

Report of the Workshop on Harmonisation of
Scientific Observers' Programmes of the
Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement
(SIOFA)

Held via Zoom videoconferences on 27 October, 3 & 10 November 2021

Table of contents

1. Opening of the workshop on the Harmonisation of Scientific Observers' Programmes.....	3
2. Administrative arrangements	3
3. Determination of the workshop objectives and agenda.....	3
4. Harmonising CCPs scientific observer programmes	3
a. Documentation supplied to observers by CCPs for their respective Observer Programmes	3
b. Training procedures used by CCPs for their respective Observer Programmes	4
c. Monitoring of VMEs	4
d. Post-trip evaluation, data submission, and review	4
5. Development of an evaluation process for scientific observer programmes to improve data quality.....	5
a. CCP observer programme infrastructure	5
b. Training of observers.....	5
c. Post trip evaluation, data submission, and review	5
6. Developments on the use of e-monitoring to support scientific observation.....	6
a. E-monitoring standards.....	6
b. Data collection, storage, and security	7
c. E-monitoring review requirements	8
7. Recommendations to the Scientific Committee	8
a. The means to achieve harmonisation of CCPs scientific observer programmes	8
b. An evaluation process for scientific observer programmes to improve data quality.....	8
c. The introduction of e-monitoring schemes to support scientific observation	9
ANNEX A – List of participants	11
ANNEX B – List of WHSOP meeting documents	12
ANNEX C – Revised Agenda.....	13
ANNEX D – WHSOP Recommendations	14

1. Opening of the workshop on the Harmonisation of Scientific Observers' Programmes

1. The workshop was convened by Dr Sebastián Rodríguez Alfaro, Vice-Chair of the Scientific Committee (SC) who welcomed the participants (Annex A).

2. Administrative arrangements

2. The SC Vice-Chair outlined the administrative arrangements for the meeting as per SC Circular 2021-09. Informal Notes of the first two sessions were circulated for comments and the Workshop website <http://apsoi.org/meetings/whsop> contains all workshop related documents (Annex B).

3. Determination of the workshop objectives and agenda

3. The meeting objectives and agenda (Annex C) were adopted as per SC Circular 2021-07.
4. Mr Alexander Meyer (Urban Connections, Tokyo) was appointed as rapporteur.

4. Harmonising CCPs scientific observer programmes

5. CCPs (Australia, the Cook Islands, the European Union, France (OT), Japan, Chinese Taipei and Thailand) presented overviews of their respective scientific observer programmes.
 6. Overviews covered main scientific observer programmes areas such as: training of observers, programme content, documentation, data flow, etc., together with specific agenda topics to be covered in the next sessions.
- a. Documentation supplied to observers by CCPs for their respective Observer Programmes
7. In general, CCPs supply observers with an observer manual and a variety of supplementary materials such as:
 - a. A list of tasks;
 - b. The relevant SIOFA CMM(s);
 - c. Identification guides, such as for fish, VME indicator taxa, seabirds, marine mammals, and sea turtles;
 - d. Tagging protocols;
 - e. Other at-sea hardware.
 8. Concerning the tagging protocols, the SIOFA Executive Secretary reminded participants that MoP8 required the Secretariat to develop a toothfish tagging protocol for the SIOFA area consistent with that of CCAMLR. This work is in progress, but will need some tools from CCPs (some pictures, schemes, photos or educational videos), with which SIOFA should be able to make its own framework that will follow the same process as CCAMLR.
 9. The workshop agreed on taking SIOFA CMM on data standards (CMM 2021/02) as the basis for the documentation to be provided in order to fulfil the obligations in terms of fisheries data collection and data reporting to the Secretariat.

b. Training procedures used by CCPs for their respective Observer Programmes

10. There are wide-ranging differences among CCPs' training procedures, including the training components, the length of training, which training is conducted on-board a vessel or on land, and whether digital and/or virtual tools are used.

11. Most training programs include the following general components:

- a. Safety at sea;
- b. Data collection and entry;
- c. Biological sampling;
- d. Species identification;
- e. Fisheries and fishing vessel/gear;
- f. Tagging.

12. Considering some CCPs' observers are not trained by national administrations, the commercial value of those training programmes could prevent the information from being available for analysis.

13. Limiting factors for women to be deployed in some CCPs' observer programmes were also described.

c. Monitoring of VMEs

14. CCPs have scientific observers attempting to identify VME taxa at sea (using the SIOFA identification guide), taking photos that are sent back to the national laboratories on land for verification/identification.

15. For France OT, each observer collects samples of all non-identified or rare benthos bycatch, freezes them and sends them to the Natural National History Museum for identification.

16. Japan inquired about the feasibility to collect and mail samples of certain organisms when CITES forbids its carriage (corals). The SIOFA Executive Secretary informed that it is usually possible with the proper export permit delivered by the competent authority and that the package must be stamped for scientific studies.

d. Post-trip evaluation, data submission, and review

17. CCPs generally take the same approach, consisting of a post-trip performance evaluation, an assessment of the data quality, and submission of the data, but with different processes for the performance evaluation and data quality assessment.

18. The SIOFA Data Manager suggested that he could prepare information about where the main data gaps exist in the observer database, for further discussion of post-trip evaluation, data submission, and review under Agenda item 5.c.

19. After considering the current state of each other's scientific observer programmes, the CCPs discussed how to move forward on harmonising them. Two main options were discussed:

- a) To review the data that are required to be collected in accordance with Annex B of CMM 2021/02 (Data Standards), identify which data are being collected by more than one CCP, identify how each CCP is collecting such data, and, if these CCPs are currently

applying different methods from one another, have them discuss and agree to a common approach.

- b) To compare each CCP's observer manual, and identify and compile common practices and best practices. However, it was noted that the latter option would be very labour-intensive and would require consideration and comparison of a large amount of information in several languages.

If implemented, both options will have a financial impact on the SIOFA budget that the MoP will have to consider. A voluntary contribution could also cover the consultant cost to implement one of the two options discussed.

5. Development of an evaluation process for scientific observer programmes to improve data quality

a. CCP observer programme infrastructure

- 20. CCPs (Australia, the Cook Islands, the European Union, France (OT), Japan, Chinese Taipei and Thailand) presented overviews of their respective observer programme infrastructure.
- 21. Overviews covered areas such as administrative, financial and logistical arrangements.
- 22. Noting that some CCPs' scientific observer programmes are funded by the fishing industry, CCPs discussed the importance of ensuring the independence of observers and avoiding any conflict of interest or the perception of one. They suggested that the development of a SIOFA code of conduct could be useful to that end and that it would be useful for CCPs to share any codes of conduct that they are currently using. They also noted that any SIOFA code of conduct would need to be flexible and accommodate CCPs' national administrative arrangements. Those CCPs whose observer programmes are funded by industry explained that they have arrangements in place such that their governments recover the costs of their observer programmes from industry and then pay observers with the recovered costs, thereby ensuring there is no direct financial relationship between industry and observers.

b. Training of observers

- 23. CCPs recapped the information they presented on the training of observers under Agenda item 4. b.
- 24. Several CCPs reported that aspects of their observer training have been moved online due to restrictions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 25. Chinese Taipei shared examples of international cooperation it is engaged in for the training of observers, both with countries and RFMOs.

c. Post trip evaluation, data submission, and review

- 26. CCPs recapped the information they presented under Agenda item 4. c.
- 27. The SIOFA Data Manager suggested that it would be useful to understand what kinds of hardware, computer, and software infrastructure CCPs use for data collection on-board vessels and for managing and reviewing these data. The SC Vice-Chair confirmed that this information could be provided intersessionally.

28. Based on the discussions in the first session of the workshop on how to harmonise each other's scientific observer programmes, the Cook Islands proposed a draft workplan and schedule of tasks for the consideration of the workshop.
29. CCPs generally supported the proposal. It was pointed out that several CCPs already have well developed data collection systems and processes and it was agreed that CCPs do not necessarily need to all collect and manage data in the same way as long as the necessary data (as required by CMM 2021/02 (Data Standards)) are collected and they are in a standardised SIOFA format with standardised codes when submitted to the SIOFA Secretariat. A useful approach for CCPs to do this would be to map their database onto the SIOFA one. It was also suggested that the proposed schedule be based on a quarterly timeline as that would allow for greater flexibility. How to make it operational was also addressed with the involvement of the Secretariat, CCPs and a consultant.
30. The SC Vice-Chair requested CCPs to submit written comments on the proposal by the end of business on Friday, 5 November. Based on the comments received, he would circulate a revised proposal on Monday, 8 November, for further comments. He would then further revise the proposal and present it for discussion at the third session of the workshop on Wednesday, 10 November.
31. The SC Chair pointed out that several Excel spreadsheets have been developed for the observer data that is required to be collected and submitted. The last update of CMM 2021/02 is not yet reflected in these templates. At the request of the SC Chair, the SIOFA Data Manager uploaded the current spreadsheets to the workshop meeting website. He also explained that these spreadsheets were developed to allow CCPs to check that they are collecting as much of the required data as possible and that there are no data controls or restrictions within them. This is because they were developed with the intention that the Secretariat would standardise the data submitted by CCPs, so as to avoid overburdening CCPs. However, the Secretariat would certainly welcome CCPs standardising the data before submission, which would enable the Secretariat to focus on other tasks.
32. The SC Chair pointed out that it is not obvious where all the information relevant to observers can be found on the website and suggested that it may be useful to set up a dedicated part of the website for observer training materials, observer manuals, data templates, and other relevant information.
33. The SIOFA Data Manager presented a summary of gaps in the observer database. The provision of fishing operation information is good overall whereas the provision of gear specifications is generally poor. There is also a need to differentiate between 0 observations and data that are not monitored for bycatch and seabird information.
34. The importance of not overburdening observers and the prioritisation of observer tasks were also discussed from the perspectives of the practicality of conducting all the required tasks and CCPs' national regulations on observers' working hours.

6. Developments on the use of e-monitoring to support scientific observation

a. E-monitoring standards

35. The Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) presented a summary of its Guidelines on Fisheries Electronic Monitoring Systems. Recognising the

movement from human observers to electronic monitoring programs around the world, ACAP developed two sets of complementary guidelines for either human observers or electronic monitoring programs to help CCPs collect the correct data in standardised way, regardless of the means by which they are collected. In particular, the ACAP guidelines consider the following categories of data fields to be essential:

- Seabird captures;
- Seabird at-vessel condition;
- Seabird catch fate;
- Seabird release condition;
- Information on tags or rings attached to captured seabirds;
- Trawl warp strikes when towing;
- Use of seabird bycatch mitigation methods;
- Variables that significantly explain seabird catch and post-capture mortality risks.

36. Japan explained that it prioritises the collection of data by human observers, rather than electronic monitoring, which is still in a developmental stage, and that the first priority for data collected by electronic monitoring would be fundamental information on catch and bycatch. Furthermore, human observers are already required to observe seabirds from the stern to estimate seabird abundance. Therefore, the collection of seabird data would be a lower priority in a Japanese electronic monitoring program.

37. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) provided a summary of the use of still and video cameras to record deepwater shark and VME indicator catches by scientific observers from a webinar on “The use of on-board cameras by scientific observers” held by FAO. The use of cameras would increase the efficiency of the observer’s work and promote personal safety. Cameras would provide increased spatial and temporal coverage, especially when observers were off-duty or not carried. Cameras could be used to efficiently monitor both catch and bycatch. Tasks better undertaken by camera systems could be used to free-up observer’s time for other tasks that cannot be done by electronic means such as otolith sampling. The hardware and software technologies are largely developed, but their use in commercial situations is in its infancy and requires support. The process of developing an electronic monitoring system using cameras to support on-board observers follows a reasonably well-defined path.

b. Data collection, storage, and security

38. CCPs presented overviews of their progress in developing electronic monitoring programs, both in general and specific to SIOFA fisheries. The stage of development of CCPs’ electronic monitoring programs varied greatly in general. With regard to SIOFA fisheries specifically, CCPs have made little progress in developing electronic monitoring programs.

39. Costs, including financial and human resources, and the need for the relevant technical expertise to evaluate the video footage were seen as factors limiting the development of some CCPs’ electronic monitoring programs.

40. CCPs with well-developed electronic monitoring programs have experienced benefits such as the ability to reduce the number of human observers required on-board vessels or the

reallocation of their time to biological sampling and other tasks that cannot be done electronically, the reduction of observer effects, the ability to share detailed feedback with vessels based on videos, and greater confidence in the accuracy of reported data.

41. Australia pointed out that the analysis of video taken from electronic monitoring systems requires a different skillset to that of traditional fisheries observers and reported that it has had success in hiring and training analysts with a scientific background but not necessarily a fisheries science one.

c. E-monitoring review requirements

42. The SC Vice-Chair noted that an important part of the development of Australia's electronic monitoring program was the extensive pilot study it did at the beginning, which included a review of what data could be collected by electronic monitoring, actual data requirements, and which data would require additional collection by human observers. He suggested that it may be useful to consider conducting a similar SIOFA pilot study in the future.
43. The workshop noted that working processes are underway at other RFMOs, including the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, and the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission. The SC Vice-Chair, Australia and Japan volunteered to work intersessionally to prepare an information paper summarising these processes for submission to the 2022 SC meeting.
44. The CCPs agreed to present summaries of the development of their electronic monitoring programs at the 2023 SC meeting.
45. Australia reported that it is currently conducting a pilot study in its toothfish longline fisheries and should be able to report on the results of the study at the 2023 SC meeting.
46. The CCPs suggested that, upon reviewing the abovementioned information, the 2023 SC meeting may wish to consider contracting a consultant to conduct a broader review of developments related to electronic monitoring systems.

7. Recommendations to the Scientific Committee

47. The SC Vice-Chair drafted recommendations to the Scientific Committee based on the discussions of the first two sessions of the workshop and presented them for the consideration of the participants.

a. The means to achieve harmonisation of CCPs scientific observer programmes

48. The participants considered and amended the draft recommendations relating to the means to achieve harmonisation of CCPs' scientific observer programmes.

b. An evaluation process for scientific observer programmes to improve data quality

49. In addition to the discussions of the first two sessions of the workshop, the draft recommendations relating to an evaluation process for scientific observer programmes to improve data quality also reflected points from a workplan proposed and circulated by France (OT) following the second session.
50. France (OT) gave a summary of its proposed three-year workplan (2021/22-2023/24). The proposal recommends the creation of an ad hoc technical working group to develop guidelines for evaluating and approving observer programs for scientific data collection,

and sets out a two-step approach: 1. establish minimum standards for observer programs, 2. design a process for evaluation of observer programs.

51. The participants considered the draft recommendations and France (OT)'s proposal together, and amended the draft recommendations.

52. CCPs agreed with the general content of the draft recommendations and France (OT)'s proposal. However, CCPs had differing views on the method for progressing the work.

53. Some CCPs had concerns about progressing the work on the harmonisation of observer data templates through a technical working group. They explained that it can be very time-consuming and inefficient to try to draft data collection forms in a group. They suggested that it would be more efficient to have one individual in charge of developing the initial forms, which could then be circulated among CCPs for comment, and that only in the case of substantive disagreement would it be necessary to hold a meeting and discussions. They suggested that the initial work to develop the forms could be the primary task of the new SIOFA science officer until the 2023 SC meeting. Then, the MoP could consider the progress made and what additional funding and processes may be needed.

54. Australia pointed out that there is great variability among CCPs' observer programmes, that most CCPs' observer programs for SIOFA are part of larger observer programs, and that it will therefore be very difficult to standardise aspects other than observer data, such as training programs, etc. France (OT) agreed and clarified that the intention of its proposal is to create a structure and metrics to ensure that all observer programs meet some kind of minimum standards.

55. In response to questions about the process of approving the proposed hiring of a consultant and the budgetary implications, the SC Vice-Chair explained that the consultant would be funded by a grant by the European Union.

56. CCPs agreed that when developing forms, manuals, codes and metrics, the work should consider existing manuals, forms from CCP programs and CMM requirements.

57. France (OT) suggested that waiting until 2022/2023 to start the work to harmonise the aspects of observer programs other than those relating to data would be too late. This work is also important and should start as early as possible.

58. France (OT) pointed out that, in addition to CMM 2020/03 (Data Standards), the draft recommendations should also refer to paragraph 5c of SIOFA CMM 2020/01 (Interim Management of Bottom Fishing), which pertains to guidelines for evaluating and approving electronic observer programs for scientific data collection.

59. The SC Vice-Chair said that he would reflect the comments made when drafting the terms of reference for the observer program harmonisation work together with the SC Chair, including elaborating on the processes for conducting the work to harmonise observer data templates, elaborating on the content involved in the development of a framework for the evaluation of observer programmes, and making good use of all the available resources, including the grant from the European Union.

c. The introduction of e-monitoring schemes to support scientific observation

60. The participants considered and amended the draft recommendations relating to e-monitoring schemes to support scientific observation.

61. CCPs supported the general approach for progressing the work on e-monitoring schemes. However, the Cook Islands suggested that it would be premature, at this stage, to recommend that a consultant is necessary.
62. The participants considered positively the suggestion and amended other general recommendations.
63. Regarding the recommendation that the Secretariat develop a proposal for a toothfish tagging protocol for the SIOFA area, several CCPs emphasised the importance of ensuring consistency with the CCAMLR tagging protocol and that the Secretariat should not be updating or rewriting the CCAMLR protocol. The SIOFA Executive Secretary agreed and clarified that the Secretariat is adapting the CCAMLR protocol for use in the SIOFA area, not updating or rewriting it. He also explained that he needs to consult with the CCAMLR secretariat regarding any potential copyright issues of using the CCAMLR protocol as the basis for a SIOFA protocol.
64. The amended recommendations to the SC are attached as Annex D.
65. The SIOFA Data Manager suggested that, in the future, it may be worthwhile developing a specific observer program CMM, which would contain all protocols relevant to SIOFA observer programs.
66. The SC Chair thanked the SC Vice-Chair for convening the workshop and drafting the recommendations to the SC, and the participants for their contributions. He pointed out that such workshops with clear recommendations are very useful for facilitating the work of the SC.
67. The SC Vice-Chair thanked all participants for their contributions and support, and brought the meeting to a close.

ANNEX A – List of participants

Delegation	Title	Name	Contact
Australia	Mr	Tamre Sarhan	tamre.sarhan@afma.gov.au
Australia	Mr	Rhys Arangio	arangio@australfisheries.com.au
Australia	Mr	Nate Meulenberg	nate.meulenberg@afma.gov.au
Australia	Mr	Brodie Macdonald	brodie.macdonald@afma.gov.au
Australia	Mr	Trent Timmis	trent.timmiss@agriculture.gov.au
Cook Islands	Dr	Steve Brouwer	steve@saggitus.co.nz
Cook Islands	Ms	Tiare Nicholas	t.nicholas@mmr.gov.ck
Cook Islands	Ms	Chloe-Ane Wragg	c.wragg@mmr.gov.ck
Cook Islands	Mrs	Latishia Maui	l.maui@mmr.gov.ck
Cook Islands	Ms	Kerrie Robertson	k.robertson@mmr.gov.ck
European Union	Dr	Roberto Sarralde Vizuete	roberto.sarralde@ieo.es
France (OT)	Mr	Patrice Pruvost	patrice.pruvost@mnhn.fr
France (OT)	Mr	Matthieu Piron	matthieu.piron@agriculture.gouv.fr
France (OT)	Mr	Alexis Martin	alexis.martin@mnhn.fr
France (OT)		Nicolas Gasco	nicolas.gasco@mnhn.fr
France (OT)		Charlotte Chazeau	charlotte.chazeau@mnhn.fr
France (OT)	Dr	Jules Selles	jules.selles@mnhn.fr
Japan	Dr	Takehiro Okuda	okudy@affrc.go.jp
Japan	Dr	Tsutomu Nishida	aco20320@par.odn.ne.jp
Thailand	Ms	Chuanpit Jaikeo	chuanpit.jai@gmail.com
Thailand	Mr	Prasit Luesrithawornsin	prasit_kim@hotmail.com
Thailand	Ms	Sawitre Yawanopas	sawitre_yawa@hotmail.com
Thailand	Ms	Tirabhorn Yothakong	tirabhorn@gmail.com
Thailand	Ms	Kanyarat Woraprayoth	kookky0053@gmail.com
Thailand	Ms	Praphayapath Thonrosrapee	cake.thonrapee@gmail.com
Thailand	Mr	Nattawut Aiemubolwan	nattawut.mnk62@gmail.com
Thailand	Mr	Weerapol Thitipongtrakul	weerapol.t@gmail.com
Thailand	Mr	Aekkarat Wongkeaw	aekfish@hotmail.com
Chinese Taipei	Mr	Wei-Chen Hung	weichen0506@ms1.fg.gov.tw
Chinese Taipei	Mr	Yi Te Huang	yite@ofdc.org.tw
Chinese Taipei		Chia Chun Wu	jiachun@ms1.fg.gov.tw
Chinese Taipei	Mr	Ren Fen Wu	fan@ofdc.org.tw
ACAP	Dr	Igor Debski	idebski@doc.govt.nz
FAO	Dr	William Emerson	william.emerson@fao.org
SIOFA	Mr	Pierre Périès	pierre.peries@siofa.org
SIOFA	Mr	Thierry Clot	thierry.clot@siofa.org
SIOFA	Mr	Alistair Dunn	alistair.dunn@oceanenvironmental.co.nz
SIOFA	Mr	Alex Meyer	meyer@urbanconnections.jp
SIOFA	Dr	Sebastián Rodríguez Alfaro	sebastian_chano@hotmail.com

ANNEX B – List of WHSOP meeting documents

Working papers:

1. WHSOP1-WP-01-Cook Islands proposal to Workshop on Harmonisation of Scientific Observers_rev1
2. WHSOP1-WP-02-FR-OT_Proposed-workplan-for-the-harmonisation-and-evaluation-of-SIOFA-observer-programs-to-improve-data-quality
3. WHSOP1-WP-03-Convener-Recommendations from the Workshop HSOP
4. File SIOFA_observer_data_TRAWL_TEMPLATE
5. File SIOFA_observer_data_TRAP_POT_TEMPLATE
6. File SIOFA_observer_data_PEL-LONGLINE_TEMPLATE
7. File SIOFA_observer_data_HANDLINE_TEMPLATE
8. File SIOFA_observer_data_DEM-LONGLINE_TEMPLATE
9. File SIOFA_observer_data_DAHNDROPLINE_TEMPLATE

Information papers

1. WHSOP1-INFO-01-SIOFA-CMM-2021-02-data-standards
2. WHSOP1-INFO-02-FAO-use-of-camera
3. WHSOP1-INFO-03 ACAP data collection guidelines.
4. WSHOP1-INFO-04-EU-Spain-Observers-Training-summary
5. WHSOP1-INFO-05-THA-Observer-Programme-Presentation
6. WHSOP1-INFO-06-French-Observer-program
7. WHSOP1-INFO-07-Chinese-Taipei-observer-programme
8. WHSOP1-INFO-09-JapanObserver2021
9. WHSOP1-INFO-10 FR-OT MNHN presentation_siofa_harmonisation
10. WHSOP1-INFO-11-Observers-data-fields-gap-summary
11. WHSOP1-INFO-12-ACAP-2021-EM-guidelines

Restricted documents:

1. WHSOP1-INFO-08-AFMA-Observer-Program-2021
2. WHSOP1-INFO-09-Japan-Observer-2021

ANNEX C – Revised Agenda

1. Opening of the workshop on the Harmonisation of Scientific Observers' Programmes

2. Administrative arrangements

- a. Adoption of the meeting objectives and agenda
- b. Appointment of rapporteurs

3. Determination of the workshop objectives and agenda

4. Harmonising CCPs scientific observer programmes

- a. Documentation supplied to observers by CCPs for their respective Observer Programmes
- b. Training procedures used by CCPs for their respective Observer Programmes
- c. Monitoring of VMEs
- d. Post-trip evaluation, data submission, and review

5. Development of an evaluation process for scientific observer programmes to improve data quality

- a. CCP observer programme infrastructure
- b. Training of observers
- c. Post trip evaluation, data submission, and review

6. Developments on the use of e-monitoring to support scientific observation

- a. E-monitoring standards
- b. Data collection, storage, and security
- c. E-monitoring review requirements

7. Recommendations to the Scientific Committee on

- a. the means to achieve harmonisation of CCPs scientific observer programmes,
- b. an evaluation process for scientific observer programmes to improve data quality, and
- c. the introduction of e-monitoring schemes to support scientific observation

ANNEX D – WHSOP Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE WORKSHOP ON THE HARMONISATION OF SCIENTIFIC OBSERVERS' PROGRAMMES (WHSOP) TO THE SIOFA SC7

On the Harmonisation of scientific observers' programmes

1. In establishing the harmonisation of SIOFA scientific observers' programmes the WHSOP **recommends** that the SC:
 - 1.1. **Notes** that SIOFA CMM 2021/02 (data standards) is the basis for the information to be provided to the Secretariat in order to fulfil fisheries data collection and data reporting obligations.
 - 1.2. **Notes** that CCPs should have flexibility in collecting and managing SIOFA Scientific Observer data, as long as the necessary data (as required by CMM 2021/02) are collected and reported in the standardised format required by SIOFA.
 - 1.3. **Considers** that consistency in the data quality provided by CCPs scientific observer programs for SIOFA is essential.
 - 1.4. **Considers** developing a SIOFA code of conduct for CCPS for their scientific observers, taking into consideration the CCPs' national administrative arrangements, prioritising observer tasks as required by CCPs' national regulations, and aims to ensure independence of observers including avoiding any conflicts of interest.

In order to make operational¹ the harmonisation of scientific observers' programmes the WHSOP:

2. **Recommends** that the SC evaluate and agree on data collection forms and minimum standards on CCPs observer programs for scientific data collection, as required by para. 16 of SIOFA CMM 2021/02 (Data Standards) and para. 5c of SIOFA CMM 2020/01 (Interim Management of Bottom Fishing).
3. **Requests** 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.
4. **Notes** that the proposed Workplan would form the basis of the work.
5. **Encourages** CCPs and participants in the WHSOP to participate in the process.

¹ SIOFA CMM 2021_02 (Data Standards) Paragraph 16. "By 2023, the Scientific Committee shall develop and adopt a template for the observer reports, and a template for an observer data collection form that may be used by observers in subsequent years".

6. **Requests** that the SC Chair and SC Vice Chair provide a draft proposal to SC7 for a SIOFA code of conduct, including requirements for independence, managing conflicts of interest, and health and safety considerations for Scientific Observers.

On Electronic Monitoring the WHSOP recommends that

7. At the 2023 SC meeting, CCPs **present** a summary on the development of any electronic monitoring programs trialled by CCPs on vessels in the SIOFA Area or similar fisheries for consideration by the WG-HSOP and SC.
8. Upon reviewing the abovementioned information, the 2023 SC **consider** conducting a broader review of developments related to electronic monitoring systems.

The WHSOP makes the following general recommendations

9. The WHSOP **requests** that the Secretariat develop a proposal for a toothfish tagging protocol for the SIOFA area, for consideration at SC7, that uses the tagging protocol used by CCAMLR, and provide links and other relevant information on the SIOFA website.
10. The WHSOP **notes** that this may be a useful item to include on the agenda at the upcoming Joint SIOFA-CCAMLR Workshop on the exchange of scientific toothfish data.
11. The WHSOP **requests** that the SIOFA Secretariat set up a specific part of the SIOFA website for observer training materials, observer manuals, data templates, and other relevant information.

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											
SIOFA SC MEETINGS			SC7												SC8												SC9																				
SIOFA MoP MEETINGS							MOP9												MOP10																												
SIOFA Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ToR WG HSOP ToR Consultant Funding opportunities 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss and adopt WHSOP recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant selection Establishing WG HSOP 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HARMONISATION OF OBSERVER DATA TEMPLATES 1) Using the Data Standards CMM Annex B & develop a series of fishery specific data collection forms. 2) Circulate those for comment. 3) Amend the forms as needed and get agreement on the finalised forms. 4) Create electronic forms that reflect the agreed forms with all fields linked to the specific fishing set that is being observed. 5) 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 a cross observer programs. 6) Circulate for comment. 7) Amend standard reporting formats as needed. 8) Develop a manual that describes how to collect these data and complete each data field. 9) Circulate those for comment. 10) Amend them as needed. 11) 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. 												<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop & adopt a template for the observer reports, and a template for an observer data collection form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend CM Q2 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATION OF OBSERVER PROGRAMMES: • Establish minimum standards for observer programs 1) Observer program infrastructure 2) Training of observers 3) Post trip evaluation, data submission • Design of the process for evaluation of observer programs 												<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop & adopt the framework for evaluation of Observer Programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation and Accreditation process to be decided by the MoP • Deadlines for accreditation • Service provider to WG HSOP 													
WG HSOP Secretariat Consultant																																															

First stage agreed by WHSOP participants for SC7 consideration

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