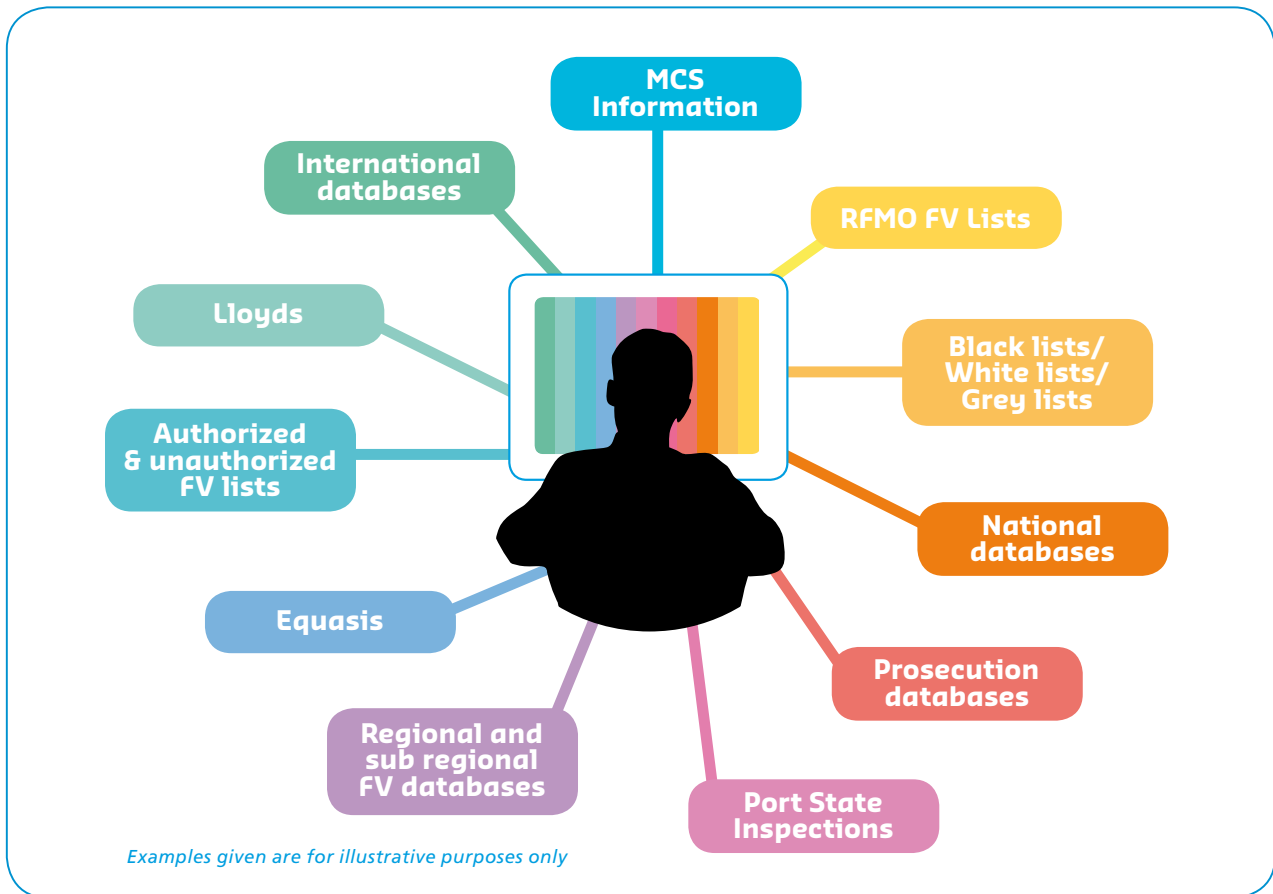


The Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels:



Improving Transparency and Traceability, Facilitating Risk Assessment, Improving Decision-making

The development of a Global Record of Fishing Vessels would improve transparency and traceability. It would facilitate risk assessment for Industry, RFMOs and Government; and it would improve decision-making on a number of fronts, including on fleet capacity, size and structure, management, safety, pollution, security and statistics.

The Problem: Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing

Illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU) remains one of the greatest threats to sustainable fisheries and those whose livelihoods depend on them. The scale of illegal fishing is huge, yet more troubling is that the amount of IUU fishing worldwide appears to be increasing as IUU fishers try to avoid stricter fishing rules being created to deal with declining catches.

The adverse ecological impacts of IUU fishing are wide ranging and include compromising the scientific basis of fish stock assessment, threatening the sustainability of fisheries that many depend on for food and income, and having a disproportionate impact on non-target species, habitat and ecology.

There have been numerous calls for the development of tools to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing. One such tool is a comprehensive Global Record of Fishing Vessels. In February 2008 the FAO hosted an Expert Consultation on the Development of a Comprehensive Global Record of Fishing Vessels, which recommended the Global Record be pursued as matter of high priority and be implemented as soon as possible.

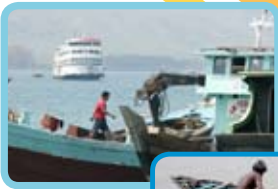
Why a Global Record of Fishing Vessels?

One of the greatest obstacles to eliminating IUU fishing is the lack of access to information on fishing vessel identification, ownership and control. This lack of transparency means there is no ability to trace vessels as they change name, flag, registration, ownership and operators. Currently, there is no single source where basic information about fishing vessels of all sizes is contained or can be accessed. If such a tool existed, companies and vessels acting illegally would find it much more difficult and costly to do business.

What Is the Global Record of Fishing Vessels?

The initial concept for a Global Record of Fishing Vessels is an internet-based global portal / database where data and information from many sources is gathered in one location.

The Global Record of Fishing Vessels would be the window through which global vessel information can be accessed; it will be a publicly available one-stop shop with linkages to a variety of information and data sources such as international, regional, national and other vessel-related databases.



The Global Record of Fishing Vessels

- A record of publicly available and relevant vessel information. It will not be a registry that confers rights or obligations.
- Objective, neutral and non-judgmental but may contain information and linkages to other vessel records, both authorised and unauthorised, which do make judgments.
- A provision of information to allow users to make informed judgments and risk assessments based on a broad range of relevant information.
- A collation of data drawn from publicly available information from a variety of sources to capture information on vessel activity, historical behaviour, ownership and authorisation as well as information from monitoring, control and surveillance and port state records.
- Using the broadest definition of “vessel” – encompassing as many as four million vessels – recognising illegal fishing is a problem not only on the high seas but also in national zones. Such a broad definition will necessitate a phased approach to the Record’s delivery.

Addressing the Growing Demand for Traceability in the Market

Increasingly, importing countries and buyers are seeking eco-labels and other forms of certification that require full traceability of seafood products in order to reduce illegal and unsustainable activities and to help instil greater confidence within the seafood consuming public. The importance of the Global Record of Fishing Vessels is underscored by these new and growing market demands.

Such market forces and incentives also provide a stimulus for countries to provide information to the Global Record of Fishing Vessels. The Global Record would support existing binding and non-binding instruments to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU Fishing and increase the effectiveness of Port State Measures and MCS activities.

Making the Global Record of Fishing Vessels a Reality

The successful development of the Global Record of Fishing Vessels will require political support and cooperation by FAO and other United Nations bodies and their members, States, RFMOs, data providers, industry and other stakeholders. To be effective and improve transparency and traceability, mandatory, unique vessel identifiers will be required.

Further development and implementation of the Global Record will remain conditional on the availability of the significant funds required to ensure viability of the project; funds will also be required and employed to assist some countries in the development of their national registries. Consideration will need to be given to provision of financial assistance and expertise to developing countries for capacity building.

The outcomes of the Expert Consultation together with information from the other related activities will be presented to the Committee on Fisheries at the FAO in March 2009 where decisions as to the future of the Global Record of Fishing Vessels will be made.

Would you like to share your thoughts about the Global Record of Fishing Vessels or participate in a survey? Please send an email to GlobalRecord@seafoodchoices.org

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