



What is the Global Record of Fishing Vessels?

The Global Record of Fishing Vessels is envisaged as a global repository (database) designed primarily to provide **reliable identification** of vessels. It simply requires that vessels acquire a '**unique vessel identifier**' (UVI) from an international numbering system by submitting a small data set designed to accurately identify the vessel. This process will be free (no cost) and the provider (i.e. IHS-Fairplay) will **physically verify the identity** of the vessel prior to providing the UVI.

The Global Record of Fishing Vessels is not a 'Register.' The process of registration is something that confers legal personality on the vessel while a record simply records the vessel information and displays it. Registration is generally a State function and it is not envisaged that it would ever replace national vessel registers or national records of fishing vessels.

Why the Global Record of Fishing Vessels is Necessary

The Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels is one of the tools created to fight IUU fishing, which has been endorsed by COFI, and is moving forward in a phased implementation (phase 1 includes vessels >24m and/or > 100 GRT/GT).

IUU fishing remains one of the greatest threats to sustainable fisheries and those whose lives and livelihoods depend on them (depletion of resources, lower income for legal fishers, unfair competition, disregard of safety at sea, poorer working conditions, etc). In particular, monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) agencies everywhere are constantly seeking new and integrated tools to combat this problem and it is often frustrated by an inability to identify the vessel.

Some characteristics and benefits of the Global Record

- Accurate vessel identification available globally in real-time (supporting port state measures, flag state performance, etc)
- Web-based for ease of access
- Flexible in design (additional information modules)
- Neutral in the presentation of data, leaving users to make own judgements or assessments
- Improves transparency and traceability so that legitimate operators are recognised for openness.
- No commercial purpose
- To the extent possible, provides public access to relevant information
- UVI number allocated for entire life of the vessel
- Promotes collaboration among countries & regions
- Includes refrigerated transport vessels & supply vessels, often involved in the illegal fishing.
- A pillar of fisheries management (capacity control) and the fight against IUU fishing

Proposed collaboration of GFCM with FAO - Global Record

The GFCM is now developing tools such as its **Vessel Records** as well as supporting individual countries in developing and implementing their own national fishing fleet registers. These registers are the basis for many data collection systems (e.g. the CAS, fishing licenses, socio-economics, VMS, etc) and are therefore a primary tool to fight IUU fishing and a source of support to fisheries management initiatives (control of capacity, effort, etc) .It seems therefore beneficial at this point to put efforts together and coordinate actions in order to bring the Mediterranean and Black Sea to a leading position in the global challenge of eliminating IUU fishing. Currently, the Global Record project counts on a variety of funding sources (RP, NOAA, and Korea), part of which can be put to the service of collaboration with the GFCM for building capacity in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

There are several direct benefits for the GFCM in this synergy:

- Support can be provided to GFCM in further developing the GFCM Vessel Records (Res. GFCM/35/2011/1), having also a positive impact in the quality of the Task-1 data collected.
- Support to build up of the GFCM IUU vessel list with related non-compliance information.
- There would be benefits both in economical and human resources terms by making joint efforts in specific activities (capacity building, systems development, coordination, etc).
- The GFCM members would be a step forward in their preparations for adopting the Port State Measures agreement and other international initiatives/tools to fight IUU fishing.

The aim is to enhance register systems and upgrade the quality of the data to support management.