreement and/or its implementation by individual Parties.

c. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PSMA IN FIGHTING IUU FISHING

The effectiveness of the PSMA in achieving its objective of fighting IUU fishing could be assessed in several ways. Some may focus on quantitative analysis and others in qualitative ones and the reference level (baseline) against which the assessment is done can also vary.

It may refer to a measure of the overall implementation by Parties (quantitative) or to a qualitative assessment of how well the implementation is executed or measured against the ongoing prevalence of IUU fishing, which is difficult to determine, or through other ways and interpretations.

In any case the assessment of the effectiveness of PSMA would most likely have to rely again on information provided through the questionnaires and the GIES.

VIII. WORKPLAN AND STRATEGY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GIES

Following the official launch of the GIES on 18 December 2023, FAO developed a work plan and strategy for the continued development, implementation and maintenance of the GIES supported by funds made available by the Government of Iceland through the GCP/INT/036/ICE project. Additionally, through the new GCP/GLO/1200/EC project, financial support will be available for the GIES Help Desk and development work related to the use of the UN/ FLUX standard for automatic connections.

The 2024-25 workplan (up to MOP5) includes the following main features:

- ✓ Advanced user management
 - Enhance coordination at the national level through the decentralization of the account management process to NCPs.
- ✓ Migration of the PSMA APP for NCPs and DPs to the GIES technology and environment
 - Facilitate NCP and DP uploads directly through the GIES, with additional mechanisms for bulk-upload of DPs, non-Party access and account registration.
- ✓ Advanced notification features (feedback mechanism with GR)
 - A feedback mechanism notifying Global Record NFPs when a vessel entered in the GIES does not coincide with (or exist in) the Global Record.
- ✓ Advance request for port entry (ARPE)
 - To allow the secure exchange of information between foreign vessels and port authorities to request entry and use of port.
- ✓ Risk analysis (vessel profile)
 - To support port authorities in analysing a vessel's risk profile automatically computed by the GIES.
- ✓ Online training and backstopping support through the GIES Help Desk
 - Continued support to States and contribution to the development, maintenance and promotion of the GIES.

- ✓ Technical assistance missions to several beneficiary countries to assess status of preparedness to connect with GIES
 - To be delivered in two stages. Firstly, through the assessment of compliance with global and regional information exchange requirements. Secondly, through a follow-up mission to assist with the upgrade of systems to comply with GIES requirements.
- ✓ Progress towards GIES becoming UN/FLUX compliant
- ✓ Advance on UN/FLUX implementation for GIES, including through the development of core functionalities and business requirements to achieve compliance. Advance connections with existing systems
 - Improve existing connections with national and regional systems, including through the further development of APIs, to achieve full compliance with GIES data requirements.

The **implementation strategy** for the GIES should be underpinned at least by the following four elements:

- a) Secure long-term maintenance of the current system;
- b) Develop and implement key and necessary features, such as ARPE and risk analysis, to support developing State Parties;
- c) Secure capacity development support, through the HD, technical assistance and training as well as development of communications and training materials;
- d) Interconnectivity with global, regional and national systems for enhanced effectiveness and eliminate burden from small administrations.

Throughout work with Parties, and lessons learnt from operational systems such as the e-PSM of the IOTC, it is very clear that three aspects remain key for a successful implementation, and are critical for developing States participation:

1. Move/push the (electronic) data input burden to the vessel operator (master, agent, etc.), who is ultimately interested in entering/using the port, through an electronic advance request of port entry (ARPE), as a condition to request entry or use of port.

The subsequent workflow makes use of this data plus that retrieved from the FAO Global Record to pre-fill sections of the DEN or PIR to the extent possible. The port State user would only have to fill in information strictly relevant to the action taken (denial or inspection) and verification of the pre-filled information, much of which is “guaranteed” through an updated Global Record (vessel identification and characteristics, ownership, licenses). The system could also automatically produce documentation in support of port State decisions, e.g., permission of port entry granted conditioned to inspection, permission of port use granted, denial of port entry, and these be transmitted to the vessel operator, flag State and those relevant to the specific case.

2. Some level of risk analysis to be made available through the GIES, based on information contained in it (certified control/compliance information).

This will give assurances, especially to developing States with limited resources, about the perceived level of compliance through the GIES for a specific vessel. This information would be the basis for an initial assessment of the risk and support the verification of the information and taking adequate decisions leading to efficient actions. With due consideration for confidentiality matters, the GIES will provide a “GIES summary vessel profile” to the port State in connection with every ARPE submitted through the system (i.e. the “vessel profile” would be made available only to the port State receiving an ARPE from that vessel). This

means that a port State receiving an ARPE would be presented with factual information including:

- ✓ # ARPE: number of ARPEs submitted through the GIES in a given period;
- ✓ # DEN: number of denials of port entry (DEN) in a given period;
- ✓ # PIR: number of inspections conducted (entry allowed conditioned to inspection)
- ✓ # PIR with issues
- ✓ Ratio of #DEN/#ARPE
- ✓ Ratio of #PIR/#ARPE
- ✓ Ratio of #PIR with issues/ARPE
- ✓ Ratio of #PIR with issues/total #PIR

3. Automatic connections to the GIES are essential in at least two main cases: for Parties with a high number of foreign-flagged vessels entering their designated ports, and; for Parties that are Contracting Parties or Members of a RFMO/A with a fully electronic e-PSM, to avoid the burden of double reporting.

For cases of Parties with low numbers of foreign vessels entering their designated ports, manual data entry is the feasible option, as one would be able to consult all their forms submitted into the system at a glance, including those for which they are recipient to, into a dedicated space within GIES. For RFMO/As with low levels of “PSMA DEN and PIR” the best option goes through having a “multi-flag access to the GIES” granting access to all notifications received in respect of fishing activities taken in their convention areas and species covered by them.

Similarly, for RFMO/As with low levels of applicable PIRs and DENs, the optimal solution would be to grant special “multi-flag State” access, allowing the RFB/REIO to view, and receive notifications on, all reports involving fishing activities and/or concerning species covered by their convention area.

Overall funds available for the GIES have dropped significantly in 2024, requiring a downsizing and restructuring of the GIES team.

IX. GIES IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING STATES

In 2022 the European Commission provided funding for capacity development support for the GIES through the GCP/INT/1042/EC project for up to 4 countries during 2023 and early 2024. Additionally, the Republic of Korea agreed to support similar support for the Uruguay under GCP/INT/350/ROK.

During 2023, and January 2024, with these funds, the FAO deployed a team composed of an MCS expert and IT expert to five beneficiary countries, namely:

- ✓ the Republic of Ecuador (8-12 May 2023);
- ✓ the Republic of Panamá (2-9 July 2023);
- ✓ the Eastern Republic of Uruguay (18-22 September 2023);
- ✓ the Republic of Mozambique (8-12 January 2024), and;
- ✓ the Kingdom of Thailand (22-26 January 2024).

The objective of each mission is to assess the status of readiness of national information systems to contribute to, or connect automatically with, the GIES. This is done through an initial interagency workshop to raise awareness on the importance of the PSMA and the role of GIES, particularly through the involvement of several national agencies. This workshop is followed by bilateral work with each one of the relevant national agencies to assess the compatibility of their systems in terms of data fields, reference lists (standards), formats, and exchange mechanisms. Finally, a wrap up meeting

with the authorities gives an initial conclusion of the state of preparedness of the country to connect to GIES. A report of each mission was produced specifying the next steps required to advance towards an automatic connection. Overall results can be consulted on table 2 of TWG-IE/4/2024/4 as described in a previous section.

In 2024, and thanks to the generous contribution by the European Commission, FAO is planning to deliver another series of such missions to other beneficiary countries. Work is underway for technical assistance to be provided to the Republic of Fiji and the Independent State of Papua New Guinea as of April 2024. Prioritization work to identify other beneficiary countries is underway.

In addition to the above missions, since 2022, the dedicated GIES Help desk have delivered several trainings, tutorials, and demonstrations of the GIES to Parties which has had a positive contribution to system activity. These capacity development support initiatives have been illustrated in table 7 below:

Table 7: Virtual capacity development, training & backstopping support interventions delivered by the GIES Help Desk

PSMA Parties	Language	Date	GIES Environment	
			Environment	Attendant/s
Libya	EN	15/08/2022	Pilot	Libyan NCP and others
Peru, Chile, Costa Rica, Panama, Ecuador, Colombia, Spain and USA	ES	8/2/2023	N/A	Red ALC-Pesca INDNR
Uruguay	ES	17/09/2023	Test	DINARA (10 persons)
Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Uruguay	ES/EN	27-28/09/2023	Test	16 Inspectors from LAC countries
Angola	PT	2/8/2024	Test	NCP and Inspectors
				NCP and Inspectors
Cabo Verde	PT	03/01/2023 // 8/02/2024	Pilot / Test	NCP and Inspectors
Gambia		16&17/08/2023	Test	
Ghana	EN	6/11/2023	Test	NCP and Inspectors
Guinea	FR	16/11/2023	Test	NCP and Inspectors
Kenya	EN	3/10/2023	Test	NCP and Inspectors
Mozambique	PT	2/8/2024	Test	NCP and Inspectors
Papua New Guinea	EN	21/02/2024	Test	NCP and Inspectors
Sao Tome and Principe	PT	2/8/2024	Test	NCP and Inspectors
South Africa	EN	15/01/2024 // 05/02/2024	Test	32, NCP and inspectors

Annex 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON INFORMATION EXCHANGE

1. Establishment

Article 16 of the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA) requires Parties to share information through a communication mechanism that allows for the direct electronic exchange of information. Parties should cooperate to establish an information-sharing mechanism, preferably coordinated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The Parties to the PSMA agreed at the first Meeting of the Parties (MOP1) to establish an informal Open-ended Technical Working Group on Information Exchange (TWG-IE) to provide guidance on the development of data exchange mechanisms. The TWG-IE met twice, in April 2018 in London, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and in May 2019 in Seoul, Republic of Korea, prior to the adoption of the Rules of Procedure by the Parties to the PSMA at their second meeting in Santiago, Chile, in June 2019. It met for a third time in December 2022 at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy, prior to the adoption of these Terms of Reference.

2. Objective

The TWG-IE shall provide guidance on technical and operational matters related to the implementation of the PSMA, with a focus on sharing information to fulfil the requirements of the Agreement, including through the purposely developed Global Information Exchange System (GIES) and complementary information systems.

3. TWG-IE tasks

3.1. The TWG-IE shall provide guidance on technical aspects of the electronic exchange of information, and reports to the subsequent Meeting of the Parties to be adopted, including the following elements, inter alia:

- (a) The definition, format and use of data elements required for information exchange;
- (b) The application and development or adjustment of data standards applicable to the PSMA;
- (c) The definition, development and application of mechanisms, procedures and standards for data exchange, including compatibility with and use of UN/FLUX standard for information exchange through, but not limited to, GIES and complementary information systems;
- (d) The maintenance, development and application of the GIES and complementary information systems, including the advisement on new features (components and functionalities) to fulfil the requirements of the PSMA and improve its efficiency and secure its applicability and utility at global level, as required;
- (e) The implementation approach to be followed, including gradual operationalization and varying levels of access depending on the nature of information provided, as needed;

- (f) The setup of a financial mechanism to ensure the long-term sustainability and operability of the GIES and complementary information systems; and,
- (g) The adequacy, elements and procedures for interacting with other systems, such as those of other Intergovernmental Organizations, particularly Regional Fishery Bodies, the International Maritime Organization and the International Labour Organization;

3.2. The TWG-IE shall provide advice on other technical and operational matters in relation to the implementation of the PSMA, with a focus on the transmittal, electronic exchange and publication of the information, including the following elements:

- 3.2.1. The development or review of other means of collecting information, such as through the questionnaires adopted by the Parties;
- 3.2.2. The development of user guides and other training material related to the systems;
- 3.2.3. The approach to the delivery of technical assistance on information exchange to developing States;
- 3.2.4. The development and review of communications and promotional materials and channels;
- 3.2.5. The development of means to assess reporting obligations;

3.3. The TWG-IE shall provide the opportunity for expression of the views of national and regional administrations, as well as external entities, including international organizations with similar areas of work, which may act as data providers or system users, and facilitate the exchange of relevant information on their working modalities and information systems in place.

4. Participation

The TWG-IE is open to all Parties to PSMA and eligible observers pursuant to Rule 8 of the Rules of Procedure.

5. Chairperson

The Chairperson and the vice-Chairperson of the TWG-IE shall be elected among the participating Parties at the start of the meeting.

6. Working arrangements

6.1. The language of the TWG-IE shall be in the six official languages of the FAO.

6.2. Parties and observers shall notify their intended participation in the meeting to the Secretariat at least 30 days prior to the meeting.

6.3. The provisional agenda shall be developed by the Secretariat in consultation with the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Meeting of the Parties. Documents shall be made available at least 30 days prior to the meeting.

7. Recommendations

The TWG-IE shall adopt Recommendations by consensus.

8. Meetings

The TWG-IE shall aim to hold meetings on an ad hoc basis, as determined by the Parties.

9. Expenses

The expenses shall be covered pursuant to Rule 10 and 11 of the Rules of Procedure.

10. Report

The TWG-IE shall prepare a report on the outcome of the meeting at least 60 days before the following Meeting of the Parties and other Meetings as decided by the Parties.