



REGIONAL OBSERVER PROGRAMME INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP

Ninth Meeting

3 June 2026

Electronic Meeting

Chair's Summary Report

ROP-IWG09-2026_rev¹

24 June 2026

AGENDA ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

1. The Ninth Meeting of the Regional Observer Programme Intersessional Working Group (ROP-IWG09) was convened electronically on 3 June 2026. The meeting opened with a prayer, after which the Chair welcomed participants and acknowledged CCMs, subregional agencies, and the Secretariat. The Chair noted that the purpose of the meeting was to progress priority tasks carried forward in the 2026 work plan and to continue refining papers intended for consideration by the Scientific Committee and the Technical and Compliance Committee this year. The List of Participants is in Attachment 1.

AGENDA ITEM 2. INTRODUCTION AND OPENING

2. In introducing the meeting, the Chair recalled the practical progress already made on a set of draft proposals revised intersessionally on the basis of feedback from CCMs, PNA and through delegation papers. This meeting would revisit the draft CCFS process flow, review the draft proposal on the CMMs to be monitored for potential infringements through the CCFS, consider the proposed minimum standard data fields for observer transshipment reporting of non-catch transfers, and receive updates on other priority taskings brought forward from the previous meeting.
3. The Chair emphasized that the objective of the meeting was to steer discussion toward clear and practical progress on remaining areas of divergence to support further refinements intersessionally and, where possible, finalising papers for consideration at SC22 and TCC22. The agenda was adopted without amendment, and the Secretariat advised that there were no logistical matters requiring attention. (Attachment 2)

AGENDA ITEM 3. REVIEW AND DISCUSS THE PROPOSED FINAL SOLUTION TO USE ROP DATA IN THE CCFS AND CMS PROCESS AND POTENTIAL CMM INFRINGEMENTS OBLIGATIONS

4. Under this agenda item, the Working Group considered refinements to the framework for using ROP data in the Compliance Case File System and related compliance processes. There was broad

¹ Include date for submitting feedback on revised proposals in advance of deadline for SC papers.

support for continuing work to improve clarity, consistency and operational practicality, while ensuring that any final arrangements remain aligned with Convention obligations, existing observer arrangements including recognising the needs of national observer programmes, and the realities of investigation and compliance follow-up. It was generally recognised that the draft proposals had advanced significantly since earlier meetings, but that further textual, procedural and technical refinement would still be required before a final package could be forwarded for consideration at TCC22.

Agenda item 3.1 Revisit working draft proposal on CCFS process flow ([ROP-IWG09-2026-02](#))

5. The Working Group undertook a detailed review of the revised CCFS process flow with specific changes made to the document onscreen to reflect CCM feedback during the discussion on this agenda item. It was noted that further review would be needed after the meeting and discussion during TCC22.
6. Support was shown for efforts to simplify the process flow, strengthen drafting clarity and better articulate the sequence from observer reporting through debriefing, compliance evaluation, referral and case management. It was considered important that terminology be standardised throughout the draft, including references to flag CCMs, coastal CCMs, chartering CCMs where relevant, and the specific CCM contact points used within the CCFS. Particular attention was given to defining the concept of “trip data” and to ensuring consistent use of the title of the WCPFC ROP Trip Monitoring Summary Questionnaire.
7. A substantial part of the discussion concerned the proper sequencing of debriefing, compliance evaluation and formal referral. It was generally agreed that observer information should first be accurately captured through the debriefing and trip monitoring summary process, but that the authoritative decision on whether a matter should proceed as a formal case should rest with designated CCM compliance personnel at the compliance evaluation stage rather than at the debriefing stage. Support was shown for making this distinction clearer in the process flow and for refining the text so that debriefing records observer observations while compliance evaluation determines whether a case should move forward.
8. The Working Group also considered the composition and purpose of the observer-sourced case package. A consistent view was expressed that only information relevant to the specific alleged infringement should form part of the case package, and that broad or undefined requirements for transmitting full observer reports or all trip data should be avoided. It was noted that references to observer forms, reports and debriefer outputs would require further clarification so that the process remains practical while still providing sufficient supporting information for follow-up by flag CCMs.
9. Concern was raised regarding the practical ability of flag CCMs to conduct investigations within specific timelines where supporting information is incomplete or where further clarification is required. It was observed that formal investigation requests should be accompanied by sufficient documentation to enable an informed investigation, while allowing for further communication where necessary. It was also noted that the transmission of large supporting packages may not

always be practicable by email alone and that web-based transmission through the CCFS may need to be accommodated.²

10. The Working Group further examined whether the proposed process flow sufficiently accommodates the diversity of observer deployment arrangements operating in the Convention Area. It was noted that multilateral, bilateral and carrier-vessel arrangements may raise different issues in relation to debriefing responsibilities, compliance evaluation and the framing of investigation requests. It was therefore considered that additional work would be needed to ensure that the process flow remains workable across different operational arrangements and does not create uncertainty for investigations.
11. A number of editorial and form-related refinements to the Trip Monitoring Summary Questionnaire were also discussed. These included proposals to improve question wording so that it more accurately reflects underlying obligations, to include fields such as the ROP trip identifier, to clarify references to shark, mobulid and observer obstruction-related questions, and to ensure consistency in the use of CCM contact terminology. It was generally agreed that the questionnaire must remain a practical tool for accurately recording observer information while aligning with the legal and operational context of the CCFS process.
12. The outcome of the discussion was that the revised process flow would remain a working draft. It was agreed that comments from the meeting would be compiled and incorporated into a further refined version for intersessional consideration, including possible additional input on the process flow diagram and associated notes, before the paper is brought forward to TCC22.

Agenda item 3.2 Review the draft proposal of CMMs monitored for potential infringements for CCFS (ROP-IWG09-2026-03)

12. The Working Group then reviewed the draft proposal on the CMM provisions to be monitored for potential infringements for CCFS purposes. The discussion reflected general support for establishing a clearer and more predictable scope for CCFS-relevant provisions, while recognising that the list must remain closely tied to obligations that are current, binding, monitorable in practice and capable of being supported by observer-collected information. Support was shown for updating references to superseded CMMs and removing obsolete footnotes so that the draft aligns with the current legal framework.
13. A major focus of the discussion concerned the distinction between obligations that are appropriate for observer monitoring and obligations that fall outside the realistic scope of observer duties. It was considered important that inclusion in the scope paper should depend not only on whether an obligation is binding, but also on whether observers can practically collect information that is sufficiently relevant and reliable to support further compliance processes. Support was shown for excluding provisions of general application directed to CCMs rather than vessels, non-binding provisions, and obligations that can only be assessed through events occurring after landing or in port. There were some differing opinions where parts of obligations were seen as feasible to monitor at sea while other elements could not.
14. In that regard, there was considerable discussion on shark-related provisions. Support was shown for retaining some at-sea obligations where observers are well placed to record storage,

² The Secretariat notes this facility is available in CCFS for specific formats. Where documents are shared through the cloud, the url can be provided in the case file or, if shared with the Secretariat as well as the relevant CCM, the Secretariat extracts and uploads this into the case file.

handling or transshipment practices, particularly where simple factual indicators may assist later compliance evaluation. Others noted that binary yes/no fields may have limited utility for CCFS purposes if they are not supported by sufficient contextual information, and that care would be needed before relying on such fields in formal investigation processes. It was generally recognised that the treatment of shark provisions illustrates the broader need to distinguish between information collected for monitoring purposes and information that is robust enough to support a compliance case.

15. Similar considerations were raised in relation to other CMMs, including seabirds, mobulids, driftnets and marine pollution. It was suggested that each provision should be assessed individually according to whether the obligation is directed to vessel conduct and whether the observer can realistically verify the relevant activity. In relation to marine pollution, support was shown for treating the issue as an evolving area of work in light of possible revisions to the underlying measure. The discussion also underscored that future observer materials may need to clarify which parts of some provisions are relevant to observer monitoring and which parts fall outside that role.
16. The outcome of the discussion was that the draft list of CMMs monitored for potential infringements would be further refined intersessionally to reflect the comments made during the meeting. It was understood that the Working Group would continue work toward a more final version of the document for consideration at TCC22.

AGENDA ITEM 4. REVIEW OF THE PROPOSED MSDF FOR THE TRANSHIPMENT ROP NON-CATCH TRANSFER MONITORING ([ROP-IWG09-2026-04](#))

17. The Working Group considered the proposed minimum standard data fields for Regional Observer Programme monitoring of non-catch transfers. The discussion recognised that this work responds to a specific request from the Commission and is intended to improve transparency regarding transfers other than catch during transshipment-related operations. It was also recalled that the proposed fields are intended to identify information to be collected and that the sample form provided was illustrative rather than a proposal to standardise a Commission form.
18. Different perspectives were expressed on the appropriate mechanism for collecting and reporting such information. One view was that non-catch transfer reporting should remain within the ROP framework because carrier vessels are subject to observer coverage requirements during transshipment operations and observers are well placed to document activities occurring during those operations. A contrary view was expressed that where no observer is on board, or where transfers occur outside the circumstances in which observer data are available, responsibility may instead need to fall on the carrier vessel through a dedicated reporting mechanism. It was noted that broader questions concerning the overall regulatory framework for such reporting had not yet been fully considered by CCMS.
19. The Working Group also considered the practicality and appropriateness of specific data fields. Concern was raised regarding some proposed fields where the rationale for inclusion was not yet fully clear or where privacy and legal sensitivities might arise, particularly in relation to nationality information linked to persons transferred. Alternative approaches to traceability were suggested, and there was support for further reviewing whether each field is both necessary and practically collectable. At the same time, support was shown for continued work

to improve transparency and accountability in relation to non-catch transfers, including transfers of personnel and operational supplies.

20. The outcome of the discussion was that the proposed minimum standard data fields for non-catch transfer monitoring would remain under development and be reviewed further intersessionally. It was agreed that additional consideration should be given to practicality, legal interpretation, possible alignment with wider transshipment reporting arrangements and the broader operational context before a more final draft is prepared for TCC22.

AGENDA ITEM 5. UPDATE ON OTHER TASKINGS BROUGHT FORWARD FROM LAST MEETING TO PRIORITISE AND IMPLEMENT

21. Under this agenda item, the Working Group considered updates on a number of taskings carried forward from previous meetings. Across these items, there was general agreement that the work of the ROP-IWG remains closely connected to broader Commission processes, including developments in electronic reporting and electronic monitoring, refinements to observer minimum standard data fields, and species-specific reporting improvements. It was also recognised that some topics remain at an early stage or are dependent on parallel processes elsewhere and will therefore require continued intersessional attention.

Agenda item 5.1 Progressing Priority tasking 4: Consideration related to emerging technologies

22. The Working Group noted the need for continued coordination with the ERandEM-IWG in order to promote a common understanding of minimum standard data fields and the relationship between human observer data and electronic monitoring outputs. It was generally agreed that updates to observer minimum standard data fields should be shared between the two groups and that closer alignment would assist future digitisation, harmonisation and integration of monitoring systems. While the increasing overlap between the work of the two groups was acknowledged, support was shown for maintaining their separate mandates for the present while continuing close collaboration where their work intersects.

Agenda item 5.2 Review of Minimum Data Fields for Observer Transshipment Monitoring – 2023

23. The Working Group noted the need for the review of the minimum standard data fields for observer transshipment monitoring that entered into force in April 2023. In addition, it was acknowledged that further work is still needed, particularly in relation to considering possible data fields for carrier-related forms, and to fields that had previously been treated as non-mandatory but may nonetheless be collectable in some circumstances. It was also noted that further material would be prepared to support more detailed consideration at a future meeting, building on overlaps already identified between existing transshipment forms and the general minimum standard data fields.

Agenda item 5.3 Consideration of joint IWG work resulting from ERandEM-IWG and ROP-IWG

24. The Working Group recognised the increasing overlap between the work of the ROP-IWG and the ERandEM-IWG, particularly in relation to data standards and future monitoring approaches. It was generally agreed that a collaborative approach should continue in order to improve harmonisation and reduce inconsistencies between observer and electronic monitoring

systems. At this stage, however, the Working Group did not propose any merger of mandates and instead supported continuing coordination between the two bodies on areas of common interest.

Agenda item 5.4 Shark species and reporting data gaps enhancements

25. The Working Group noted ongoing concerns regarding inconsistencies in shark species identification and reporting in the WCPO. It was recognised that existing species identification materials, observer forms and biological sampling approaches can support improvements in reporting, but that this remains an ongoing task requiring further attention and possible CCM-driven proposals. No further substantive discussion was recorded, and the item was noted as needing work by this IWG.

Agenda item 5.5 Possible additional reporting requirements for Sea Turtles (CMM 2018-04)

26. The Working Group noted that CMM 2018-04 is presently being reviewed through a separate intersessional process and considered the possibility of related adjustments to ROP minimum standard data fields. It was observed that improved observer data on sea turtle interactions could support better information collection and that some relatively minor modifications to the MSDFs may warrant further consideration, including fields linked to mitigation details, handling practices and species-specific information. At the same time, it was agreed that progress under this item should remain coordinated with the broader review of the sea turtle measure so as not to pre-empt outcomes under consideration elsewhere.
27. The Working Group therefore noted that it would continue to monitor developments in the separate review process and remain open to written proposals from CCMs on possible data field enhancements. The timing and need for further work under this item will depend on the outcomes of the informal sea turtles intersessional review process and any subsequent recommendations to SC and TCC.

Agenda item 5.6 Consideration of any other proposals from CCMs

28. Under this item, the Working Group considered additional proposals relating to the CCFS, including updates to CCFS reference materials, refinement of case status designations, revision of case identification structures and the retirement of certain case types. Support was shown for the value of these proposals in principle, particularly where they would improve clarity, consistency and functionality in case handling. At the same time, it was recognised that several of the proposals would benefit from further technical consideration before adoption, especially where they extend beyond ROP-sourced cases or may affect the broader operation of the CCFS.
29. It was suggested that some of these matters should first be considered through TCC processes and discussed further intersessionally before any final recommendation is forwarded. The Working Group took note of the proposals and their broad rationale and agreed that further work and discussion would be needed before they are finalised.

AGENDA ITEM 6. SUMMARY AND CLOSE

30. In closing the meeting, the Chair recalled that the principal priority areas for the session had been the CCFS process flow, the scoping of CMMs monitored for potential infringements, and

the proposed minimum standard data fields for non-catch transfer monitoring. It was noted that each of these areas had advanced through the discussion, but that further refinements would still be required during the intersessional period before the relevant papers could be regarded as final. It was also noted that further opportunities for intersessional review, including a possible further meeting before TCC22, would be considered.

31. The Chair thanked CCMs, the Secretariat and all participants for their constructive engagement and contributions throughout the meeting. The Ninth Meeting of the Regional Observer Programme Intersessional Working Group was then declared closed.

FEEDBACK ON PROPOSALS

32. Please provide feedback on the revised proposals by **10 July 2026** to allow preparation of relevant information for consideration at SC22.



**9TH REGIONAL OBSERVER PROGRAMME INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP
ONLINE**

3 June 2026

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REGIONAL OBSERVER PROGRAM INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP

Ninth Meeting

3 June 2026

Electronic Meeting

Agenda

ROPIWG09-2026-02

31 May 2026

Agenda item 1	Opening of meeting
Agenda item 2	Introduction and Opening
Agenda item 3	<p>Review and discuss the proposed final solution to use ROP data in the CCFS and CMS process and potential CMM infringements obligations</p> <p>3.1 Revisit working draft proposal on CCFS process flow (ROP-IWG09-2026-02). <i>Incorporating comments from CCMs and refinement text from PNA and US DP02</i></p> <p>3.2 Review the draft proposal of CMMs monitored for potential infringements for CCFS (ROP-IWG09-2026-03) <i>Incorporating comments from CCMs, PNA and US DP03</i></p>
Agenda item 4	<p>Review of the proposed MSDF for the ROP Non-catch transfer monitoring <i>Incorporating comments from CCMs and PNA</i></p>
Agenda item 5	<p>Update on respective on other taskings brought forward from last meeting to prioritize and implement</p> <p>Agenda 5.1 Progressing Priority tasking 4: Consideration related to emerging technologies – work closely with ER/EM - IWG for common understanding on the usage of MSDF</p> <p>Agenda 5.2 Review of Minimum Data Fields for Observer Transshipment Monitoring – 2023</p> <p>Agenda 5.3 Consideration of joint IWG work resulting from ERandEM-IWG and ROP-IWG</p> <p>Agenda 5.4 Shark species and reporting data gaps enhancements</p>

Agenda 5.5 Possible additional reporting requirements for Sea Turtles (CMM
2018- 04)

Agenda 5.6 Consideration of any other proposals from CCMs

Agenda 6.0 Summary and Close