



**COMMISSION  
EIGHTH REGULAR SESSION**  
Koror, PALAU  
5-9 December 2011

---

**WCPFC/IATTC CROSS ENDORSEMENT OF OBSERVERS**

---

**WCPFC8-2011-IP/03  
17 November 2011**

**Information Paper for WCPFC8**

Building on the outcome of a previous and quite detailed meeting between Karl Staich (WCPFC), Tim Park (FFA) Nickolas Vogel and Ernesto Altamirano (IATTC) in 2009, I met with Ernesto Altamirano and the Executive Director of IATTC Guillermo Compean to work out how we could progress the MoU on Cross Endorsement of Observers.

The meeting in 2009 identified the differences in the two Observer programs for WCPFC and IATTC and in the data fields recorded on both data bases. The major difference in the two programs is in the requirement of the IATTC Agreement of the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP) which has strict requirements for observing and reporting and specific forms to be completed regarding intentional and unintended fishing on dolphins associated with tunas and includes specific rescue requirements for dolphins.

The FFA and the IATTC have an agreement on the use of FFA based observers who have been jointly trained as observers by IATTC. These observers are utilized by the FFA for trips by US Treaty boats not in the IATTC Registry.

The AIDCP, for which the IATTC staff is the Secretariat, requires coverage of 100% of the fishing trips of this fleet of which 50% can be from National Programs. Currently, Colombia, Ecuador, the EU, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and Venezuela have National Observer Programs. IATTC has coordinators in 6 different ports across 5 countries that provide updates, debriefing and logistics to observers in their areas. Observer training is mainly conducted by Ernesto Altamirano. AIDCP observers are required to have college degrees. WCPFC observers are drawn from National Programs and are trained by FFA or by SPC trainers. Debriefers are available in most major transshipment ports.

There may be some scope within the WCPFC approach to better utilize the National program debriefers to provide updates to observers on changes to Conservation and Management measures (CMM) and Resolutions by both parties. This would allow WCPFC observers to stay current with all the requirements of IATTC including AIDCP and new WCPFC CMM's.

It was generally felt that in the first instance it might be useful if the respective Commission's were to train 12 observers from each organization as Cross Endorsed Observers. The logical starting point might be to train WCPFC observers from or from countries adjacent to the fishing states where the interaction between the two parties is most often focused. Initial activity has been centered on the waters of Kiribati.

In the case of the IATTC Observers it may be logical that the initial cadre of observers is drawn from those fishing nations whose flagged vessels are approved to fish in the WCPFC Convention area. These flagged vessels would include those from EU, El Salvador and Ecuador. Most of the fishing and transshipping seems to occur in Kiribati waters. Therefore depending on consultation and advice it might be practical to select 10-12 of the best observers for Kiribati and adjacent Coastal States for cross endorsement training along with Observers from Ecuador and El Salvador.

It was agreed between the Secretariats that the task of training the initial cadre of observers would be best undertaken by the Observer Coordinators and the data base managers from both organisations. It was suggested that discussions continue at this level so that by February 2012 WCPFC and IATTC would be in a position to meet in Honolulu to finalize arrangements.