



**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
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**STATUS OF THE REGIONAL OBSERVER PROGRAMME
INTER-SESSIONAL WORKING GROUP**

WCPFC-SC3-EB SWG/WP-12

SECRETARIAT¹

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STATUS OF THE REGIONAL OBSERVER PROGRAMME INTER-SESSIONAL WORKING GROUP

WCPFC Secretariat

Introduction

1. The Third Regular Session of the Commission (WCPFC3) at Apia, Samoa, 11-15 December 2006 adopted Conservation and Management Measure-2006-07 which established an Intersessional Working Group for the Regional Observer Programme (IWG-ROP). It was agreed that IWG-ROP should work inter-sessionally and to the maximum extent possible, conduct its work by electronic means.

Terms of Reference

2. As recommended by the Second Regular Session of the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC2), 28 September – 3 October 2006, at Brisbane, Australia the Terms of Reference for the IWG-ROP are to, *inter alia*:

- i. comment on the adequacy of near and long term objectives for the design of the ROP;
- ii. consider the institutional and financial arrangements necessary to support the ROP and its implementation
- iii. consider science, technical, compliance-related, practical and economic elements of the programme and their feasibility
- iv. develop a detailed strategic plan, including a practical time table, for the development and phased implementation of the ROP, taking into account the characteristics of each fishery;
- v. develop procedures for deployment observers under the ROP
- vi. consider a list of tasks for ROP observers for each fishery;
- vii. consider standard and harmonized procedures for observers, including data and reporting formats and debriefing procedures;
- viii. consider ROP observer coverage taking into account other observer programmes and other means of collecting data required by the Commission.
- ix. consider operational procedures and guidelines for security of observer data;
- x. develop, in cooperation with main existing observer programmes in the Convention Area, a draft observer provider certification standard and procedure, to include *inter alia*:
 - a. Recruitment, selection, qualifications and training of individuals;
 - b. Capability to implement the technical and operational protocols for the observer role and tasks, including data management issues, as required by the Commission;
 - c. Day to day management of observers, including all personnel and financial matters, and the co-ordination of all logistical components;
 - d. Capacity to handle efficiently, effectively and safely the deployment and recovery of observers;
 - e. Capacity to arrange for debriefing of observers and primary checking and

- validation of data collected and reports prepared;
 - f. Safety policies and procedures; and
 - g. Maintenance of good communications links with client States, companies and vessels receiving observers.
- xii. prepare guidelines for the rights, duties and responsibilities of observers;
 - xiii. develop a procedure for facilitating the development of national observer programmes to achieve Commission certification;
 - xiv. consider data management needs for the ROP;
 - xv. prepare standards for safety at sea course for observers;
 - xvi. consider a code of conduct for observers and procedures for monitoring observer's compliance with the code;
 - xvii. provide recommendations to the Commission regarding safety standards to be met for carrying observers.

3. TCC2 also recommended that the IWG-ROP review the first draft of a Programme Document contained in WCPFC-TCC2-2006/11, in light of discussion at TCC2 reported in paragraphs 52 to 69 of the TCC2 report and prepare a revised draft.

Process to date

4. Following the recruitment of the Regional Observer Programme Coordinator on 22 February 2007, in Circular 2007/04, distributed to all CCMs on 2 March 2007, the Secretariat invited Members to nominate an observer expert for the IWG-ROP and to submit dates for a scheduled to be held in June 2007.

5. In late March 2007 the Secretariat circulated an initial draft set of ROP documents to those observer experts that were nominated in response to the invitation in Circular 2007/04. Without prejudice to subsequent formal comment and input by CCMs nominated experts were invited to provide comments and suggestions on the initial draft set of documents by 18 May 2007. To the extent possible the document set reflects comments received from those experts that responded to that invitation.

6. In April 2007 CCMs were advised in WCPFC Circular 2007/09 that, consistent with CCMs' comments, there would not be a physical meeting of the IWG-ROP in mid-June and that IWG-ROP discussions would be conducted electronically.

7. Comments received by 18th May were incorporated into revised documentation which was circulated to all CCMs together with an invitation for active participation in the IWG ROP process. CCMs were invited to submit further comments and suggestions by 23rd July 2007. Members, Cooperating Non-members and Participating Territories (CCMs) were also asked to nominate a Chair of the IWG-ROP and provide feedback electronically on;

- i) the documentation circulated by the Secretariat,
- ii) issues detailed in the TOR at paragraph 2 above which may not have been addressed in the current document set;

8. From the comments received from CCMs on the documentation circulated it is apparent that CCMs have different viewpoints about the structure and implementation of the ROP. The Secretariat proposed in Circular 2007/18 that, if progress is to be made on the design of the ROP during the Third Regular Session of the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC3) that a physical meeting of the IWG-ROP be convened immediately prior to TCC3.

9.

Documents available to the IWG-ROP

9. To facilitate the work of the IWG-ROP by electronic means the following documents were made available to observer experts nominated by their countries to participate in the IWG-ROP on 13th June 2007:

- Draft Strategic Plan for the Development and Phased Implementation of the ROP
- Revised Programme Document
- Fisheries to be monitored by the Regional Observer Programme (Appendix A)
- Standards required for accreditation of Observer Providers(Appendix B)
- Standardised procedures for ROP observer deployment (Appendix C)
- Procedures for debriefing ROP observers (Appendix D)
- Observer training, Trainer and ROP Observer Certification Standards (Appendix E)
- Provisional List of Observer Tasks (Appendix F)
- Rights and Responsibilities of Observers (Appendix G)
- Duties, rights and Responsibilities of master and Crew (Appendix H)
- Code of Conduct for observers (Appendix I)
- Vessel Safety Check Form (Appendix J)
- Format standards for Data Collection and Reporting (Appendix K)

10. WCPFC3 also noted the proposal from the members of the Pacific Island Forum Fisheries Agency, “Conservation and Management Measure for the Regional Observer Programme WCPFC3-2006-DP05” which it agreed was to be forwarded to the IWG-ROP for consideration in the development of the ROP. This document was also included in the document set distributed to the IWG-ROP participants.

IWG-ROP Chairmanship

11. The announcement regarding the IWG-ROP Chair in italics below was sent to CCMs on 13 July 2007. There were several opinions put forward in the submissions received, varying from no Chair being required at this stage to suggestions that the US should supply a Chair for the group. CCMs are invited to further consider this matter further and provide guidance to the Secretariat..

- *As a subsidiary body of the Commission the IWG-ROP will benefit from the guidance of a Chair. Unless other suggestions for coordination of the work of the IWG-ROP are forthcoming, members of the Commission are invited to nominate an individual who may take responsibility for working with the Secretariat to facilitate the work of the IWG-ROP through the remainder of this year. It would be appreciated if the Secretariat could receive nominations for Chair of the IWG-ROP by 23rd July so the person appointed may assist with preparations for IWG-ROP discussions at the 2007 meetings of the Scientific Committee and the Technical and Compliance Committee.*

Proposed Schedule of Work

The proposed schedule of work for the IWG-ROP, on which comment and suggestions are invited from CCMs and IWG-ROP members, is:

- **6 August:** A revised set of documents prepared and re-circulated to all CCMs, based on the suggestions received was intended to be dispatched by this date. However, as it is not possible to amalgamate the widely varying comments on the ROP this was not done.

Instead the current documents as sent out on 13 June 2007 plus all the comments received were supplied to the observer expert group of the IWG-ROP on 30th July 2007

- **13 August:** Interested CCMs and available IWG-ROP members will convene in the margins of SC3 to discuss the status of the documents, and the many comments and suggestions with a view to proposing a strategy for consideration of science-related ROP issues during SC3.
- **13-24 August:**
 - Statistics Specialist Working Group considers:
 - Objectives and priorities for data to be collected by observers for fisheries other than purse-seine and longline
 - Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group
 - Update on the status of the design of the Regional Observer Programme.
 - SC3
 - WCPFC Data Standards for Regional Observer Programme
- **3 September:** Set of documentation and comments, based on the Science outcomes of SC3, circulated to the IWG-ROP and CCMs.
- **22-25 September** Proposed physical meeting of the IWG –ROP to provide TCC3 with a revised set of documentation, consistent with the requirements of CMM-2006-07, relating to the ROP.
- **27 September – 2 October:** TCC3 considers the work of the IWG-ROP and status of the documentation to support implementation of the ROP, including a draft Conservation and Management Measure.
- **24 October:** A revised version of the Programme Document, Strategic Plan for the Phased Implementation of the ROP and other documents, addressing comments from the SC3 and TCC3, prepared by the Secretariat and submitted to the Commission at least 40 days in advance of its 4th meeting.
- **3-7 December:** WCPFC4