



International Consultations on the Establishment of the
South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation

Interim Secretariat Report on Vessel Size Standardisation Issues

Interim Secretariat

1. Introduction

There is a lack of consistency and clear specification associated with a number of the existing vessel data standards. Some of these issues were documented in the paper SPRFMO-V-DIWG-9 during the most recent Data and Information Working Group (DIWG) meeting held in Guayaquil, Ecuador during March 2008.

There remains a need to clarify which standard units of measure should be used to record **vessel tonnage** and **vessel length** to ensure that measures of those quantities are used consistently.

The *Interim Measures*¹ specify that vessel tonnages should be submitted in Gross Tonnage (GT) units, while the *Data standards*² specify that tonnage data should be provided in Gross Register Tonnage (GRT) units. The *Data standards*² are not clear about the unit of measurement that should be used to record vessel length.

This paper focuses on promoting further discussion about the most practical and appropriate standard units of measure to use for the future submission of:

- i) Vessel tonnage data,
- ii) Vessel length data.

2. VESSEL TONNAGE

2.1 Measures Specified in SPRFMO Documentation

As noted above, there is an inconsistency between the units of measure of vessel tonnage specified in the *Interim measures*¹ adopted at the 3rd International Meeting, versus those specified in the *Data standards*².

The *Interim measures*¹ adopted at the 3rd international Meeting specify that vessel tonnage information should be provided to the Interim Secretariat in GT units:

*“Participants will communicate by 1 January 2008 to the interim Secretariat the total level of **GT** recorded in the Area in 2007 for those vessels flying their flag actively fishing in 2007.”*

The vessel standards in Annex 4 of the *Data standards*² specify that vessel tonnages should be provided to the Interim Secretariat in **GRT** units.

¹ The [Interim Measures](#) were agreed at the 3rd International Meeting held in Reñaca, Chile, 2007

² The [Data Standards](#) were agreed at the 3rd International Meeting held in Reñaca, Chile, 2007.

2.2 Standard Vessel Tonnage Definitions

The following are descriptions of GT and GRT taken from the CWP Handbook of Fishery Statistical Standards (Section L: Fishery Fleet), <http://www.fao.org/fishery/cwp/handbook/L>:

Gross Register Tonnage The Gross Register Tonnage represented the total measured cubic content of the permanently enclosed spaces of a vessel, with some allowances or deductions for exempt spaces such as living quarters (1 gross register ton = 100 cubic feet = 2.83 cubic metres).

Gross Tonnage The Gross Tonnage for ships of 24 metres in length and over refers to the volume of all ship's enclosed spaces (from keel to funnel) measured to the outside of the hull framing.

The two conventions produce very different tonnage values. Although GT measurement is higher than GRT, there is no simple correlation between the two units (GT is often double the GRT, but sometimes as much as four times the GRT).

Based on the international convention in use, FAO fleet data on the vessel tonnage are measured according to the Oslo Convention (1947) expressing data by Gross Register Tonnage (GRT) until 1995; and according to the London Convention (1969) expressing data in Gross Tonnage (GT) since 1996.

Although the London Convention has been adopted for vessels of 24 metres in length and over, ***for many vessels only data by the Oslo Convention are available***. The situation varies from country to country, as measuring units defined at national level can also be used to determine the tonnage of vessels operating without an international tonnage certificate.

2.3 Discussion – Vessel Tonnage

The Interim Secretariat has received vessel tonnage measurements from Participants in either GT or GRT standard units; no participant has provided tonnage in both GT and GRT units for a single vessel. Table 1 provides a summary of the units of measure used for vessel tonnage and provided to the Interim Secretariat by each Participant to date.

At the last meeting of the DIWG, there was a brief discussion about this issue. Some Participants commented that it may not be possible for them to provide one of the two standard tonnage measures. It was subsequently agreed and noted in the “Report of the Data and Information Working Group (Guayaquil, Ecuador, 10 – 14 March 2008)”, that Participants would “consult with their necessary agencies to determine which measure was used in their flag state and bring that information to the next meeting of the DIWG for further discussion”.

It would be useful to review the unit of tonnage information that Participants agreed to bring this meeting, for example:

- Which units of tonnage (GT and/ or GRT) are currently used by/are available to each Participant?
- Are Participants equally able to provide either measure if required?
- Which measure(s) is/are the most appropriate/logical unit(s) of measure to use to record vessel tonnage for both the interim measures and the data standards, and do both GT and GRT measures need to be accepted?

3. VESSEL LENGTH

3.1 Standard Measures of Vessel Length

Various standards of length measurement can be used to record vessel length – *e.g.* Registered length, Length Overall (LOA) and Length Between Perpendiculars (LBP). No specific unit of length measure is referenced in the Standard for Vessel Data (see Annex 4 of the *Data standards*²). Providing a more specific definition of the vessel length measurement to be collected and submitted by Participants would assist in the reduction of any potential ambiguities in future data submissions.

Table 1 provides a summary of the vessel length measures provided to the Interim Secretariat by each Participant to date.

3.2 Definitions

The FAO Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas defines length as:

Article 1(c) "length" means:

- (i) for any fishing vessel built after 18 July 1982, 96 percent of the total length on a waterline at 85 percent of the least moulded depth measured from the top of the keel, or the length from the foreside of the stem to the axis of the rudder stock on that waterline, if that be greater. In ships designed with a rake of keel the waterline on which this length is measured shall be parallel to the designed waterline;
- (ii) for any fishing vessel built before 18 July 1982, registered length as entered on the national register or other record of vessels.

Other commonly used terms are:

Length overall: The overall length of the ship, in feet, is measured from the foremost part of the stem to the aftermost part of the stern, including any fixed projections extending beyond the stem and stern.

Length between perpendiculars, often abbreviated as **p/p, p.p., pp** or **LBP** is a term describing the length of a ship. LBP refers to the length of a vessel along the waterline from the forward surface of the stem, or main bow perpendicular member, to the after surface of the sternpost, or main stern perpendicular member. This was believed to give a reasonable idea of the ship's carrying capacity, as it excluded the small, often unusable volume contained in her overhanging ends. On some types of vessels this is, for all practical purposes, a waterline measurement. In a ship with raked stems, naturally this length changes as the draught of the ship changes, therefore it is measured from a defined loaded condition.

3.3 Discussion – Vessel Length

It was agreed and noted in the “Report of the Data and Information Working Group (Guayaquil, Ecuador, 10 – 14 March 2008)”, that Participants would “consult with their necessary agencies to determine which measure was used in their flag state and bring that information to the next meeting of the DIWG for further discussion”.

It would be useful to review the length measurement information that Participants agreed to bring to this meeting, for example:

- Which vessel length measurements are currently used by/ available to each Participant?
- Are Participants equally able to provide either measure if required?
- Which is the most practical and appropriate measure to use to record vessel length?

Table 1: Summary of the Units of Measure of Vessel Tonnage and Length Submitted to the Interim Secretariat to Date

PARTICIPANT	Unit of Measure Provided for Vessel Tonnages	Unit of Measure Provided for Vessel Lengths
Belize	GT and net tonnage	LOA and/or LBP
Chile	GT	<NA>
China	GT	LOA
Cook Islands	GRT	<NA>
European Community	GT (and GRT in some cases)	LOA and LBP
Faroe Islands	GT	Length measurement type not specified
Japan	GRT	Length measurement type not specified
Korea	GT	Length measurement type not specified
New Zealand	GT	LOA
Russia	GRT	Length measurement type not specified
Vanuatu	GRT	Length measurement type not specified

<NA> Data not available