



IUU Risk Intelligence

Putting Compliance First

GLOBAL EVALUATION OF FISHERIES MONITORING CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE IN 84 COUNTRIES

SOLOMON ISLANDS - COUNTRY REPORT

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SUMMARY

*This evaluation of Fisheries Monitoring Control and Surveillance report for **Solomon Islands** is one of 84 such country evaluations that covers nations landing 92% of world's fish catch. Using a wide range of interviews and in-country consultations with both military and civilian agencies, the report exemplifies the best attempt by the author(s) at evaluation of MCS compliance using 12 questions derived from international fisheries laws. The twelve questions are divided into two evaluation fields, (MCS Infrastructure and Inspections). Complete details of the methods and results of this global evaluation would be published shortly through IUU Risk Intelligence website.*

Over a five-year period, this global assessment has been subjected to several cross-checks from both regional and global MCS experts familiar with compliance aspects in the country concerned. Uncertainty in assigning each score is depicted explicitly through score range. However, the author(s) are aware that gaps may remain for some aspects. The lead author remains open at any time to comments, and revisions will be made upon submission of evidence where necessary. Throughout the report, extreme precaution has been taken to maintain confidentiality of individuals who were willing to share information but expressed an inclination to remain anonymous out of concern for their job security, and information from such sources was cited as 'anonymous' throughout the report.

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SOLOMON ISLANDS – COUNTRY REPORT



FAO landings (2013): 36,480 tonnes
Fisheries contribution to GDP (2014): 2.4%
Law of the Sea (Ratification/accession): 23rd June 1997
Coastline: 5313 km
RFMO Membership: WCPFC
Patrolling agencies: Solomon Islands Police Force



Rank	Priority for maritime security tasks
1.	Illegal fishing
2.	Narcotics trafficking
3.	Contraband Smuggling

SECTION 1: MCS INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Does the country have adequate surveillance infrastructure (patrol aircraft, sea-based patrol vessels and coastal patrols) to effectively patrol fisheries resources within its EEZ?

Score: 2.5

Score Range: 2-4

Low capability. The two patrol boats (*RSIPV Auki*, *RSIPV Lata*) can conduct limited patrols within the EEZ (Jane 2011). The two patrol boats are also part of the QUAD operations co-ordinated by FFA (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2016).



Solomon Islands is still largely reliant on FFA-VMS for surveillance of vessel traffic within the EEZ. Monitoring a huge maritime area requires investment in patrol boats and other technologies such as radar. Most of the patrol boats received by Pacific Island states in the mid-eighties (designed for 15 years) are way past the end of their service and prone to frequent breakdowns. Australian Government is currently planning to provide 22 new boats to 12 Pacific island states. Nevertheless, this is likely to take time and monitoring of coastal waters is likely to be minimal over the next five years. Further, under the new Australian PPB replacement programme, Solomon Islands is likely to get only one patrol boat in exchange for two existing ones (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2015).

2. Does the country have adequate trained officers to conduct MCS operations?

Score: 5

Score Range: 4-5

There are officers in both Solomon Islands Police Force and Ministry of Fisheries for fisheries surveillance duties. Two fisheries inspectors are deployed at ports, 2 staff are tasked with VMS duties, and 2 officers work on licensing and statistics (ACPFish-2013).

The MFMR has 12 fisheries officers based at key fishing ports (Honiara for transshipments and Noro for Landings) and since July 2016 it has hired 14 new recruits as CDS officers. The NZ Govt. is directly involved in capacity building in all aspects of compliance (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2016).

However, the above changes in recruitment of staff and inspections of tuna vessels are largely due to EU Yellow card process and long-term management performance cannot be assessed using current policy plans. Further, there is a need for complete overhaul of the monitoring of coastal fleet and inspection procedures at larger fishing ports which are vulnerable to illegal trade practices within the PIC region (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2016).

3. Does the country have adequate management plans to monitor their fishing vessels on the high seas?

Score: 7

Score Range: 5-7

Solomon Islands has limited capability to monitor fishing vessels on the high seas. Most of the intel on vessels operating beyond the EEZ is provided by FFA-VMS which tracks all vessels operating in the PIC region. The country is not a signatory to the FAO Compliance Agreement (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2015).

Of the 10 flagged fishing vessels 7 operate in archipelagic waters and the other 3 in PNA waters. There are no SI vessels operating on the high seas, all vessels have double VMS (FFA and PNA) and 100% observer coverage (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2016).

4. What proportion of fishing vessels is equipped with vessel monitoring system (VMS) to monitor their movements on a continuous basis?

Score: 8

Score Range: 7-8



Licensed foreign fishing vessels are required to have VMS tracking devices and transmit signals during their presence in Solomon Islands EEZ (Anon 2005). VMS data is also compared against logsheet data to get better estimate of catches caught by vessels operating under licensing agreements.

In 2016, around 270 foreign fishing vessels (*170 purse seiners as part of PNA – and 100 tuna longliners*) were licensed to fish in Solomon Islands EEZ waters; and there were only 5 locally registered purse seiners and 2 pole and line vessel licensed to fish in archipelagic waters and EEZ, plus 3 for EEZ and PNA waters). So, there is 100% double VMS coverage (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2016).

5. What percentage of fishing vessels (>20 m OAL) is monitored through onboard observers at sea (for major commercial fish stocks)?

Score: 7

Score Range: 5-7

Available information suggests that there are 110 observers to monitor fishing activities in the Solomon Islands EEZ (MFMR 2016; Honiwala 2012);

Catch reports are also cross-checked with observer records to check for fisheries violations (MSC 2012). Purse seiners had 100% observer coverage with application of Vessel Day Scheme and longliners had less than 5% coverage (WCPFC 2015a).

SECTION 2: INSPECTIONS

6. How often fishing vessels are inspected at sea (Identification by sight and boarding for inspections)?

Score: 2

Score Range: 2-4

More recent data is lacking; Existing data suggests low capability. Regional estimates suggest that at least 141 sea days of patrolling is required to provide a credible IUU deterrence in the EEZs of Pacific island countries.

MCS patrols are expensive and with limited resources, the challenge is to achieve minimal prevention of IUU activities. With a vast EEZ, it is not possible to control entry of unlicensed vessels when they cannot be detected on our VMS system. In 2011, patrols were conducted for 60 days and nine

vessels were boarded at sea. A surveillance officer from fisheries, customs and immigration assist maritime patrols during each mission. Normally, only one patrol vessel is at sea (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2015).

111 sea days of patrols were undertaken in the year 2011 using two patrol boats “RSIPV Lata and RSIPV Auki”, with an average of 112.5 sea days of patrols over the period 2006-2011 (McCann 2013).

Low capability on its own (as with all Pacific Islands) for 2016 in combination with NZ and AUS it has 80 days in its EEZ and adjacent high seas pockets, targeting mostly longliners (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2016).

7. How often fishing vessels are scrutinized through aerial patrols?

Score: 2

Score Range: 2-4

Around 60-70 hours of aerial surveillance is provided each year, but such gaps are compensated by satellite surveillance using VMS throughout the year (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2016).

Limited aerial surveillance is available through regional MCS assistance from Australian and New Zealand aircraft. 50 hours of aerial surveillance is available each year (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2015).

8. How often are fishing vessels inspected at landing centers and docks for foreign and domestic vessels (Dockside monitoring)?

Score: 5

Score Range: 4-7

All landings and transshipment are to be authorized by MFMR. There are 100% inspections for foreign flagged and local tuna vessels based on the volumes including mass balance of exports and processing. An Annual Inspection Plan has also set inspection targets for each type of fleet focusing on different risk areas (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2016).

MFMR surveillance officers are available for supervising transshipments at ports (ACP-Fish 2013). As a condition of the foreign fishing vessels are required to send VMS position, declare on entry/exit, transship and refuel at ports (Prohibition on transshipment at sea), submit logbooks and weekly catch reports (EU 2009). According to WCPFC (2011) and Honiwala (2012) documents port sampling has been relatively low for the past few years. Solomon Islands are not a signatory to the FAO Agreement on Port State

Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing. In 2014, port sampling coverage was low for purse seiners as well as Pole & line vessels with moderate coverage for longliners (WCPFC 2015a).

Noro, Tulagi and Honiara are the three designated ports where port state control is exercised for industrial tuna vessels. Port sampling cannot be construed as equivalent to complete control on legality or documentation. MCS controls are low-key in most Pacific Island ports. SPC and FFA have trained several officers from Government Ministries within PIC's but muted documentary checks and lack of meaningful penalties for identified discrepancies suggest that distant water nations assume more power through bilateral pressure and financial aid packages. This is the precise reason for so many out of court settlements and lack of distant water vessels on WCPFC blacklists. If Governments in Pacific island states remain dependent on rich countries, they will have limited leverage on compliance matters (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2015).

9. Are there adequate plans to monitor catches in coastal areas through coastal patrols (beach patrols, small-scale fishing gear and catch inspections) on a regular basis?

Score: 4.5

Score Range: 3-5

Very few coastal patrols are feasible due to low allotment of funds and fisheries officers in local fisheries. Incursions into MPAs are detected using VMS system. CBRM is achieved through support and visits to communities participating in the Locally Marine Managed Areas (LMMAs). Catch enumeration has improved with the introduction of *Hapi Fis*, *Hapi Pipol*. Both fishers and vendors collect information (species and size of the fish) for fish landed by local canoes and boats a few days each week for some landing sites (Anon, *pers. comm.*, 2015).

The coastal fisheries division has been developed since 2013 and incorporated various new officers and an international advisor, a market monitoring programme and a reporting app (*Happi Fis*) target local consumptions and captures. Coastal fisheries are completely based on subsistence catches with no exports (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2016).

See Anon (2011); Aqorau (2007); Niesten *et al.*, (2012); Pakoa (2012); Cohen and Alexander (2013); MFMR (2014); Bennett (2014); Evans *et al.*, (2017); Rohe *et al.*, (2017); Jupiter *et al.*, (2019) for information on coastal fisheries management in Solomon Islands. Destructive fishing practices have also been

reported from these waters (Veitayaki *et al.*, 1995; UNEP 2004; Brewer 2013; Hamilton *et al.*, 2012; Aalbersberg *et al.*, 2012).

10. Are all the catches that are caught in this jurisdiction at sea accounted for (i.e., unreported Trans-shipments at sea)?

Score: 7.5

Score Range: 7-8

Purse seiners are prohibited from transshipping catches at sea and only allowed at Honiara and Noro ports (EU 2009). Solomon Islands is signatory to the UN Fish stocks agreement. In 2013, a total of 161 vessels transshipped 124,088 tonnes of tuna in Noro and Honiara ports (Honiwala 2012). See McCoy (2012); MRAG (2011); WCPFC (2017) reports for more information.

Under the CDS structure 100% of the tuna that is transshipped and or landed is accounted for. Exports are mass balanced against individual landings (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2016).

11. Are vessels required to undergo inspection of equipment and fishing gear for every fishing trip?

Score: 4

Score Range: 2-4

Such measures are not reported. Pre-fishing inspections to check vessel license and equipment onboard are seldom implemented among Pacific island nations so Solomon Islands is not an exception to this issue (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2015).

All foreign vessels require a “*Outwards Clearance Inspection*” (100% implemented), while domestic vessels fishing in EEZ and Archipelagic waters around 50%, but on the whole 100% monitoring of tuna landings (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2016).

12. Has the country taken adequate measures to revise and implement national fisheries laws to curtail illegal fishing practices; and does it comply with national and international laws signed?

Score: 6.5

Score Range: 5-7

Fisheries Management Act (*No. 2 of 2015*) is the main national legislation for fisheries management in Solomon Islands. The country has also adopted an



NPOA on IUU Fishing to fight and end illegal fishing. Solomon Islands ratified the UN Fish Stocks Agreement on 13 February 1997.

Solomon Islands is not a party to the FAO Compliance Agreement and the UN Port State Measures Agreement. See Brown (2016); Mapuru and Naz (2013); MRAG (2009); SIG (2005); MRAG (2011); Govan *et al.*, (2013); MRAG (2016) documents for more information.

Flag of Convenience	No
Vessels on the RFMO - IUU vessel list	No

RFMO	Year of the assessment	Compliant	Partially compliant	Not Compliant	Source
WCPFC	2016		Yes		WCPFC (2018)

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Note:

Bibliography and other notes relevant to this country report including methods, results and discussion for the global evaluation of 84 countries would be released shortly through IUU Risk Intelligence website (<http://iuriskintelligence.com/>). (The author can be contacted at pramod.raju@gmail.com to provide any feedback).

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