

APEC Roadmap on Combatting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing

Third Senior Officials' Meeting

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BACKGROUND

Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing is a global and regional threat to sustainable fisheries, fishing communities, marine ecosystems and societies. IUU fishing diminishes ocean resources and remains a persistent threat to sustainable development. Our cooperation through APEC, in accordance with its mandates, is aligned with efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which establishes in its 14th Sustainable Development Goal, inter alia, the objective of ending IUU fishing. The Asia Pacific region accounts for nearly 52% of global marine fisheries catch (FAO-SOFIA 2018), and fisheries provide significant benefits to the APEC region in terms of food security, economic value and cultural value. Since the 2005 Bali Plan of Action, Ministers have continued to encourage APEC Economies to cooperate to address IUU fishing in the region. At their 2019 Meeting, Ministers Responsible for Trade noted the increasingly adverse impact of IUU Fishing on fish stocks, the marine environment, food security, and livelihoods, encouraged additional work to address these challenges and reiterated their support for the work underway in the World Trade Organization for comprehensive and effective disciplines that prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies.

VISION

Given the importance of fishing for the economy, food security and sustainable growth of the Asia Pacific region, it is critical for APEC Economies to work cooperatively within the context of this regional economic forum on initiatives to prevent and combat IUU fishing, as part of a joint effort to promote ocean conservation and the sustainable use of marine resources. Combatting IUU fishing can support the achievement of sustainable fisheries and fishing communities and global maritime safety interests. A successful strategy in preventing and combating IUU fishing should be founded on cooperation. Various strategies have been developed and implemented to prevent and combat IUU fishing in recent years, but most of them focused on the harvesting and transport phases. As APEC Economies represent some of the main markets for high value fishery products, market-based measures and strategies are also needed to strengthen the prevention and combating of IUU fishing with consideration on capacity building.

OBJECTIVES

To help address IUU fishing in the Asia Pacific region, while recognizing that APEC supports the development of free and open trade in fisheries products of legal origin,

OFWG proposes an APEC roadmap on IUU fishing to be implemented, based broadly on two objectives:

- Building technical capacities in APEC Economies where appropriate to prevent and combat IUU fishing activities; and
- Strengthening institutional capacities and compliance with domestic and international conservation and management measures to address IUU fishing within APEC through enhanced cooperation between member Economies, including capacity building, technical assistance and, where applicable, enhancement of monitoring, control and surveillance and traceability measures.

ROADMAP ACTION AREAS

To prevent and combat IUU fishing, APEC Economies are encouraged to strengthen their relevant domestic policies and legal frameworks, by pursuing the following lines of action to achieve the Roadmap's objectives:

1. **Implementation of Port State Measures (PSM):** Reaffirming their important role in combatting IUU fishing, encourage APEC Economies to carry out robust and effective PSM based on the principles of implementing the Port State Measure Agreement. In addition, advocate for the adoption of PSM in regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) to which they are Members, as well as other measures that detect and prevent IUU fish and fish products from entering through ports to global supply chain. These measures should apply to foreign-flagged fishing vessels seeking entry to the APEC Economies ports or while they are in their ports, and should include procedures to verify that such vessels have not engaged in IUU fishing or fishing related activities.
2. **Exchange of information regarding traceability and monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing activities:** Cooperate to enhance information sharing of tools to prevent and combat IUU fishing, including those tools for improving the traceability of fish throughout the supply chain through implementing catch documentation or trade certification schemes. Additionally, Economies should consider participating in specific monitoring, control and surveillance networks for sharing and exchanging information, as well as enforcement strategies, to prevent and combat IUU fishing, taking into account the related confidentiality requirements.
3. **Increase the coordination of APEC Economies:** Develop and implement cooperative activities among agencies within APEC economies responsible for monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing activities and the traceability of fishery products. This cooperation should consider activities to enhance capacity building, training and use of available advanced technologies to

support effective implementation of measures to combat IUU fishing. To facilitate this coordination, APEC economies should establish domestic contact points.

4. **Promote collaboration with relevant regional and international fisheries bodies to identify where APEC can contribute:** Collaborate with relevant regional and international fisheries bodies, as appropriate, to exchange experiences and best practices, as well as to benefit from their work on combatting IUU fishing, particularly relevant RFMOs and the FAO. This includes the identification of any economic or market-related measure where APEC could contribute.
5. **Strengthen Public-Private Engagement:** Strengthen public-private engagement and promote collaboration through the exchange of information and the development of studies on the causes, operation and impact of IUU fishing, as appropriate.
6. **Capacity building:** Enhance the capacity of APEC developing Economies in combatting IUU fishing through technical assistance and training on catch certificate and traceability; the use and application of regulatory instruments; methodologies and operational fisheries enforcement procedures; technologies to combat IUU fishing and fishing-related activities.

IMPLEMENTATION

Reviews of the Roadmap will be undertaken during each first annual OFWG meeting, including sharing information on related activities by Economies and at regional levels, as well as discussing and addressing related challenges. At the first OFWG meeting in 2025, each Economy will report on the implementation of the Roadmap. The Steering Committee on Economic and Technical Cooperation has the overall responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the progress under the Roadmap. Senior Officials will report periodically to Ministers on progress and seek further guidance as appropriate. APEC economies will continue efforts to promote sharing of knowledge and success stories, lessons learned from various management approaches, best practices and creative solutions to prevent and combat IUU fishing.