



FACTSHEET

TRANSSHIPMENT PRACTICES



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TRANSSHIPMENT PRACTICES

Transshipment operations involve the unloading of all or any of the fish onboard a fishing vessel to another vessel either in port or at sea, without the fish being recorded as landed.

At sea, transshipment practices occur both within the exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and on high sea areas with the latter thought to be linked to greater risks of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. However, it is often difficult to monitor and oversee at sea transshipment practices as illegally caught fish facilitated by transshipment at sea can enter the seafood supply chain, and thereby indirectly support criminal activities that includes the risks of human rights violations and the falsification of information.

The risk of human rights violations and transshipment of IUU-caught fish occurring in Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) member ports is substantially lower as authorities can now oversee and monitor these heinous activities before they happen.

Despite the lack of capacity or resources to monitor transshipment operations and enforce regulations in the high seas, fishing industries in some developing Pacific island countries still rely heavily on transshipment operations to maximise profits. A 2019 report by the Pew Charitable Trusts, estimates IUU catch valued at more than US\$142 million is transshipped each year in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO), mainly from violations on misreporting or not reporting by a licensed fishing vessel.

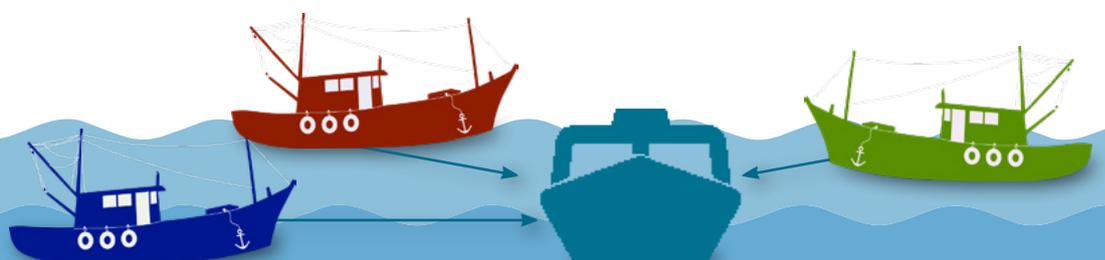
RECOMMENDED OPTIONS FOR MANAGEMENT OF TRANSSHIPMENTS

The report by the Pew Charitable Trusts highlights three key areas that require strengthened regulatory framework, specifically on reporting, monitoring and data sharing. The findings from this report can assist the WCPFC and other RFMOs better manage transshipment activities to mitigate discrepancies between reports required by carrier vessels and their flag States.

Listed below are some recommendations by the Pew Charitable Trusts to strengthen regulatory frameworks on transshipments in the WCPO.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE 2019 PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS REPORT ON TRANSSHIPMENT

- Inconsistent management of transshipment due to insufficient information being reported
- Only 25 carrier vessels reported high seas transshipments in the WCPO (2016)
- More transshipments at sea may have occurred in 2016 than what was reported to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)
- Transshipments at sea by unauthorised carrier vessels might have also occurred
- Potential high risks in transshipments being unreported could also arise from absence of data-sharing agreements on transshipment between the WCPFC and other Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs)



EFFECTIVE REPORTING ON TRANSSHIPMENT

- Reports on all activities are required and essential, irrespective of area or origin of catch
- All reporting and notification forms need to be updated and standardised, including requirements for minimum data collection on target and non-target species e.g. bycatch species
- A 24-hour electronic notification prior to and after each transshipment activity is required, irrespective of its location
- Presence of certified trained observers on all vessels engaged in transshipment operations should be mandatory, including submission of observer reports at the end of each operation for independent verification

EFFECTIVE MONITORING ON TRANSSHIPMENT

- Regardless of location, 100% observer coverage – including electronic monitoring – should be mandatory on all vessels engaged in transshipment activities, for the purpose of collating data on science and compliance matters
- Manual reporting and vessel monitoring arrangements should be mandatory in case the vessel monitoring system (VMS) malfunctions
- Requirements should be made by the WCPFC for its members' vessels to use automatic identification system (AIS) as a supplement to the VMS to enhance or improve overall monitoring of vessels and transparency in operations

EFFECTIVE DATA SHARING ON TRANSSHIPMENT

- Establish and expand data-sharing agreements between the WCPFC and other RFMOs

HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH TRANSSHIPMENT

- Due to large economic incentives, high seas transshipment can facilitate and sustain fishing efforts for months or even years, allowing longline fishing vessels to avoid returning to port while continuing to operate out of sight and unnoticed. This practice further increases the ability of the fishing industry to retain, exploit and manipulate individual crew or workers, sometimes against their will (forced labour) through stress of long periods at sea, lack of oversight by authorities and less opportunity for crew to leave vessels for being out at sea.
- The high seas are also areas where no country has jurisdiction or control beyond flag State authority of the vessel and where monitoring or regulations are limited or do not exist.
- IUU fishing activities associated with transshipment at sea thwart global efforts to effectively manage fisheries and are also simultaneously linked to transnational crimes at sea including smuggling of migrant workers and trafficking of weapons and drugs.

We should all work together to create better practices that benefit workers and the Marine Environment



WWF is working with these partners to address issues on IUU Fishing in the WCPFC.



Working to sustain the natural world for the benefit of people and wildlife.

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