



La Réunion, Monday 19 August 2024

SC CIRCULAR n° 2024-11

SUBJECT: SIOFA SC Scientific Observer Form Workshop (WS2024-OBS2)

Dear Heads of Delegation of the Scientific Committee,

Dear Colleagues,

As included in the SIOFA Scientific Committee workplan 2024-2028 approved at MoP11, please find below the draft working arrangements for the upcoming SC Scientific Observer Form Workshop (WS2024-OBS2).

The purpose of WS2024-OBS2 will be to consider any issues identified by the Secretariat and participating CCPs in the trial of the new observer forms (SC9 report, paragraph 347).

SC9 had recommended that a trial of the new forms for scientific observer data submission take place in the coming year and noted that the SC would then consider the results of the trial at its next meeting before formulating its recommendations to the MoP on the adoption of the forms (SC9 report, paragraph 344).

Please find attached the draft Arrangements, Provisional Agenda and Timetable for WS2024-OBS2, Included as Annex 1, proposed to be held in virtual format in one session on Thursday 28 November 2024 from 07.30 UTC to 11.30 UTC.

As a part of this workshop, I propose to invite Melanie Williamson (CapMarine) as an Invited Expert, and also suggest we consider the draft project description for project OBS-2025-03 *Development of a SIOFA scientific observer data collection manual* (provided for your convenience as Annex 2 of this Circular).

Please provide any responses on the proposed Arrangements, Provisional Agenda and Timetable to the SIOFA Science Officer (marco.milardi@siofa.org), by Friday 30 August 2024. Following any responses, I will circulate the final Terms of References, Agenda, and Meeting Arrangements.

Sincerely yours,

Alistair Dunn

SIOFA Scientific Committee Chair

Annex 1 - Working arrangements for the SIOFA SC Scientific Observer Form Workshop (WS2024-OBS2)

Introduction

At SC9, the Scientific Committee proposed to hold a workshop to consider any issues identified by the Secretariat and participating CCPs in the trial of the new observer logbook forms (SC9 report, paragraph 347).

This workshop will aim to consider any issues arising from CCPs trials of the new observer logbook forms and summarise any potential changes for consideration at SC10.

This Circular outlines the proposal for a workshop, and the proposed Terms of Reference, the Provisional Agenda, and meeting arrangements for WS-2024-OBS2. The outcomes of the workshop will be presented to the 2025 meeting of the Scientific Committee.

Workshop Arrangements

The proposed workshop arrangements are:

1. The workshop is open to all representatives of the SIOFA Scientific Committee and the SIOFA SC Observers. Representatives of the Scientific Committee are encouraged to include SIOFA Scientific Observers and Observer Coordinators in their delegations.
2. The workshop will be convened by the SIOFA Scientific Committee Chair.
3. The workshop will meet online via video conference (Zoom) on Thursday 28th November 2024 from 07.30 UTC to 11.30 UTC.
4. A Convener's report of the workshop will be compiled by the Workshop Convener, circulated for comment to the Workshop participants, and then presented to the 2025 meeting of the Scientific Committee.

Provisional Agenda

1. Opening
 - a. Welcome from Convenor
 - b. Introduction of meeting participants
 - c. Adoption of agenda
 - d. Confirmation of meeting documents
 - e. Workshop report arrangements
2. Background
 - a. Summary of the new observer forms
3. Revisions to the observer forms
 - a. Summary of issues identified by CCPs
 - b. Summary of issues identified by Secretariat
4. Development of the project description for OBS-2025-03: *Development of a SIOFA scientific observer data collection manual.*
5. Summary of advice to SC

Timetable

12 November 2024

Deadline for submission of any information or working papers to the workshop.

13 November 2024

Deadline for registration of participants to the workshop.

28 November 2024

The workshop meeting will take place virtually between 0730 and 1130 UTC. A short break will be scheduled at about 0930 UTC.

4 December 2024

Distribution of draft Workshop Conveners Report for comment by participants.

15 February 2024

Final Workshop Conveners Report submitted to SC10.

Annex 2 - Draft project description for project OBS-2025-03 *Development of a SIOFA scientific observer data collection manual*

Description: Develop a SIOFA Scientific Observer Manual for use by SIOFA Scientific Observers and CCPs

Objectives:

1. Development of detailed biological sampling requirements for primary and secondary species in all SIOFA fisheries.
2. Development of an Observer Manual that describes the detailed methods and processes that can be used by all Observers in SIOFA fisheries, including the following contents:
 - a. Introduction
 - b. SIOFA Scientific Observer roles and responsibilities
 - i. Definition of terms
 - ii. SIOFA regulations (CMMs)
 - iii. Overview of roles and responsibilities
 - c. General operational procedures
 - i. Units and formats
 - ii. Standard measurements
 - iii. Weights
 - iv. Sexing and maturity stages
 - v. Otolith collection and storage
 1. Removing otoliths
 2. Otolith storage
 - vi. Tagging and tag recaptures (toothfish and skates)
 - vii. Conversion factor tests
 - d. Target catch and by-catch species
 - i. Primary species definitions and species identification
 - ii. Secondary species definitions and species identification
 - iii. Primary and secondary species sampling requirements
 - e. Observations of marine mammals and seabirds
 - f. Interactions with fishing gear
 - g. Vulnerable marine ecosystems
 - h. Vessel requirements
 - i. Observer data collection and data submission requirements
 - j. Appendices
 - i. Appendix 1 – Identification guides
 - ii. Appendix 2 – Maps of the SIOFA Areas, Sub-areas, and relevant seamounts/seamount complexes
 - iii. Appendix 3 – Functions and tasks of Scientific Observers
 - iv. Appendix 4 – SIOFA Scientific Observer resources
 - v. Appendix 5 – Recommended lists of Scientific Observer safety gear
 - vi. Appendix 6 – Recommended lists of Scientific Observer sampling gear

Budget: 15,000 Euro

Funding source: MoP

Project outputs:

1. A summary report summarising the manual scope and objectives
2. A draft SIOFA scientific observer data collection manual

Lead: TBD