

Update from the Intersessional Working Group for the Regional Observer Programme

Prepared by the IWG-ROP Chair and Secretariat

WCPFC-SC20-2024-ST-WP-04

Presentation to 20th Regular Session of the WCPFC Scientific Committee

14 – 20th August, Manila, Philippines



Structure of the Paper

SC20-2024-ST-WP-04



1. Purpose
2. Background to IWG-ROP Workplan 2023 – 2025 tasks
3. 2024 progress to date
4. Review of ROP Minimum Standard Data Fields
5. Next steps

Annex 1. Working Table to facilitate intersessional feedback from IWG-ROP participants in 2023/24 in support of the review the ROP minimum standard data fields (MSDF) – and reflecting additional suggestions and comments from IWG-ROP participants received in 2024

IWG-ROP was reactivated in 2023

- WCPFC19 – Commission supported TCC’s recommendation to reactivate the IWG-ROP to:
 - Provide advice to assist in Commission discussions,
 - Ensure the ROP optimizes its contribution to the Commission’s independent monitoring and verification programs, and
 - Support achieving the Commission’s objectives for the ROP as set out in the Convention
- IWG-ROP workplan for 2023-2025 was prepared from the Terms of Reference, and TCC18 and WCPFC19 taskings

Background and key info: <https://www.wcpfc.int/iwg-rop>

IWG-ROP Workplan Themes

2023-2025



There are four themes for tasks in the Workplan:

1. Review and recommend draft modifications to ROP Minimum Data Fields

- Consider removal of redundant ROP data fields to streamline
- Review Observer data fields to improve data collection for Species of Special Interest,
 - Cetaceans and whale sharks – distinguish between interactions and infractions
 - Sea turtles and seabirds – allow for use in compliance case files
 - Advice on training and implementation needs
- Review transshipment observer data fields

Initial priority tasks 2023/24

2. Review and consider ROP observer coverage

- Includes advising on the potential to increase observer coverage and alternative means to collect data

3. Standards for ROP Observers

- Includes advising on observer safety matters

4. Considerations related to emerging technology

- Includes advising on ER and EM opportunities to streamline observer work

Background and key info: <https://www.wcpfc.int/iwg-rop>

2024 progress to date

SC20-2024-ST-WP-04 pg 2-4, Annex 1

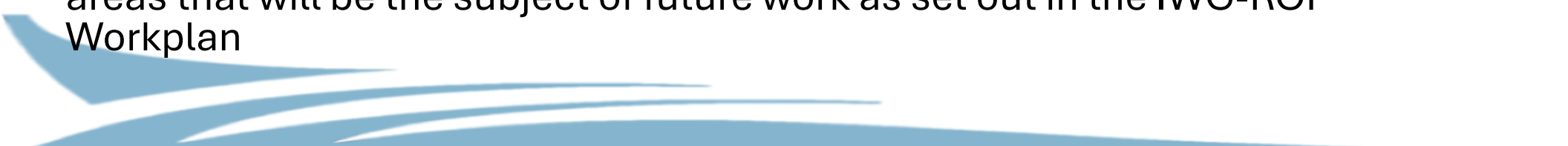
4th April 2024: IWG-ROP Chair email communication reiterating call for feedback from paper to WCPFC20.

To date, comments and suggestions received from:

- New Zealand
- United States
- PNA Office

*(see **SC20-2024-ST-WP-04** pg 2-3 for a summary of each set of comments)*

Annex 1 incorporates the changes, including recent suggestions, that are proposed to the ROP Minimum Standard Data Fields, and placeholders for areas that will be the subject of future work as set out in the IWG-ROP Workplan

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Next steps

SC20-2024-ST-WP-04 pg 4

13. Further feedback on this paper is requested from IWG-ROP participants and SC20 and TCC20 participants. This will be used to further consider proposals for changes to MSDF in 2024.

 14. It is noted that there may be flow-on effects that mean consequential changes to CMMs or other requirements such as the Electronic Reporting Standards for Observers may be needed.
- ** An interim IWG-ROP Chair could be appointed in the intersessional period and then confirmed at WCPFC21