

## **REGIONAL ELECTRONIC TECHNOLOGIES IMPLEMENTATION PLAN For WEST COAST MARINE FISHERIES DRAFT October 2014**

### **Introduction**

The implementation of marine fisheries management regulations in recent years that require near real-time reporting retained catch fishery-related impacts by species at the vessel level have challenged the methodological and budgetary limits of contemporary data collection methods such as on-board observers, self-reporting, dockside monitoring, and filing landing receipts. Further, the demands for more precise, timely, and comprehensive fishery-related data continue to rise as fishery managers strive for greater bycatch control and optimized target stock catches via increasingly more sophisticated regulatory approaches. Electronic technologies<sup>1</sup> (ET) are emerging as a more effective and efficient solution to meet these challenges and demands. Additionally, opportunities to carry out existing data tasks in a more efficient manner are particularly important in time of increasing budgetary constraints.

In May 2013, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) issued Policy Directive 30-133, *Policy on Electronic Technologies and Fishery-Dependent Data Collection* (Agenda Item C.4.a, Attachment 1), which called for the development of Regional Electronic Technology Implementation Plans to address regionally-specific fishery data collection issues and needs. Importantly, the Policy Directive did not state that electronic technologies were appropriate for all of a region's fisheries or fishery management plans (FMPs). Rather, it called for the identification of fisheries or FMPs for which electronic technologies are appropriate and planning for organized regional implementation.

A truly regional plan needs to take into account the roles of several key partners in addition to NMFS. The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Pacific Council) is responsible for the policy role in the development of the regulations necessitating the collection of data and, in some cases, regulatory requirements for the use of ET. While there is always a linkage between Pacific Council management policy and the design of the data system, the specifics of how management data needs are met are often left to the implementing agencies. In that regard, in addition to implementation responsibilities of NMFS, the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) has the important role of being the clearing house of West Coast fishery catch information, and the States of Washington, Oregon, and California, and Northwest Indian Tribes have important roles as the original collectors of most shore-based catch accounting information.

ET Plan information distribution and outreach to the public is important in successful implementation. The Pacific Council forum will be used as the primary public outreach mechanism, including the Council meetings, website postings, and between meeting informational distributions. The NMFS Office of External Affairs will also provide information and outreach to the public on this Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Electronic technologies for the purposes of this plan include vessel monitoring systems (VMS), electronic logbooks (EL), video cameras for observer-type electronic monitoring (EM), electronic fish ticket (EFT) systems and other technologies that provide EM and electronic reporting (ER).

## **Incremental Planning Horizons**

This Plan reflects the following three phases to be conducted over the next ten years.

1. Initial Implementation Projects—Implementing current Pacific Council actions and planning for ET initiatives or major policy issues identified prior to 2015
2. Expansion of current projects, development of recreational projects, and developing, revising, and integrating databases including data access policies
3. Implementing advanced ET projects –projects based on improved ET capabilities and on better tools to report the information and data

### 2015-2017—Initial Implementation Projects:

- Review of ET Plan by PSMFC’s Pacific Fisheries Information Network (PacFIN) Data and Recreational Fisheries Information Network (RecFIN) Technical Committees
- Submit funding needs to NMFS for FY 2015 consideration
- Groundfish Shorebased Trawl Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) –Electronic Fish Tickets are in place
- Groundfish Shorebased Trawl IFQ (whiting, bottom trawl, fixed gear)—Cameras and logbooks
- Groundfish Shorebased Fixed Gear –Electronic Fish Tickets and Electronic Logbooks
- Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Drift Gillnet—explore use of cameras and e-logbooks
- Standards/Type approval rulemaking for third-party providers of ET products and service
- Policy consideration of rulemaking on “Who Pays for What” issues
- Expansion of State electronic fish ticket capabilities beyond IFQ trawl fisheries
- Integration of Tribal Electronic Fish Ticket System with State and Federal systems
- Vessel movement monitoring –updating current VMS reporting and equipment requirements including taking into account use of groundfish electronic monitoring projects and possible use of other data logging technology.
- Encouragement of Industry and Scientific Communities to research ET advancements via exempted fishing permits, voluntary cooperative research, and funding opportunities such as Salstonstall-Kennedy and National Fish and Wildlife Grant Programs.

## 2018-2020—Expansion of Existing Projects and Data Integration/Sharing Projects

- Umbrella Rulemaking-- Electronic Fish Ticket Regulations to cover landings from all FMP fisheries (Groundfish, Salmon, Coastal Pelagic Species, and HMS Fisheries)
- Integration of e-ticket, e-logbook, and other data such as VMS data with existing State and Federal reporting and permit systems. Revise systems so data is easier to link.
- Data standards for industry groups who choose to develop their own logbooks and other ET tools.
- Review of logbook considerations for all FMP fisheries and related state fisheries including recreational.
- Recreational ET projects
- Development of confidentiality, IT security, data storage, and data sharing policies with NMFS (including Council), States (including PSMFC), and Tribes (including Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission)
- Development of secured databases access portals with appropriate restriction levels for: 1) State, tribal, and Federal fish managers and stock assessors; 2) state and Federal law enforcement officials; 3), industry, academics; and 4) by the general public.

## 2021-2024—ET-Advanced Projects.

Revised monitoring regulations, if appropriate, due to improvements in camera technology

- Updates and revised ET regulations for FMP fisheries as appropriate.
- Geo-Spatial Referencing of state and federal regulations.

### **Costs**

The major costs associated with the program concern equipment, data transmission, data analysis, regulatory processes, ET related permitting processes, and data management and storage. In the Groundfish IFQ fisheries, fishermen will be given a choice to carry an observer or carry a camera. Therefore, the electronic monitoring system is not replacing an existing system, but is an additional system. In the HMS fisheries, cameras could be added to boats to supplement existing observer coverage. In both these situations, the costs of electronic monitoring are adding costs to the current costs of monitoring, as the camera data is a new data stream. Electronic reporting projects such as the e-ticket and e-logbooks have some cost amelioration because they are either replacing or substituting existing paper systems.

Costs for the initial implementation phase are needed from FY 2015 Congressional appropriations. Costs for future implementation phases, or additional costs in the latter stages of the initial implementation phase will need to be developed during 2015 as a separate planning matter.

***{October 22, 2014 Note: At the time of the advance Briefing Book deadline, cost estimates for the initial phase were not sufficiently developed to be included in the draft ET Plan. According to the Situation Summary for this agenda item, finalizing the cost estimates that might be used in obtaining FY 2015 funding could be assigned to Council and NMFS staff for inclusion in the ET Plan as it is completed by December 31, 2014.}***

### **Evaluation of Implementation Progress**

Routine reports at Pacific Council meetings and routine reports to the NMFS Leadership Council should be expected to track, evaluate, and report on progress. Evaluation criteria can include such things as the number of fisheries that have moved from ET implementation plans to actual implementation and the percent of landings covered by electronic fish tickets and, where appropriate, the percent of landings covered by e- logbooks.