

SC-07-24

7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC7)  
21-25 March 2022 (online)

## Workplan for the harmonisation of scientific observers' programmes

*Relate to agenda item: 11.3*

Working paper  Info paper  Restricted

### SC Chair and SC Vice Chair

---

#### Abstract

This working Paper addresses WHSOP Recommendation 3 (Annex D of the WHSOP Report) requesting that *“the SC Chair and SC Vice Chair provide a draft proposal for the Terms of Reference for the work, the workplan, and any requirements for a technical consultant for consideration at SC7”*.

---

---

#### Recommendations

It is recommended that the SC:

1. Notes the outcomes of the intersessional workshop on the Harmonisation of Scientific Observers' Programme (WHSOP).
  2. Agrees with the Workplan on the harmonisation of scientific observers' programmes as agreed in the WHSOP.
  3. Recommends supporting the Secretariat on the implementation of the Workplan outsourcing a selected consultant.
-

## INTRO

Scientific observers provide critical information on the biological characteristics of target and bycatch species from commercial fishing in the SIOFA Area. The SIOFA conservation and management measure (CMM 2021/02, Data standards, Paragraph 17) require that the Meeting of the Parties, based on recommendations from the Scientific Committee and the Compliance Committee, adopt a framework for scientific observation clarifying the aspects related to the role.

In order to receive high-quality data from scientific observers, it is important that observers working in SIOFA fisheries operate using a consistent set of standards for observation and measurement. To achieve this, the Scientific Committee recommended an intersessional workshop to initiate discussions on the harmonisation of standards and an evaluation process for CCPs scientific observer programmes (para 70, Scientific Committee of the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) 2021).

The intersessional workshop on the Harmonisation of Scientific Observers' Programme (WHSOP) took place on 27 October, 3 and 10 November 2021 and provided key recommendations on: how to harmonise the scientific observation programmes of the CCPs, the process for evaluating scientific observation programmes in order to improve data quality and on electronic monitoring system to support scientific observation.

The WHSOP Recommendation 3 (Annex D of the WHSOP [Report](#)) requested that *"the SC Chair and SC Vice Chair provide a draft proposal for the Terms of Reference for the work, the workplan, and any requirements for a technical consultant for consideration at SC7"*.

## TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE WORK - THE WORKPLAN

The Workplan on the harmonisation of scientific observers' programmes agreed during the WHSOP (See Annex I) has two stages: The first stage, agreed by WHSOP participants, focuses on the Harmonisation of Observer Data templates, the second stage focuses on the Framework for Evaluation of Observer Programmes.

The first stage on the Harmonisation of Observer Data templates and the second stage on establishing minimum standards for observer programmes and design of the process for evaluation of observer programmes will benefit from the support provided by the European Union Grant (SIOFA SC- CIRCULAR n° 2022/03) through a selected consultant. Furthermore, the creation of the SIOFA ad hoc technical Working Group *"to develop guidelines for evaluating and approving observer programs for scientific data collection"* (Paras 50-53 of the WHSOP Report) seems redundant as the consultant will be the one developing the guidelines.

The main objectives for the consultant will be:

- Objective 1: Analysis of CCPs observers' programmes;

- Objective 2: Identify synergies for improving scientific observer management and optimising coverage and deployment in relation to pandemic constraints;
- Objective 3: Describe and recommend potential tools and operational characteristics for electronic observer monitoring on board vessels;
- Objective 4: Workshop organisation: Consult with the SIOFA SC on potential tools and way forward for developing the SIOFA Observer Programme.
- Objective 5: Proposal for amending SIOFA CMMs on Data Standards, in Annex B (Observer Data);
- Objective 6: Develop a proposal for a CMM for regulation of observer harmonisation in SIOFA;

These objectives will ensure that the scientific observers working in SIOFA fisheries operate using a consistent set of standards for observation and measurement, resulting in high-quality data that will inform scientific advice for conservation and sustainable management of SIOFA fisheries.

The consultant tasks to be delivered as per the Workplan on the harmonisation of scientific observers' programmes will be as follow:

STAGES	TASK	DESCRIPTION	DEADLINE
STAGE 1	Harmonisation of Scientific Observer standards of data collection	Data collection and minimum standards on CCPs observer programs for scientific data collection	February 2023
		Develop templates for the observer reports, and for an observer data collection form	February 2023
STAGE 2	Framework for Evaluation of Observer Programmes	Establish consistent standards for Observer Programs across the SIOFA Area	December 2023
		Design of the process and framework for evaluation of Observer Programs	December 2023

## ANNEX I Workplan on the harmonisation of scientific observers' programmes

	2022												2023												2024													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
<b>SIOFA SC MEETINGS</b>			SC7												SC8												SC9											
<b>SIOFA MoP MEETINGS</b>							MOP9												MOP10																			
<b>SIOFA Secretariat</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ToR WG HSOP</li> <li>ToR Consultant</li> <li>Funding opportunities</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss and adopt WHSOP recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultant selection</li> <li>Establishing WG HSOP</li> </ul>											<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop &amp; adopt a template for the observer reports, and a template for an observer data collection form</li> </ul>												<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop &amp; adopt the framework for evaluation of Observer Programmes</li> </ul>											
<b>WG HSOP Secretariat Consultant</b>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>HARMONISATION OF OBSERVER DATA TEMPLATES</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using the Data Standards CMM Annex B &amp; develop a series of fishery specific data collection forms.</li> <li>Circulate those for comment.</li> <li>Amend the forms as needed and get agreement on the finalised forms.</li> <li>Create electronic forms that reflect the agreed forms with all fields linked to the specific fishing set that is being observed.</li> <li>Develop standard reporting formats and codes to populate the forms and hard wire these into the e-forms to ensure the data quality and consistency in reporting across observer programs.</li> <li>Circulate for comment.</li> <li>Amend standard reporting formats as needed.</li> <li>Develop a manual that describes how to collect these data and complete each data field.</li> <li>Circulate those for comment.</li> <li>Amend them as needed.</li> <li>Develop a database that each CCP can use to capture and store the data in country. These data can be submitted annually to the secretariat and housed at the secretariat on a single database.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>												<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATION OF OBSERVER PROGRAMMES:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observer program infrastructure</li> <li>Training of observers</li> <li>Post trip evaluation, data submission</li> </ol> </li> <li><b>Design of the process for evaluation of observer programs</b></li> </ul>												<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Evaluation and Accreditation process to be decided by the MoP</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deadlines for accreditation.</li> <li>Service provider as WG HSOP</li> </ul> </li> </ul>										

First stage agreed by WHSOP participants for SC7 consideration

Second stage developed by SC Chair and Vice Chair for SC7 consideration