

Fisheries Assistance provided by Australia in the Indo Pacific Region

Australia is working internationally to build capacity in fisheries management and support regional partners to take actions to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. By addressing IUU fishing, we help reduce the threat to regional food security and sustainable fisheries resources, and help ensure the livelihood of legitimate operators who depend on fishing.

Through its membership of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), Australia contributes to a comprehensive regional program to combat IUU fishing, delivered through the Regional Fisheries Surveillance Centre located in the Solomon Islands. Australia contributes funding to run the surveillance centre and contributes seconded staff to assist in day-to-day activities, and to take part in cooperative operations to detect and deter IUU fishing.

Australia has played a key role in developing the Niue Treaty Subsidiary Agreement, which provides a legal framework for cooperative monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) and information sharing in the Pacific. Australia is currently in the process of ratifying the Agreement which supports improved management of fisheries resources in the region and aims to maximise their social and economic benefits. The Agreement will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Australia's current cooperative assistance activities in the region.

As a member of regional fisheries management organisations in the Indian and Pacific oceans, Australia supports the development and application of conservation and management measures regarding combating IUU fishing and listing identified IUU vessels on IUU vessel lists. IUU vessels lists are an effective deterrent as they devalue the vessel and inhibit market and trade access for the IUU catch. Australia also supports the boarding and inspection regimes of these organisations by ensuring that fisheries officers are authorised and trained in the relevant obligations.

Australia is a key party to the Regional Plan of Action to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices Including Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (RPOA) in South East Asia. Through the RPOA Australia supports efforts to strengthen the overall level of fisheries management in South East Asia including cooperative action against IUU fishing. As a result of regional data sharing and implementation of effective port State controls through the RPOA, all of the active IUU fleet known to be operating in the Southern Ocean are now out of action.

Australia provides capacity building in fisheries management and MCS with regional partners, including RPOA members. Examples of capacity building activities include:

- support for the implementation of the Niue Treaty Subsidiary Agreement through the provision of officers to regional enforcement operations, the development of standard operating procedures and legal and technical support
- implementation of the Australia-Indonesia Fisheries Management/MCS Training program which involves fisheries management, and MCS training for Indonesian officers from maritime, port authority, customs and police agencies. A similar program was also run in Papua New Guinea and Timor Leste.
- delivery of theoretical and practical training in measures consistent with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization Agreement on Port State Measures
- assistance with investigations of suspected IUU fishing vessels
- cooperation and technical assistance on fisheries patrols.

Through the Pacific Maritime Security Program, Australia provides assistance to regional partners to strengthen the Pacific region's capacity to respond to maritime security threats, including fisheries protection.