



**FFA**

1 March 2010  
File Ref: SO/6

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

**TO:** ALL TYPE APPROVED VMS UNIT VENDORS  
**FROM:** SU'A N.F. TANIELU, DIRECTOR-GENERAL  
**SUBJECT:** **CHANGES TO THE FFA VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEM (VMS)  
TYPE APPROVAL PROCEDURE**

This letter contains important information about changes to the FFA VMS processes and procedures. You should ensure you are familiar with the new requirements and their implications. The new requirements are substantially changed from previous requirements.

The new type approval specification is available at [www.ffa.int](http://www.ffa.int).

Vendors should be aware that FFA has agreed on the implementation of electronic transmission of catch and effort data from vessels on a fishery by fishery basis. The transmission of such data would be through the VMS communication channels using 'E-FORMS' as prescribed by FFA. E-FORMS may only be used by units approved for such use; these units are called Enhanced-Mobile Transceiver Units (E-MTUs).

Consequently units that are only approved as Mobile Transceiver Units (MTUs) will not be eligible to be used in E-FORM reporting. Many fisheries agencies globally are moving to, or have moved to, the use of electronic catch reporting. Into the future, with the expansion in the use of E-FORMS, it is possible that units without the capability to handle E-FORMS may be un-approved or may fall into disuse as the use of E-FORMS widens. More details about E-FORMS can be found in the type approval specification.

I invite you to consider the above issue and its implication for your business. Vendors with units that do not currently have E-FORM capability may wish to consider upgrading their units to incorporate this functionality (note such units will require full type approval to the new specification).

As a result of the review of the type approval process a number of units are no longer approved by FFA. In order to allow the fishing industry to change over units as necessary, all units on List One in the attachment may continue to be used until 30 June 2011, so long as this MTU is consistently reporting automatically to the FFA VMS in accordance with FFA requirements. After this date and pending the outcome of the review all vessels on the FFA register may then be required to have fitted type approved units (refer List Two below).

The units contained on List one may gradually be removed from the list of FFA type approved units because the units are no longer supplied, the software version is outdated, or the units themselves are outdated and there is no vendor support.

A further important change to the type approval process is that the vendor of the units is now wholly responsible for the supply chain. Consequently vendors must supply an updated list of their authorised installers to FFA by 30 June 2010. These lists will be posted to the FFA website by FFA but changes to the lists are the responsibility of the vendor and any changes to the lists should be communicated to FFA.

Vendors should be aware that any new or updated VMS units will be required to meet the new type approval specifications. Another major change to the type approval is the inclusion of the Mobile Communications Service Provider in the type approval.

I urge you to familiarise yourself with these requirements. For further information contact the Manager, Vessel Monitoring System on:

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