



联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

Organisation des Nations  
Unies pour l'alimentation  
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная организация  
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las  
Naciones Unidas para la  
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة  
الأغذية والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

E

## Sixth meeting of the Global Record Informal Open-ended Technical and Advisory Working Group (GRWG6)<sup>1</sup>

Rome, Italy<sup>2</sup>, 12 December 2022

### DISCUSSION ITEMS

#### I. BACKGROUND

The FAO Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (Global Record) was conceived as a tool to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. The FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) provided guidance for its scope and purpose and called for an informal open-ended technical and advisory working group, the Global Record Working Group (GRWG), to provide advice on specific technical matters.

The design, structure and characteristics of the Global Record are thus defined through the meetings of the GRWG and then shared with COFI for endorsement as relevant. Five meetings<sup>3</sup> of the GRWG were held from 2015 till 2019 when they were interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The FAO Global Record information system was launched back in April 2017, accessible only to FAO Members, and in 2018 it became publicly accessible. The system has been in use since then, with the participation of a total of 66 States and has collected information of almost half of the global eligible fleet.<sup>4</sup>

#### II. SUMMARY OF THE OUTCOMES OF RELEVANT MEETINGS

##### RELEVANT OUTCOMES FROM COFI34 AND COFI35

The 34th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI34) held in February 2021 recognized the role that the Global Record plays in the implementation of the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA) and other international instruments and initiatives, and called for the further development of the Global Record and increased submission of information by Members on their fleets, including periodic updates, as required.

The 35th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI35) held in September 2022 noted the continued efforts by Members to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing, including through the implementation of relevant international agreements and voluntary guidelines, and regional mechanisms, but expressed its concern that IUU fishing is a serious issue in most areas, and called for

<sup>1</sup> To be held in Arabic, Chinese English, French, Russian and Spanish.

<sup>2</sup> FAO Headquarters, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.fao.org/global-record/meetings/en/>

<sup>4</sup> Vessels currently having an IMO number that fall within the scope of the Global Record.

increased cooperative action and sharing of information at national, regional and global level; COFI35 welcomed the launch of the second version of the Global Record, and reiterated a call to strengthen engagement for broader participation in the Global Record, reaffirming the importance for Members to upload and update information on their fleets.

### **RELEVANT OUTCOMES FROM THE TWG-IE2**

Noting the conclusions of the fifth meeting of the GRWG (GRWG5), the second meeting of the PSMA Technical Working Group on Information Exchange (TWG-IE2) agreed that vessel information available in the Global Record could provide important vessel data to the PSMA Global Information Exchange System (GIES). Some participants stressed that the voluntary nature of the Global Record should not limit its use for the implementation of the PSMA, including through its link to the GIES. The TWG-IE2 agreed that active participation by States in the Global Record can be an important element to maximise the potential of the Global Record to support the functioning of the GIES.

### **RELEVANT OUTCOMES FROM GRWG5**

The GRWG5 welcomed the positive news on the increased participation by Members, which resulted in an increased number of vessels in the Global Record Information System. It encouraged participation from additional States and called upon participating States to continue uploading additional vessels and provide a wider range of information on their vessels.

The GRWG5 reported difficulties with data upload and updates in the Global Record Information System. It noted that planned developments to the system would improve system performance, introduce wider editing capabilities, provide additional search facilities, be compatible with mobile platforms, and improve current upload mechanisms while introducing additional ones. In particular, these developments would aim to facilitate future exchange of information through automatic data upload mechanisms, including links with the IHS Maritime (now S&P Global) database, regional fisheries bodies (RFBs) databases and other existing regional databases.

Noting that around 25 000 fish-catching vessels have been allocated an International Maritime Organization (IMO) number, the GRWG5 stressed the need for better understanding of the allocation of IMO numbers and noted that some States experienced difficulties in obtaining these numbers for their vessels, especially vessels from non-English speaking States. IMO and The Pew Charitable Trusts reiterated their availability and eagerness to facilitate the process. Recalling the requirement of the IMO number for a vessel to be included in the Global Record Information System, the GRWG5 encouraged States to obtain IMO numbers for their vessels.

The GRWG5 supported the role of the Global Record as one of the most important tools for the effective implementation of the PSMA, facilitating the cross-check of information and risk analysis on vessels during decision-making on whether to allow a foreign vessel to enter and use a designated port, and / or whether to conduct an inspection. The GRWG encouraged States to upload and continuously update their data so that the Global Record can support the implementation of the PSMA and encouraged increased participation of States. In this context, some participants recognised the benefit of the Global Record becoming a mandatory tool.

With regards to the International Standard Statistical Classification of Fishing Gear (ISSCFG), the GRWG5 considered the amendments presented to the 1980 ISSCFG, endorsed at the 25th session of the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP), and agreed that this should replace the previous version used within the Global Record as the reference list for fishing gear.

With regards to the International Standard Statistical Classification of Fishing Vessels (ISSCFV), the CWP at its 26th session in 2019 reviewed and endorsed<sup>5</sup> the proposal put forward by the GRWG5, including the addition of specific classification categories for non-fishing vessel types.

GRWG5 recognised the importance of using standardised reference lists for the submission of data within the Global Record Information System. In this context, the group saw the potential of the United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations (UN/LOCODE) as a suitable international standard for identifying ports in the system, considering recent developments e.g., national focal points and child codes. However, as not all ports currently have a UN/LOCODE assigned, the GRWG5 proposed the possibility of the UN/LOCODE being the preferred option or utilising an alternative code. The GRWG noted that where the UN/LOCODE is not available, the creation of this code can be requested.

In consideration of the revision of the UN/LOCODE list (last revised as of 21 December 2018), the Secretariat invited the GRWG to assess whether the UN/LOCODE should be adopted as the reference code for ports within the Global Record Information System.

### III. STATE OF AFFAIRS OF THE GLOBAL RECORD

The development of the Global Record to date has been possible through FAO's resources and the supplementary support of several donors including the European Union, Iceland, Spain, Sweden, and the United States of America.

#### GLOBAL RECORD TEAM

The FAO has been actively involved in expanding the team engaged in global information exchange (IE) related activities (Global Record and GIES). The team currently comprises 13 specialists, either fully or partly dedicated to the initiative. The GR-GIES team is organized around main responsibilities, as follows:

- 1) Business team (1 full-timer and 1 part-timer): in charge of making strategic decisions for the systems, project management and organisation of relevant meetings and inputs.
- 2) Product team (1 full-timer and 3 part-timers): provide day-to-day management of IT development, develop specifications for new features and primary testing role of new features.
- 3) Development team (5 part-timers): in charge of all IT developments and maintenance of the system.
- 4) Help Desk (2 full-timers): provide day-to-day user support, active reach out to States to increase participation, creation of new users.

Additionally, other FAO units are involved and supporting the development and maintenance of the Global Record (GR), including:

- The Digitalization and Informatics Division (CSI): Assists in the development, maintenance and support of software applications, ensuring that Information Technology (IT) products and services are delivered according to CSI/ FAO standards of quality and regulations. Specifically, CSI has supported NFIFP in the: design and development of the Global Record Programme website; development of the Global Record prototype and its initial version, including system specifications and documentation; launch of the GR pilot phase (December 2016) and in parallel

---

<sup>5</sup> [www.fao.org/3/cb5201en/cb5201en.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/cb5201en/cb5201en.pdf)

its first operational version (April 2017); launch of the Global Record public version (July, 2018) and most recently, that of the Global Record v2 (August 2022); maintenance and enhancement of related components, including testing and fixing of bugs, errors and other technical matters; migration to FAO-procured cloud-based infrastructure and creation of new system environments; technical backstopping to end users, and; advice for new system releases, such as United Nations Fisheries Language for Universal Exchange (UN/FLUX) implementation, and for the connection to regional record / registry systems and authorized databases (e.g., S&P Global).

- The Office of Communications (OCC): Responsible for all official external and internal communication activities, ensuring coherence and consistency in FAO's messaging and communication outputs, and enabling cost-effectiveness in use of communication-related resources across the Organization. OCC has assisted NFIFP in the: provision of FAO corporate designs and colour schemes for the Global Record interface, such as the logo and footer; advice on FAO communication policies and guidelines, including promotional material and publications, and assurance on copyright protection for all Global Record intellectual property.

## GLOBAL RECORD VERSION 2 ARCHITECTURE

The Global Record is a web application comprised of two interrelated layers and components including the *Backend*, *Frontend* and standardized *Reference Lists*, all hosted on a secured cloud-based infrastructure procured and managed by FAO according to standard procedures.

The Global Record Backend or server-side is the 'hidden' part of the application, where Global Record data and reference lists are stored and business workflows are executed, such as the sending of automated notifications to Members. Such functionalities are permissible through the use of documented application programming interfaces (APIs), ensuring a secure digital connection to authorized clients.

The creation of APIs, libraries and other programmable components are some of the activities that take place to ensure that the features and functionalities as determined by the business design specifications, are achieved. This includes provisions for the bi-directional linkages to both internal and authorized third-party systems, such as the GIES and S&P Global, respectively, allowing for the import and export of data in a distributed manner.

The Global Record Frontend is the visual part of the application that the user interacts with directly, through text, images, charts, tables, buttons, menus, and the like. In this regard, focus on a robust user interface (UI) and user experience (UX) has been the cornerstone of the new version of the Global Record, as demonstrated through its speed, responsiveness, interactivity and multi-device compatibility.

The Frontend does not store any data or run business workflows, but rather 'delegates' these to the Backend layer. The Global Record uses a series of standardized reference lists based on international coding systems to support data input and workflow. Examples include:

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

Such lists are read from the database and updated as necessary to ensure a harmonized approach to reporting, documentation, and interoperability with regional records and other systems.

As a global information system, the Global Record is also available in six FAO languages, including English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese and Russian. As new functionalities are added, translations are updated via an internal administration tool, allowing direct access to, and modification of system dictionaries.

To ensure system uptime and efficiency, the Global Record benefits from the robust FAO-procured Google Cloud infrastructure (e.g., virtual machines, database servers and firewalls), offering significant advantages and flexibility over traditional hosting, including:

- ✓ Performance – unlimited resources and load balancing through multiple interconnected servers, guaranteeing system speed and reliability
- ✓ Scalability – automatic increase of resource allowances (e.g., processing, memory, storage and bandwidth) as required (i.e., increase in users or traffic)
- ✓ Security – robust security mechanisms through advanced firewalls and encryption keys to ensure privacy, data integrity, data encryption and recovery in line with FAO’s practices.
- ✓ Cost – variable pricing model, lowered operating expenses compared to traditional hosting
- ✓ Maintenance – As an Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) provider, all cloud hosting maintenance operations are managed by FAO.

With the Global Record evolving and increasing in complexity, FAO is preparing to host and make available to member States and RFMOs a variety of Global Record application environments with separate websites and databases, each having a dedicated role:

- I. Production: tried and tested version of the application loaded with real data from authorized entities to fulfil the scope of the Global Record as a tool to combat IUU fishing within the framework of legal instruments, including the PSMA, ensuring access to coherent and transparent vessel information.
- II. Sandbox: same tried and tested version of the application allowing authorized users to perform ‘dry runs’ of system components using real or fictitious data without risking or compromising data in the Production environment. All Sandbox data will remain confidential, and any notifications will be disabled.
- III. Open Beta: experimental version of the application loaded with test data, permitting authorized users to preview and test new features of upcoming releases whilst also supporting the upload of any data types. All Open Beta data will also remain private.
- IV. Additional environments used internally by FAO team for development and testing purposes.

As two key systems supporting the implementation of the PSMA, the development of both the Global Record and GIES has been closely aligned, following a parallel approach to the architectural design and system functionalities. Not only will this facilitate future integrations of standard system components (e.g., reference lists) and upgrades (e.g., bulk upload), but as a result, ensure the efficiency and long-term sustainability of each application.

## **GLOBAL RECORD VERSION 2 COMPONENTS AND FEATURES**

After encountering various limitations hindering the further development and improvement of the first version of the Global Record, a decision was made to develop a new and second version of the Global Record. This change also allowed the team to move from a partially obsolete infrastructure to one in line with current FAO Service Level Agreement standards which will ensure long-term sustainability of the system within the FAO ecosystem. The second version of the Global Record currently includes the following main features and components:

- 1) User interface - developed in line with current IT trends and current FAO branding guidelines for IT systems. The interface was developed in order to be adaptable to various devices, such as mobile phones and other electronic devices. It is more intuitive and faster.
- 2) Dashboard - developed according to specifications of the previous version of the Global Record.
- 3) Simple and advanced search - covering similar specifications to the previous system however allowing for quicker searches.
- 4) Bulk upload - an improved version of the bulk upload functionality for uploading information modules into the Global Record is present within the new system. Changes include:
  - a. Using Microsoft Excel Open XML Spreadsheet (XLSX) rather than Comma Separated Values (CSV) file format for uploads. This change, besides removing a layer of complexity for the user, also allows for the upload of a much larger library of characters which had previously been an issue, such as the use of non-Latin characters and certain accents.
  - b. Issues relating to the upload speed when processing large files were addressed.
  - c. General improvements were made to make the upload process more intuitive for the user. This includes simplified error handling, which allows the download of previously processed files in XLSX format, revealing any errors in specified cells and providing recommendations to amend the incorrect data.
- 5) Connection with S&P Global - States can now "prime" their Vessel list by downloading, from their account in Global Record, a list of vessels made available by S&P Global, the company in charge of creating and assigning IMO numbers on behalf of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). States will be able to download the five essential fields of all their vessels with an IMO number and will be able to proof check and complement this information prior to using the vessel bulk upload functionality to upload their fleet into the Global Record.
- 6) De-registration - the previous version of the Global Record only contained a basic version of this functionality, whereby de-registered vessels were essentially deleted and had to be processed individually. The new system allows for the bulk upload of de-registration and the specification of reasons for de-registration. Depending on the reason, various business rules have been implemented; for example, a vessel that was de-registered due to total loss cannot be re-registered into the system.
- 7) Secured APIs - allowing for the safe integration with other applications, including but not limited to the PSMA GIES application. This feature is thus available for interfacing with relevant national and regional systems.

### **PARTICIPATION IN THE GLOBAL RECORD – THE GLOBAL FLEET**

As of 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022, 66 FAO Member States are participating in the Global Record Information System, distributed in the FAO regions as follows: 10 from Africa, 7 from Asia, 27 from Europe, 14 from Latin America and the Caribbean, 1 from North Africa and the Near East, 2 from Northern America, and 5 from the Southwest Pacific.

A total of 11 847 vessels have been uploaded into the Global Record Information System, including vessels both below and above 100 Gross Tonnage (GT), representing almost half of the global eligible fleet.

Since the last GRWG meeting in May 2019, there has been an increase of 11 States, from 55 to 66, and 2764 additional vessels, from 9083 in 2019 to 11847 vessels, as of 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022 (Table 1 provides numbers by region).

Although there has been some improvement since 2019, an increase in the number of fleets and vessels is needed for this tool to be effective in supporting the verification of information.

**Table 1:** Global Record Fleet overview as of 30 November 2022

Region	Number of	% of	Average	Total GT
	vessels	vessels	length (m)	
Africa	519	4%	44.02	227,745.00
Asia	2,121	18%	50.74	1,686,995.75
Europe	4,115	35%	31.87	1,599,829.38
Latin America & Caribbean	1,215	10%	54.69	1,750,427.63
Near East	1	0%	29,00	294
North America	3,605	31%	24.58	474,099
Pacific	271	2%	42.5	97,550.23
<b>Global</b>	<b>11,847</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>39.63</b>	<b>5,836,940</b>

With regards to the information provided, "Vessels" and "Ports" are the two modules usually made available. Other relevant modules (e.g., authorizations) are provided only by few.

The "Vessel" module represents the primary information (vessel identification and characteristics) to which other modules are connected. It comprises 51 different data fields, including the 5 essential data fields required for submitting any vessel into the system, namely the Unique Vessel Identifier (UVI), Flag State, Length overall (LOA), vessel Name and vessel Tonnage (GT or GRT). Table 2 below lists the modules uploaded by FAO Members.

**Table 2:** Information modules by Data Providers (66 Members), as of 30 November 2022

Global Record - Data providers by Module													
FAO Member	Vessels	Historical details	Authorizations	Insp. & Surv.	Port denials	Ports	FAO Member	Vessels	Historical details	Authorizations	Insp. & Surv.	Port denials	Ports
Algeria							Latvia						
Argentina							Liberia						
Australia							Lithuania						
Belgium							Malta						
Belize							Mozambique						
Bosnia and Herzegovina							Namibia						
Brazil							Netherlands						
Bulgaria							New Zealand						
Canada							Nicaragua						
Chile							Norway						
China							Panama						
Colombia							Peru						
Cook Islands							Philippines						
Costa Rica							Poland						
Croatia							Portugal						
Cyprus							Republic of Korea						
Denmark							Romania						
Ecuador							Seychelles						
El Salvador							Singapore						
Estonia							Slovenia						
Finland							South Africa						

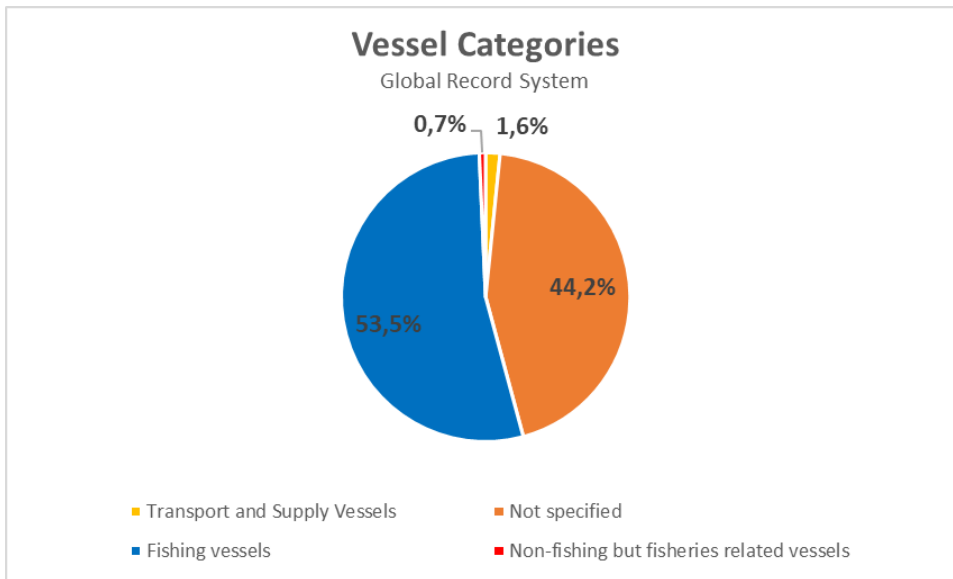


France								Spain							
Gambia								Sri Lanka							
Germany								Sudan							
Ghana								Sweden							
Greece								Thailand							
Guatemala								Tonga							
Guinea								Trinidad and Tobago							
Iceland								Türkiye							
Indonesia								UK and Northern Ireland							
Ireland								USA							
Italy								Uruguay							
Kenya								Vanuatu							
<b>Percentage of occurrence by module</b>									<b>97.0</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>19.7</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>78.8</b>	

A good proportion of FAO Members have provided more than the 5 essential data fields (flag, name, IMO number, LOA and GT/GRT), as it is recommended for the Global Record to be useful in the fight against IUU fishing.

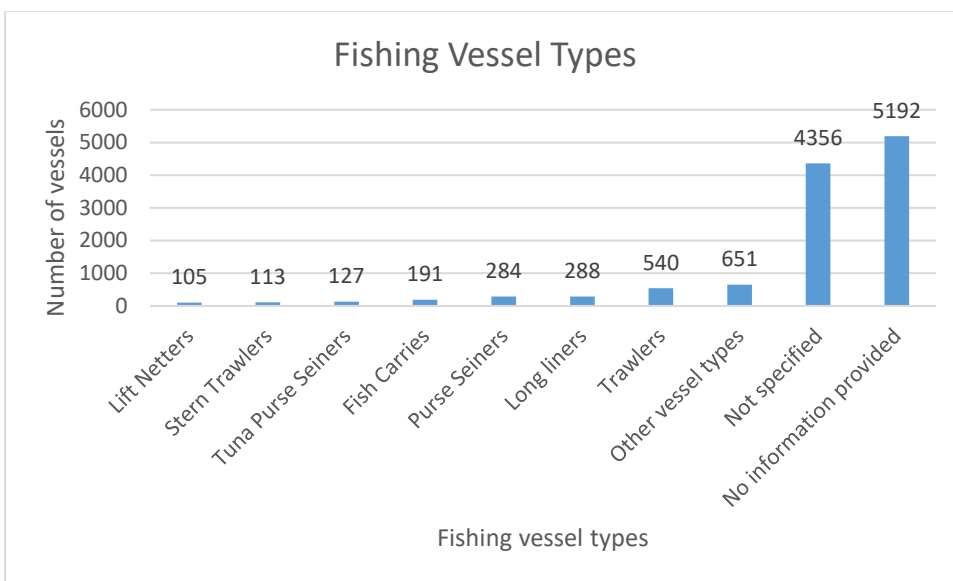
Among all non-essential data fields, it is clear that the vessel type should be considered to change status to essential, given the fact that it is essential to know at least if the vessel is a fishing vessel, a transport vessel, or a supply vessel. The ISSCFV put forward by GRWG5 and approved by CWP 26 can thus now be used to also report on refrigerated transport vessels and supply vessels.

Figure 1 below, shows that information on the vessel type is missing for a large percentage of vessels in the system.



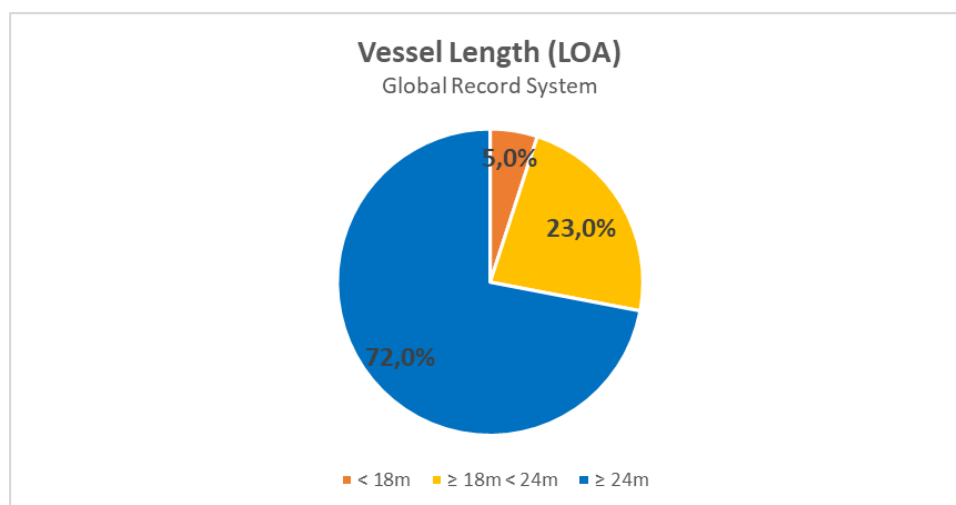
**Figure 1**– Global Record fleet by main vessel categories in percentages

With regards to the specific type, most vessels either lack information on vessel type or it has not been specified. A very small percentage of vessels (around 19%) have been reported under 8 vessel types as shown in Figure 2 below.



**Figure 2** – Vessel Types

With regards to length, as shown in figure 3 below, the majority of vessels in the system are larger or equal to 24m (LOA):



**Figure 3** – Percentages of Vessel Length (LOA)\_Global Record

#### IV. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA SECURITY

##### CONFIDENTIALITY

The FAO Global Record was designed as a system that would share information publicly from the very beginning, with the purpose of combatting IUU fishing through sharing of information, in a transparent manner, on the global fleet. Data is publicly searchable but uploads and downloads are available only to flag States for vessels within their own fleet. Only the 5 essential data fields are compulsory for any vessel record to be inserted in the system, whilst all the rest remains voluntary but highly advisable. Around 100 data fields integrate the different modules (approximately 50 in the vessel module), all of which were carefully selected and approved by FAO Members as they are useful in supporting authorities that need to verify such information. Therefore, FAO Members are encouraged to share as many data fields as possible, following confidentiality rules at national level. The Global Record remains public without any confidential section protected with access restrictions, except logically, for the upload functions, that remain available only to FAO Members.

Despite being voluntary, certain data fields are quite critical in the fight against IUU fishing, such as those concerning ownership. In the Global Record today, 64 States have uploaded Vessels, however:

- 47 States haven't specified any Vessel Owners,
- 53 States haven't specified any Vessel Operators,
- 61 States haven't specified any Vessel Beneficial Owners.

As it stands, all data in the Global Record is public. But in some States using collected personal information for anything without prior consent from the concerned individual, is illegal. For example, in certain cases, when a vessel master, owner, operator or beneficiary owner is a physical person (not a company) data can be collected for the purpose of law enforcement, but cannot be made public. This could be one reason why scarce ownership information has been reported in the Global Record at this

current stage. Nonetheless, such data would undoubtedly be quite valuable to law enforcement users of the Global Record.

Further consideration could be given to information on ownership, either through avoiding the sharing of personal information through the system and encouraging information related to companies, or, by considering the possibility/usefulness of developing a section with restricted access to Global Record users only.

#### **DATA SECURITY**

Security against data breaches is embedded into the FAO cloud-based infrastructure as described in a previous section. However, there are other processes that can incur a security breach, as are those related to the sharing of account credentials.

The process is currently being shifted towards the creation of personal user accounts instead of generic country accounts. Generic accounts are a security risk as passwords could be shared between relevant personnel, increasing the possibility of it being intercepted. In this new approach of personal user account, each account would be tied to a unique email address and upon creation of the account, the user would be requested to create a password. Furthermore, this approach would allow for the deactivation of accounts for users who should no longer have access to the system, such as due to retirement or change of position. Furthermore, the inclusion multi-factor authentication is being considered to further increase account security.

### **V. NEW FEATURES OF THE INFORMATION SYSTEM**

With the release of the new version of the information system, the Global Record is at a key point whereby new features (components and functionalities) can now be added with the aim of furthering its implementation in order to more effectively reach its objectives.

Several improvements are currently planned for the next phases of development of the system, including:

- Upload and edit through online forms – this feature is close to completion and would require testing prior to being placed onto the production environment of the system. It would allow for the upload of vessels and other modules to be uploaded by users one at a time or make edits to existing information on their fleet. This is expected to facilitate exchange of information for States with smaller vessel fleets.
- Connection to national and regional vessel registers and records - such connections are expected to have a large impact on the amount of vessel information being exchanged in the system as well as ensuring that such information remains updated. The system has been developed in such a way to allow for these connections through APIs, as has already been done with the API connection to the GIES and to S&P Global. Eventually, connections and data exchange between systems could be further facilitated through the use of the UN/FLUX standard.
- Advanced user management, to enhance coordination at national level. This would allow designated users at the national level to approve additional accounts and potentially manage rights of each account in terms of viewing and uploading information. Centralized account access will be provided to designated users, who can autonomously assign and manage Local Registration Authorities (LRAs) at their discretion.

- National Focal Point page – as present within the old system, this page would present information on all Global Record National Focal Points within the password restricted area of the application to facilitate communication between States.
- Bulk upload guide – as present within the old system, additional pages with content to guide users on bulk upload is planned to be introduced.
- Dynamic dashboard, to provide a real-time visual insight (aggregated data) into the participation and level of implementation of the application.
- Multi-factor authentication, to provide additional layers of security and prevent unauthorized system access.
- Central Authentication Service (CAS), to allow for a singular access point to all GR systems for different GR environments.

## **FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

### Expansion of essential fields

The five essential fields namely, UVI (IMO Number), Flag State, Length overall, vessel name and gross tonnage or gross registered tonnage, were decided upon through the GRWG as the minimum required to upload a vessel onto the Global Record in order to build the basic skeleton of the global eligible fleet within the Global Record. With the improvements being made on the information exchange mechanism within the Global Record, including the connection with S&P Global, consideration should be made for increasing the number of essential fields required within the application. Of particular interest would be fields which are key for the better identification of vessels thereby making the Global Record a more effective tool for States.

As reflected in Figure 1, 44.2 percent of vessels contained within the Global Record have no information on the vessel type, meaning that from the Global Record it would not be possible to determine if such vessels are ones directly involved in fishing activity or in support of fishing activity, let alone what type of activity. Furthermore, with the new FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Transshipment being endorsed at COFI35, being able to identify vessel types and understand the coverage within the Global Record of not only fishing vessels but also refrigerated transport vessels and supply vessels is becoming increasingly more relevant. Due to the importance of vessel types for the proper identification of a vessel, consideration by the GRWG should be made for including it as an essential field.

### Expansion of modules

With most of the expected features of the second version of the Global Record information system expected to be completed in the intersessional period between GRWG6 and GRWG7, there is an opportunity to take back into consideration elements of the Global Record that had been discussed in the past but were excluded at the time in order to focus on core features of the system. One such element would be the potential inclusion of a crew module.

Several COFI meetings and initiatives such as the Joint FAO/ILO/IMO ad hoc Working Group on Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing and Related Matters, recognized the clear linkages between IUU fishing and below standard working conditions found on board fishing vessels.

In order to strengthen risk analysis and support work of the International Labour Organization (ILO) on the latter issue an analysis could be conducted to assess the benefits of including such a module within the Global Record.

## **VI. ROLE OF REGIONAL FISHERIES BODIES (RFBS) IN DATA EXCHANGE**

Submission of State's certified data from FAO Members to the Global Record system can be fulfilled through regional records. Connections can be established directly through APIs and later on, possibly also using the UN/FLUX standard.

COFI called on several occasions to enhance the role that RFBs can play in the fight against IUU fishing. To date, there are no connections with RFBs regional records that could help facilitate or automatize the process and increase fleet numbers and extent of information present in the Global Record. FAO is to increase efforts to establish such connections so as to expand the options of FAO Members to contribute with fleet data to the Global Record. A number of initiatives are being planned focusing on one hand on the developing the connections including coordination and technical meetings, and on the other hand to raise awareness among FAO Members through backstopping support, attendance to relevant RFBs meetings, communication products, and others.

## **VII. ROLE OF THE GLOBAL RECORD IN SUPPORT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS**

The fishing activity at international level relies on the use of vessels for fishing. Clearly a list of all vessels with international activity, meaning fishing on the high seas or in other country's exclusive economic zone, is bound to be the backbone of any information system developed to support the implementation of an international instrument. Therefore, the Global Record is expected to play a key role to support such systems relying on or connected to vessel identification.

### **AGREEMENT ON PORT STATE MEASURES (PSMA)**

The role that the Global Record can play in the implementation of the PSMA has already been recognised at various instances, at COFI Sessions and at MOPs. Verification of a foreign vessel identification, licences and other information as contained in the Global Record is fundamental to risk analysis. This is the main reason for the connection with the PSMA Global Information Exchange System (GIES) which at the same time facilitates the data entry process by pre-filling State-certified information about the vessel from the Global Record into the GIES forms.

### **COMPLIANCE AGREEMENT**

The 1993 FAO Compliance Agreement (CA) includes provisions for the exchange of information among Parties through FAO under Article VI. COFI35 Session Background Document #19<sup>6</sup> explores the role that the Global Record can play in the implementation of the FAO Compliance Agreement (see section 2.7.3). Although originally designed to host CA information, the High Seas Vessels Authorization Record (HSVAR), a system with access restricted only to Parties to the CA (currently 45), has not been used to a significant extent by CA Parties. Almost three decades later, all of the data required to be shared by CA may now be shared in the public domain through the use of the Global

---

<sup>6</sup> COFI/2022/SBD/19 at [www.fao.org/3/cc1871en/cc1871en.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/cc1871en/cc1871en.pdf)

Record. In this regard, and in the light of successive calls by COFI to avoid duplication of efforts, consideration should be made for the Global Record to serve as the system to fulfil the requirements of the CA.

Table 3 below, presents details on data fields required by the CA (12 compulsory and 7 optional) and the Global Record (5 essential and the rest optional) for ease of reference.

Table 3: Listing of data fields required in the FAO Compliance Agreement and the FAO Global Record.

<b>Compliance Agreement</b>	<b>Global Record</b>
<b>Mandatory data fields</b>	<b>Mandatory data fields</b>
Name of fishing vessel	UVI/IMO number
Registration number	Name of fishing vessel
Previous names (if known)	Current flag State
Port of registry	Length overall
Previous flag (if any)	GR or GRT
IRCS (if any)	<b>Optional data fields</b>
Name of owner(s)	Close to a hundred, sorted in different modules of information that include:
Address of owner(s)	Vessel details ( <i>52 data fields</i> )
Where built	Historical details ( <i>8 data fields</i> )
When built	Authorizations ( <i>13 data fields</i> )
Type of vessel	Port entry denials ( <i>6 data fields</i> )
Length.	Inspection & surveillance ( <i>18 data fields</i> )
<b>Optional data fields</b>	IUU vessel lists
Name of operator(s)/manager(s) (if any)	Ports ( <i>2 data fields</i> )
Address of operator(s)/manager(s) (if any)	
Type of fishing method(s)	
Moulded depth	
Beam	
GRT	
Power of main engine(s)	

In practical terms, the Parties to the CA could fulfil their obligations under Article VI by submitting the relevant information to the Global Record.

### **VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES FOR TRANSSHIPMENT**

Vessels engaged in transshipment operations have been part of the essence of the Global Record from its inception. Its very name indicates the importance and role that transport, and also supply vessels, can play in fishing operations and consequently its impacts to the sustainability of fisheries. With the recent endorsement of the Voluntary Guidelines for Transshipment, minimum requirements have been laid down at international level to regulate, monitor and control this activity.

The Global Record was designed to host information relative to transshipment through the "Vessel" module, where vessel type can refer to various non-fishing vessels categories as per the revised classification (ISSCFV) and through the "Licences" modules, where licenses to transship can also be reported.

Annex I (Transshipment declaration) and II (Landing declaration) of the VG-Transshipment refer to a wide variety of vessel identification and licensing data that are included in the Global Record, including the IMO number as "required, if eligible", which will facilitate the verification processes at the time of inspection as well as support traceability of fish products.

### **CATCH DOCUMENTATION SCHEMES**

The traceability of fish products should cover all stages from the sea to the consumer. The various steps that conform that process may fall under different States' responsibilities, including at least flag, port and market State responsibilities. It is thus important to ensure an adequate linkage through the entire value chain, from the fishing activity, including through any possible transshipments, landings, processing, packaging, and marketing. The IMO number, as the UVI for vessels with international activity, can play an important role in keeping trace of the origin of the product and link to information that may give indications about its legality through the Global Record. As a key identification piece for vessels, the IMO number should be included in all fish product-related documentation.

### **IMO CAPE TOWN AGREEMENT AND ILO WORK IN FISHING CONVENTION**

Through the development of the Global Record several considerations were introduced with regards to the linkages among IUU fishing, and vessel safety and working conditions below standards. The previous version of the Global Record had a hyperlink connection to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS)<sup>7</sup> meaning that, information contained in the GISIS on a specific vessel of interest was made available to the Global Record user upon a simple click. Concerns over safety, pollution or security could feed into risk analysis to further understand and analyse a specific case.

Through the FAO/ILO/IMO Joint Working Group on IUU fishing and related matters (JWG) cooperation and coordination among the three UN agencies is moving forward. Activities are being developed and planned for a closer collaboration. The linkages among information systems of the three organisations could bring many benefits to the implementation of instruments such as the PSMA, the IMO Cape Town Agreement (CTA) and the Work in Fishing Convention (C188). In this regard, information on crew numbers and nationalities onboard fishing vessels could be contributing both to

---

<sup>7</sup> <https://gisis.imo.org/Public/Default.aspx>



risk analysis on the fisheries side and to more accurate information for the implementation of the ILO C188.

### **VIII. ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING STATES**

Capacity development support in relation to Global Record implementation is available through the FAO Global Capacity Development Programme to support the implementation of the Agreement on Port State Measures and complementary measures and tools.

Several projects under the Programme include activities providing support to developing States including:

- Awareness raising, through communication events and products;
- Support to attend GRWG meetings;
- In-country technical assistance for the assessment of national systems or IT support for automatic linkages;
- Backstopping support, through a dedicated Help Desk;
- Training.

These have been delivered by FAO with the support of financial contributions from the European Union, Iceland, Spain, Sweden and USA.

More recently, the European Union has put forward financial support to create and sustain a Help Desk that provides backstopping assistance to FAO Members in the implementation of the Global Record and additional technical assistance support to a limited number of developing States is available through an EU-funded project. Funds remain short to support a sufficient number of States.

FAO is now focusing on developing a training programme to support countries in the use of the Global Record and developing supporting material in this regard. Different activities are being considered at this initial stage including training workshops and training material such as manuals.

Additionally, multitenancy functionality is ready to be made available as needed.