



**TECHNICAL AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE
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Update from the Regional Observer Programme Intersessional Working Group

WCPFC-TCC22-2026-24

14 September 2026

Submitted by the ROPIWG Chair

Purpose

1. This paper provides an update on the progress of the Regional Observer Programme Intersessional Working Group (ROPIWG) during 2026. It summarises outcomes from recent ROPIWG meetings, priority taskings arising from intersessional discussions, and relevant outcomes from the 22nd Regular Session of the Scientific Committee (SC22). The paper is intended to support TCC22 consideration under Agenda Item 7.4 (ROP Improvements – ROP IWG Update) and related agenda items concerning the availability and use of ROP data.

Background

2. The ROPIWG was established in 2006 pursuant to the terms of reference in CMM 2006-07 and was reactivated by the Commission in 2023. At WCPFC22 (December 2025), the Commission endorsed the ROPIWG 2026 workplan, which prioritised:
 - Finalisation of the revised CCFS process flow for observer-reported cases;
 - Clarification of the scope of monitoring for potential infringements in the Compliance Case File System (CCFS);
 - Development of ROP minimum standard data fields (MSDF) for non-catch (non-fish) transfers during transshipment;
 - Additional ongoing tasks including alignment with emerging technologies / electronic monitoring (ER/EM-IWG), review of interim transshipment observer data fields, shark species identification and reporting improvements (SC21 recommendation), and possible additional reporting requirements related to sea turtles (CMM 2018-04).
3. In the first half of 2026 the ROPIWG convened two remote meetings: ROPIWG08 (1 April 2026) and ROPIWG09 (3 June 2026). These meetings refined draft papers on the three priority areas and

incorporated CCM feedback. Further intersessional work and coordination with SC22 took place in the lead-up to TCC22.

Progress on priority taskings

CCFS process flow

4. The ROPIWG has continued refinement of the draft Regional Observer Provider – Commission CCFS Process Flow. Feedback from CCMs, including inputs from PNA and the United States, has been incorporated into successive working drafts. The objective remains to streamline the timely and consistent inclusion of observer-reported potential infringements into the CCFS while maintaining appropriate roles for observer providers, flag CCMs and the Secretariat.
5. Supporting documentation includes the current data flows for case creation in the CCFS (Secretariat paper) and related technical enhancement proposals. TCC22 is invited to review the latest draft process flow and provide any final guidance prior to recommendations being forwarded to the Commission.

Scope of monitoring for potential Infringements

6. Work has progressed on clarifying which CMM obligations and associated ROP data fields should support the identification of potential infringements for CCFS case creation, as distinct from purely scientific data collection. High-level direction emerging from ROPIWG08 and ROPIWG09, and subsequent CCM comments, indicates a preference to retain monitoring of key obligations (including observer obstruction, driftnet prohibition, data buoys, marine pollution, FAD management elements, and core sea-turtle mitigation) while continuing to refine the list of fields required for reliable case generation.
7. A paper on the draft scope of monitoring and next priorities for the ROPIWG was presented to SC22 ([WCPFC-SC22-2026-ST-WP07](#) / A3.3). SC22 provided scientific feedback on data quality, species identification consistency, and the interface between observer data and scientific needs. These inputs have informed the version of the paper submitted to TCC22.

Non-catch (non-fish) transfer reporting

8. A proposal for additional draft data fields in the observer transshipment monitoring MSDF for monitoring non-catch transfers (provisions, fuel, bait, personnel and other non-fish transfers) during transshipment events have been further developed. CCM comments, including from PNA, have been incorporated. The intent to improve transparency of at-sea transfer activities that may have compliance or operational relevance while avoiding unnecessary burden on observers.
9. TCC22 is invited to consider the latest draft data fields and advise whether they are sufficiently mature for recommendation to the Commission for adoption as part of the [Minimum Data Fields for Observer Transshipment Monitoring](#).

Outcomes from WCPFC22 relevant to the ROPIWG

10. Under Agenda Item 3.3 (Regional Observer Programme), SC22 reviewed ROPIWG outputs, with particular attention to shark species identification and reporting. SC22 noted ongoing challenges with accuracy and consistency of observer data for certain species (including oceanic whitetip sharks) and the need for practical enhancements. The Committee also considered science-related issues raised by the ROPIWG Chair, including observer data flow to the Scientific Services Provider (SPC), ongoing MSDF revisions, and gaps in non-catch transfer data. SC22 suggests the ROPIWG consider further review of the unresolved proposed fields relating to marine pollutions, seabirds' and SSI fields and shark monitoring and the continued focus to review MSDF for transshipment monitoring.
11. SC22 feedback has been reflected in the papers prepared for TCC22. The ROPIWG will continue working with the Scientific Committee and SPC to address data standardisation and quality issues that affect the scientific and compliance use of ROP data.

Other workplan items

12. In addition to the three priority areas above, the ROPIWG continues to plan to progress:
 - **Emerging technologies and EM alignment** – close coordination with the ER/EM-IWG to promote common understanding of MSDF usage and reduce inconsistencies between human observer data and electronic monitoring outputs;
 - **Review of interim Transshipment Observer Monitoring Minimum Data Fields** (adopted 2023);
 - **Shark species identification and reporting enhancements** in response to the SC21 recommendation; and
 - **Possible additional reporting requirements for sea turtles** under CMM 2018-04, taking into account related informal intersessional work and proposals before TCC22.

Supporting document for TCC22

13. The following supporting papers are available to assist TCC22 deliberations:
 - WCPFC-TCC22-2026-24A – CCFS process flow discussion paper;
 - WCPFC-TCC22-2026-24B – Scope of Monitoring for CCFS Cases;
 - WCPFC-TCC22-2026-24C – Non-catch Transfers;
 - WCPFC-TCC22-2026-IP04 – Report on Current Data Flow for CCFS case creation arising from Observer Reporting (Secretariat);
 - WCPFC-TCC22-2026-RP02 – Annual Report on the Regional Observer Programme (Secretariat).

Recommendations

14. TCC22 is invited to:
 - a. **note** the progress of the ROPIWG in 2026 on the priority taskings endorsed by WCPFC22;

- b. **review** and provide feedback on the latest drafts of the CCFS process flow, the scope of monitoring for potential infringements, and the proposed non-catch transfer data fields, including on the readiness of the three priority proposals for progressing to WCPFC23;
- c. **advise** of any additional guidance arising from SC22 outcomes related to observer data quality, shark species reporting, and data standardisation;
- d. **review** and provide any further direction on remaining workplan items (emerging technologies/EM alignment, transshipment MSDF review, shark identification improvements, and sea-turtle reporting) to be progressed intersessionally during 2026-2027.