

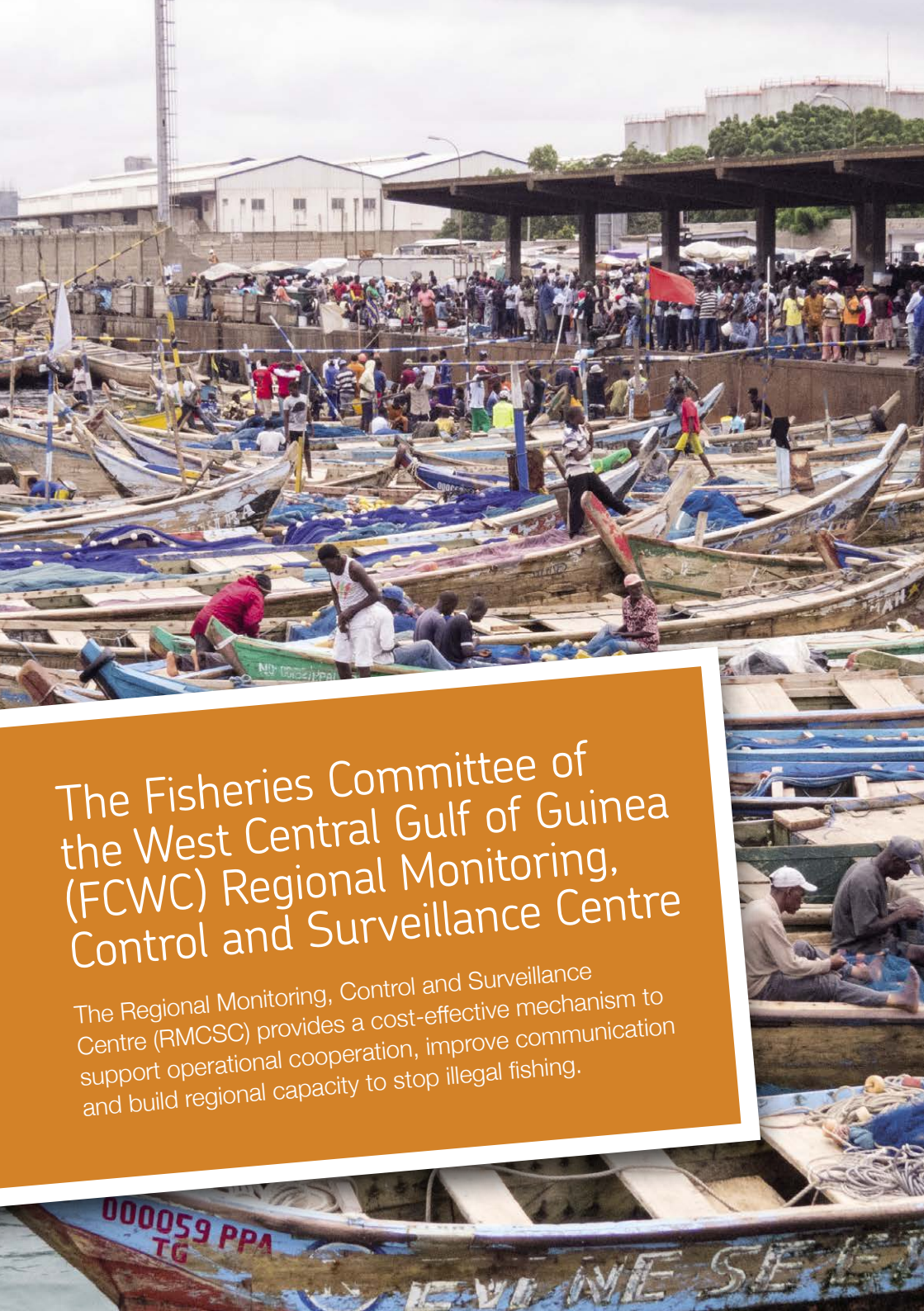


# FCWC

Fisheries Committee for  
the West Central Gulf of Guinea

## The FCWC Regional Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Centre





# The Fisheries Committee of the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) Regional Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Centre

The Regional Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Centre (RMCS) provides a cost-effective mechanism to support operational cooperation, improve communication and build regional capacity to stop illegal fishing.



Established in 2020, the RMCS addresses major national, regional and global challenges in stopping IUU fishing and related fisheries crimes. This is achieved through pooling and analysing information, working in a collaborative manner, promoting cooperation with relevant regional and national authorities and institutions, and building capacity.

The RMCS develops and supports the following activities:



## VESSEL MONITORING

Vessel monitoring and analysis to support coordinated efforts of fisheries inspection at port and at sea.

Data from the FCWC regional vessel monitoring system (VMS) is combined with automatic identification system (AIS) information, and visual data. This increases capacity to monitor fishing related activity in national exclusive economic zones and improves ability to track the highly mobile fleet active in the FCWC region. It includes monitoring of all fishing vessels registered or licensed by FCWC Member States.

The RMCS monitors the position, speed, direction and activity of registered and licensed fishing vessels and support vessels. Dedicated operators and a secure system has been established to ensure protection of data and information. Each Member State has web-based access to the RMCS system and receives notifications of vessel movements.

Gathering and analysis of information and intelligence, enables oversight of activities and areas of noncompliance, in relation to the implementation of conservation and management measures such as closed seasons. A centralised VMS ensures that reliable and real-time VMS data is available at any time, and that no loss of historical VMS data occurs.





### REGIONAL RECORD OF AUTHORISED FISHING VESSELS

To maintain an up to date, easy to access list of authorised and IUU listed fishing vessels.

This resource will support national and regional due diligence processes and enforcement activity, building on existing information sharing developed under the West Africa Task Force (WATF).

The Record will include all registered and licensed vessels within the FCWC region and provide a central repository for this information, containing standardised fields of information for ease of cross checking. It may contain information about the physical characteristics of the vessels, the owners, operators and masters and provide a history of any changes in that information over time. Details of IUU listed vessels will also be developed to serve as a rapid check for known bad actors.



### REGIONAL AND JOINT AT-SEA PATROLS

To identify vessels operating illegally, without authorisation, or in contravention of national or regional conservation and management measures.

At-sea patrols and inspections of fishing vessels offer the element of surprise and can catch illegal operators in the act. But the high cost of purchasing, equipping, staffing and maintaining patrol vessels and equipment make at-sea patrols a high cost MCS activity.

Coordinating the sharing of assets, including patrol vessels can increase efficiency and reduce costs.

Cooperation with regional maritime security actors has been established, and this will build the basis for increased information sharing, improved operational planning and greater maritime domain awareness.



### REGIONAL OBSERVER PROGRAMME

Observers on fishing vessels are used to collect scientific data that feeds into fisheries management decisions. They are also well placed to spot non-compliance and IUU fishing as it happens. However, they are also vulnerable and at a high risk of intimidation, violence and corruption.

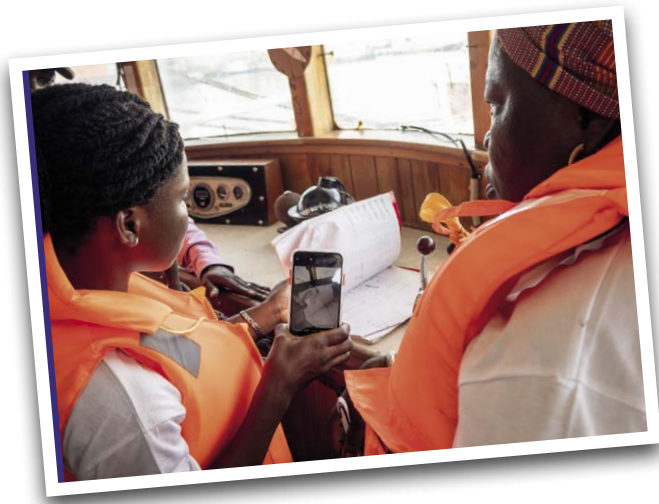
Fisheries observer programmes exist in some of the FCWC countries. By developing regional coordination, national and regional observer training activities and standards for training can be harmonised to allow observers from one country to work on vessels flagged or licensed by another. This will improve the utilisation of observer data for science and MCS purposes by providing standard forms, and guidelines for collection and compilation. A database of trained fisheries observers will enable regional deployment of those qualified for specific vessel or fishery types.

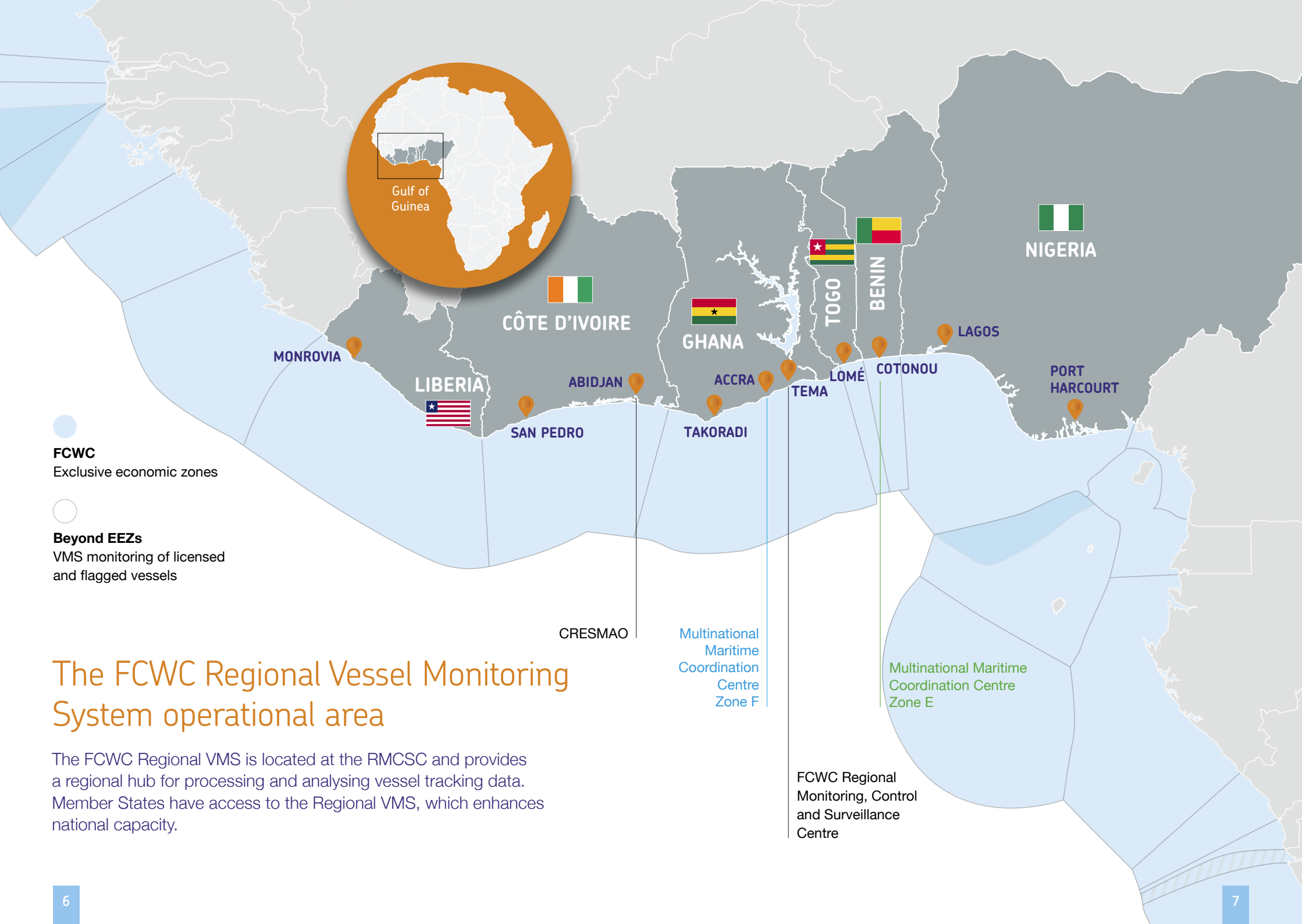


### TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

The RMCSC will provide support nationally and opportunities regionally to strengthen capacity for MCS. Training to develop the expertise, knowledge and awareness of fisheries inspectors, other MCS personnel and allied agencies is critical to ensure that illegal operators are identified, and successful enforcement action is taken.

Developing region-wide standard operating procedures and best practice guidelines will level up capacity and work towards a simpler regulatory environment.





**FCWC**  
Exclusive economic zones

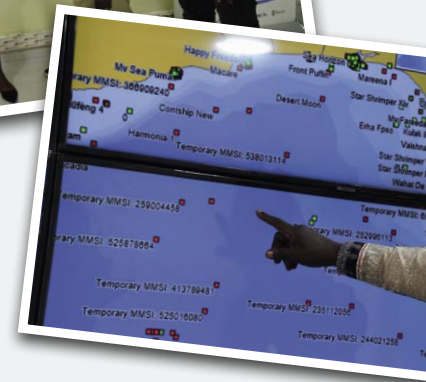
**Beyond EEZs**  
VMS monitoring of licensed  
and flagged vessels

## The FCWC Regional Vessel Monitoring System operational area

The FCWC Regional VMS is located at the RMCS and provides a regional hub for processing and analysing vessel tracking data. Member States have access to the Regional VMS, which enhances national capacity.

FCWC Regional  
Monitoring, Control  
and Surveillance  
Centre

# The development of the Regional Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Centre



## FCWC Regional Plan of Action on IUU fishing 2009-2019

established as a strategic goal the enhancement of efficient, cost effective and sustainable fisheries MCS and the establishment of mechanisms for effective regional cooperation.

## Convention on the Pooling and Sharing of Information and Data

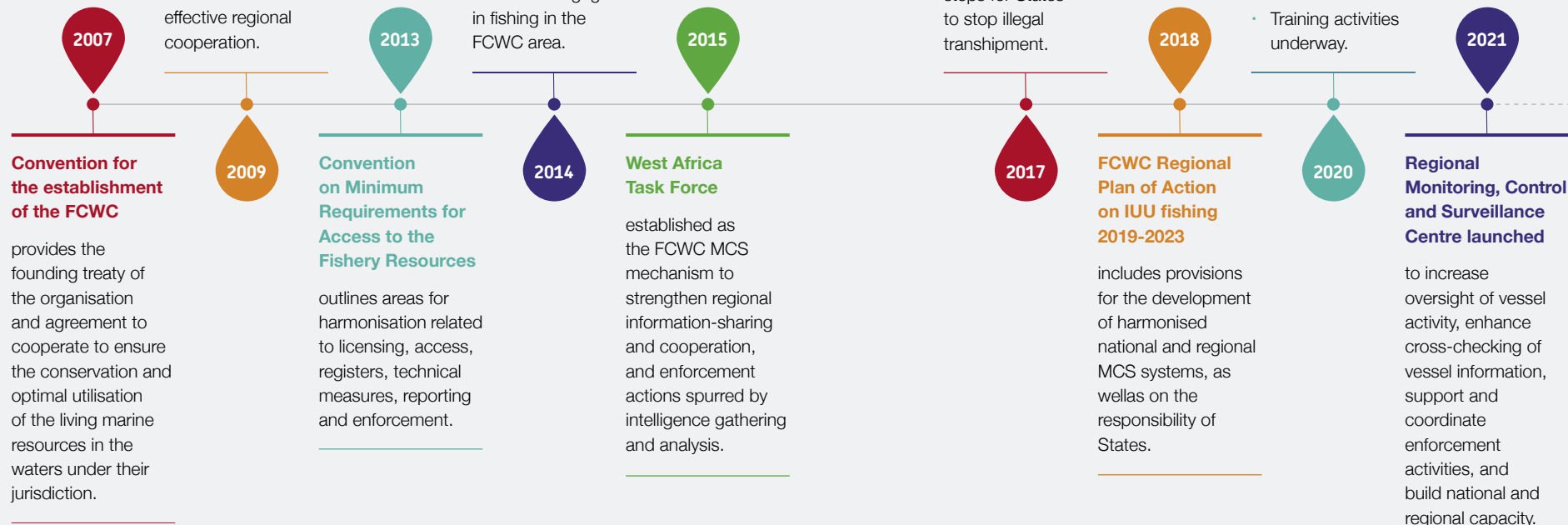
provides for the establishment of a joint database and information system including information and data on MCS, and the creation of a sub-regional register of vessels engaged in fishing in the FCWC area.

## FCWC Strategy to Combat Illegal Transhipment at Sea

identifies critical steps for States to stop illegal transhipment.

## Regional Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Centre established

- Regional Vessel Monitoring System installed.
- RMCSC Coordinator appointed.
- Training activities underway.

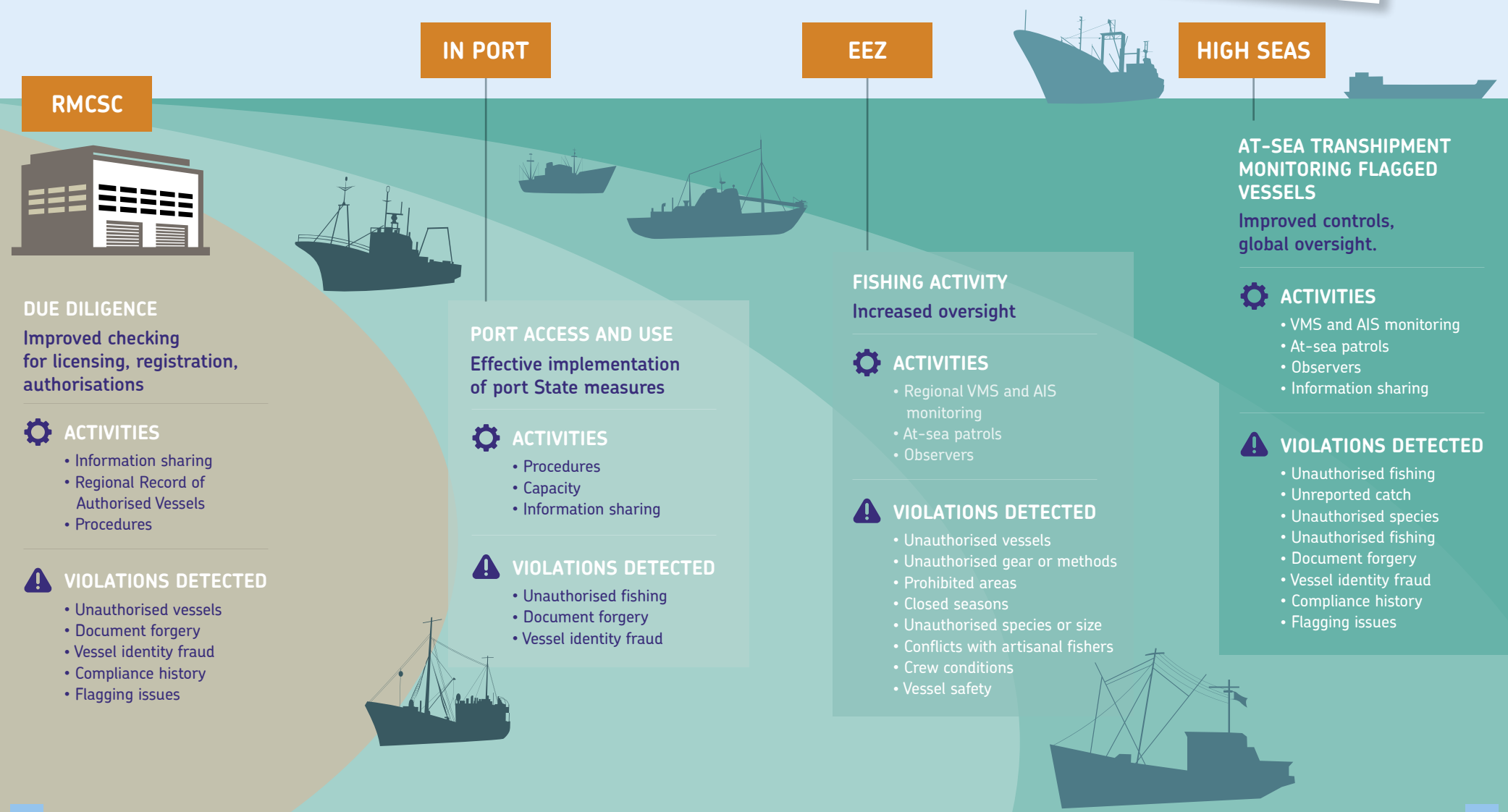


# The FCWC Regional Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Centre

The FCWC Regional Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Centre provides targeted support to counter fisheries violations and challenges in the FCWC region.

By increasing the capacity to catch and sanction illegal operators we actively deter non-compliance through:

- Improving information and knowledge.
- Increasing oversight.
- Enhancing cooperation, communication and collaboration.
- Creating transparency and accountability.



## RMSCS



**DUE DILIGENCE**  
Improved checking for licensing, registration, authorisations

- ACTIVITIES**
- Information sharing
  - Regional Record of Authorised Vessels
  - Procedures

- VIOLATIONS DETECTED**
- Unauthorised vessels
  - Document forgery
  - Vessel identity fraud
  - Compliance history
  - Flagging issues

## IN PORT



**PORT ACCESS AND USE**  
Effective implementation of port State measures

- ACTIVITIES**
- Procedures
  - Capacity
  - Information sharing

- VIOLATIONS DETECTED**
- Unauthorised fishing
  - Document forgery
  - Vessel identity fraud

## EEZ



**FISHING ACTIVITY**  
Increased oversight

- ACTIVITIES**
- Regional VMS and AIS monitoring
  - At-sea patrols
  - Observers

- VIOLATIONS DETECTED**
- Unauthorised vessels
  - Unauthorised gear or methods
  - Prohibited areas
  - Closed seasons
  - Unauthorised species or size
  - Conflicts with artisanal fishers
  - Crew conditions
  - Vessel safety

## HIGH SEAS



**AT-SEA TRANSHIPMENT MONITORING FLAGGED VESSELS**  
Improved controls, global oversight.

- ACTIVITIES**
- VMS and AIS monitoring
  - At-sea patrols
  - Observers
  - Information sharing

- VIOLATIONS DETECTED**
- Unauthorised fishing
  - Unreported catch
  - Unauthorised species
  - Unauthorised fishing
  - Document forgery
  - Vessel identity fraud
  - Compliance history
  - Flagging issues



# What benefits will the Regional Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Centre bring?

The FCWC is home to important fisheries that provide much needed food, nutrition, employment and income to the region. As a net importer of fish and fisheries products the countries of the FCWC also deal with high volumes of fish being transported, transhipped, landed, processed, and traded through their exclusive economic zones, ports and borders.

Ensuring the legality and sustainability of the fish and the related operations is central to the RMSCS mandate, it achieves this by providing:

## IMPROVED INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE

to inform due diligence checks and risk assessment for vessel flagging, licences to fish, transhipment, or access to and use of ports, leading to:

- validated information supporting transparent and well-considered decisions;
- improved monitoring information for robust stock assessment;
- improved knowledge for informed fisheries policy making;
- better operational procedures for MCS planning and operations.

## INCREASED OVERSIGHT

of fishing and vessel activity and help with coordinated approaches to joint action, leading to:

- improved compliance by identifying illegalities and improving deterrence;
- high-risk vessels being banned from operation;
- insight into repeat offenders and their operational patterns, methods and techniques;
- better intelligence to target inspection and enforcement;
- greater deterrence for non-compliance;
- better technology (AIS, VMS, Earth Observation) in combatting IUU.

## ENHANCED COOPERATION, COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

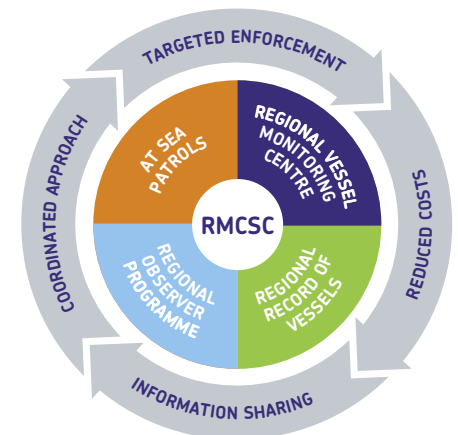
between FCWC members, regional organisations and internationally, leading to:

- improved cost-effectiveness of national MCS through cooperative port State measures, asset sharing including observers, and enforcement;
- creation of a communication hub for national fisheries monitoring centres and technological partners;
- language barriers overcome, through translation of requests and information sharing;
- increased national and regional competence;
- better access to equipment, and resources;
- vessel monitoring and analysis to support coordinated efforts of fisheries inspection at port and at sea;
- enhanced support to maritime security agencies;
- improved response to emergency situations such as piracy or accidents at sea.

## TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

will be developed by facilitating the sharing of national level information throughout the region; by cross-checking licence lists; by sharing VMS data and, by encouraging the move to making information publicly available. The RMSCS is actively promoting transparency, leading to:

- increased compliance;
- anti-corruption practices established;
- greater accountability.



# The Fisheries Committee of the West Central Gulf of Guinea

Established in 2007 the FCWC promotes cooperation in fisheries to ensure, through appropriate management, the conservation and optimal utilisation of the living marine resources in the waters under their jurisdiction of its member States – Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Togo.

The fisheries sector in West Africa is a key source of employment, a significant contributor to food security, and vital means of subsistence as the most important source of animal protein for the coastal communities of the region. But West Africa is also a global hotspot for illegal fishing with estimated losses of \$1.3 billion, of which the six FCWC countries lose \$300 million a year. High levels of IUU fishing undermine governance and management of stocks.

To address the challenges of good management, sustainability, illegality and crime in the fisheries sector the FCWC was established. By providing a robust regional framework, clear communication channels and a cooperative culture the FCWC has led the regional response in fighting IUU fishing. By establishing a Regional Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Centre the FCWC is building national, regional and international capacity to stop illegal fishing and the trade in illegally caught fish.

Funding for the RMCS has been provided through the Programme for Regional Fisheries Governance in Western Africa (PESCAO), a five-year, European Union funded initiative, implemented with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission. Technical support is provided by the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA), Trygg Mat Tracking (TMT) and AGRER.

Further support is being provided by Norad, ensuring the integration of the RMCS and the WATF. The WATF has been developed with funding support from Norad with technical support provided by TMT and Stop Illegal Fishing.







Find out more about  
the FCWC at:  
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