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Pandemic reveals a need for new connectivity solutions for the fishing industry

Connectivity at sea has never been more important than during these difficult times. New regulations can be introduced at any moment and it is of great importance to ensure that this information is communicated to all marine sectors.

While large vessels are equipped with multiple channels of communication, including circuit-switch terminals and VoIP applications powered by VSAT, smaller vessels, like those used in fishing industry, are hardly reachable.

MarineStar is an easy-to-install terminal with built-in handset and small antenna, that operates using Thuraya's extensive satellite network, providing dependable voice communications.

Nabil Ben Soussia, CEO Middle East, Asia & Turkey of IEC Telecom Group, said: "In the past crew communication has not been a high priority for many fishing vessels. Often the crew make use of one corporate satellite handset and switch sim cards in order to use it. This approach can be problematic – the phone can be lost, stolen, run out of charge, or be stored in areas with no signal, and therefore shore offices may not be able to call it. In light of fast-changing Covid-19 regulations, it is important for crews to remain reachable at all times – and with MarineStar you have a robust handset providing reliable always-on communication."

Today the global fishing fleet is estimated to include some 4.6 million vessels, the majority of which are small boats with crew daily away from their loved ones. Such boats have neither the budget nor room for a costly satellite set up, but this does not mean that the crew has no other option but to stay disconnected.

"This pandemic has taught us to care more and stay in touch. The shipping sector has increased bandwidth allowance for their welfare programs, and fishing is now able to use MarineStar as a cost-effective gateway for its crew communication. This fixed terminal can operate similar to a public phone with access provided over scratch cards that can be purchased in the port or from the captain," explained Mr Ben Soussia.



Marine fisheries provide a livelihood for some 260 million people and, like all other businesses, it is facing survival problems during the pandemic. The global 'lockdown' has significantly impacted the demand for marine products, pushing vessel owners to seek new ways to optimise their operations.

Smart applications, such as push weather notifications and fish catch reporting which are available through MarineStar, can offer enormous upsides for fishing businesses leading to greater efficiency and cost savings. With accurate meteorological updates and timely instructions received from shore, crew would use time at sea more efficiently leading to less labour hours and decreased fuel consumption.

Even on vessels with electronic monitoring systems, accurate catch information and data collected onboard is usually only shared months after a voyage is completed. Thuraya MarineStar's catch reporting, tracking and monitoring capabilities are able to transfer data immediately – thereby helping maintain regulatory compliance and aiding sustainability goals.

Mr Ben Soussia said: "In modern fishing we see an increasing push towards sustainability, catch traceability, and other forms of compliance. At present, unlike in other vessel sectors, the fishing industry is largely not taking advantage of the latest technological advances which could enable the collecting and utilising of vital information on fishing activity and catch levels. Installing MarineStar means vessels are able to benefit from the advances in technology now and are positioned ready to comply with any such future regulation."

Safety is a key priority for the fishing industry. The IMO estimates that thousands of fishers lose their lives each year, making commercial fishing one of the most dangerous professions. Satcom plays an important role in keeping crew and vessels safe. In addition to providing vital communication with shore, MarineStar is equipped with SOS alert functionality which enables one-touch and instant emergency connection.

Cost is an important factor for the fishing sector. IEC Telecom is able to provide Thuraya MarineStar for less than \$1,000 and with no long-term commitment, flexible tariff plans and no early termination fees. In addition, in recognition of the vital function seafarers are playing during this global pandemic, IEC Telecom is offering to provide the hardware free of charge if vessel operators sign up to its crew welfare program.

Satellite connectivity at a cost comparable to a GSM service – that's MarineStar from IEC Telecom.



For more information about IEC Telecom's expertise in fishing market please follow [this link](#) or contact marketing@iec-telecom.com.

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About IEC Telecom Group

IEC Telecom Group is one of the leading international providers of satellite communications services. Renowned for supplying high quality satellite-based solutions to customers for more than 20 years, IEC Telecom delivers efficient end-to-end voice and data services when and where it matters most.

We enable digitalization for the maritime industry as well as remote units on land, where GSM coverage is not available.

For urban networks, we provide a powerful satellite back up to ensure the business continuity of customer enterprises.

IEC Telecom has long-standing business relationships with all the key satellite operators. As a strategic partner for Inmarsat, Iridium, Thuraya, and Yahsat, we're in the unique position to support organisations with global operations as well as offer a wide variety of plans for area-by-area use to regional customers.

IEC Telecom's integrated approach of in-house design and engineering expertise allows us to develop truly unique solutions that enable full control over customer satellite assets.

Our portfolio includes a wide range of satellite products (from handset to VSAT services), solutions, and value-added services. In addition, we offer 24/7 support for satellite-based solutions during their full lifecycle.

IEC Telecom Group has offices across eight countries: Denmark, France, Kazakhstan, Norway, Singapore, Sweden, Turkey, and UAE.

For more information, browse our website: www.iec-telecom.com



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