

La Réunion, Thursday 27 August 2026

SC-CIRCULAR n° 2026-07

SUBJECT: SIOFA SC Workshop on the SIOFA observer manual (WS2026-OBS)

Dear Heads of Delegation of the Scientific Committee,

Dear Observers,

Dear Colleagues,

At SC11, the SC agreed to hold workshop WS2026-OBS (SC11 report, paragraph 438). The development of a scientific observer manual was undertaken in Project OBS-2025-01, to produce a manual that covered sampling of “fish” (Chondrichthyes and bony fishes), crustaceans and molluscs, as well as VME indicator taxa.

The purpose of the WS2026-OBS workshop is to consider the final report of Project OBS-2025-01: Development of a SIOFA Scientific Observer Data Collection Manual (<https://siofa.org/science/sc-works/OBS-2025-01>), with particular regard to the topics that arose during the SC11 discussions.

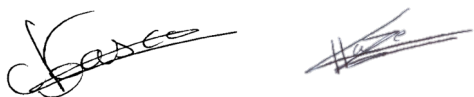
To progress the arrangements for the SIOFA Scientific Committee Workshop on SIOFA observer manual workshop (WS2026-OBS), the Chair of the Scientific Committee and the Conveners have proposed an agenda, timetable, and working arrangements for the Workshop.

The outcome from the Workshop will be a Conveners' report that will be considered by the Scientific Committee at SC12, in March 2027.

Please find attached the draft Arrangements, Terms of Reference, Provisional Agenda and Timetable for WS2026-OBS, to be held in a virtual format on Tuesday 8 December 2026 at 07:00 AM UTC.

Please provide any responses on the proposed Terms of Reference, Provisional Agenda, the Timetable, and the Meeting Arrangements by the Wednesday 30 September to the Science Officer (marco.milardi@siofa.org) and the Secretariat (secretariat@siofa.org). Following any responses, we will circulate the final Terms of Reference, Agenda, and Meeting Arrangements.

Sincerely yours,



Nicolas Gasco & Charlotte Chazeau

SIOFA WS2026-OBS Conveners

SIOFA SC WORKSHOP – SIOFA observer manual workshop (WS2026-OBS)

Proposed Agenda and Working Arrangements

1. Background

The SIOFA Scientific Committee (SC) is tasked to provide fisheries management advice to the SIOFA Meeting of the Parties (MoP). In recent years, SIOFA implemented a series of projects and workshops which contributed to the harmonization of the observer framework. Project SEC2022-OBS1 (2024) constituted the backbone of these efforts, producing observer logbook forms and recommendations which were picked up in workshop WS2024-OBS (2024) and workshop WS2024-OBS2 (2024). These efforts culminated in a dense observer-related agenda item at the 10th annual meeting of the SIOFA SC (2025). SC10 identified as a next step in this process the development of detailed biological sampling requirements for primary and secondary species in all SIOFA fisheries.

Project OBS-2025-01 started in 2025 with the aim to produce an observer manual which must cover sampling of “fish” (Chondrichthyes and bony fishes), crustaceans and molluscs, as well as VME indicator taxa. A paragraph explaining the context, why observers are asked to collect this information and how it is used shall be included in every chapter.

The purpose of the WS2026-OBS workshop is to discuss the final report of Project OBS-2025-01: Development of a SIOFA Scientific Observer Data Collection Manual, with particular regard to the issues that arose during the SC11 discussions.

2. Objectives

The aim of the Workshop is to evaluate the needs regarding format of the proposed observer manual from project OBS-2025-01, specifically

1. What is the intended format of the SIOFA Scientific Observer Data Collection Manual, an e-manual (interactive digital manual) or a PDF manual?
2. If it is an e-manual, where will it be uploaded, the SIOFA Secretariat website or a learning management system (e.g., Moodle)?
3. If it is an e-manual, who will upload and update it, when, how, and what are the current personnel, budget, and time constraints?

3. Terms of Reference for the Workshop

The proposed Workshop arrangements are:

1. The Workshop will be open to all representatives of the SIOFA Scientific Committee, including Observers.
2. The workshop will be convened by Nicolas Gasco (FR-OT) & Charlotte Chazeau (FR-OT).
3. The workshop will meet online via video conference (Zoom) on Tuesday 8 December 2026 at 07:00 AM UTC.
4. A Convener's report of the Workshop will be compiled by the Workshop Conveners and be presented at the 12 annual meeting of the SIOFA Scientific Committee (SC12).

4. Provisional Agenda

1. Opening of the workshop WS2026-OBS
 - a. Welcome from the Workshop convener
 - b. Introduction of meeting participants
2. Administrative arrangements
 - a. Adoption of the meeting objectives and agenda
 - b. Appointment of rapporteurs
 - c. Workshop report arrangements
3. Intended use of the Manual
 - a. Overview
 - b. CCP commentary
4. Intended format of the Manual and its repository
 - a. E-manual (website or Learning Management System, e.g., Moodle)
 - b. PDF manual
5. Responsibility for uploading and updating the Manual
 - a. Capacity and resources
 - b. Timeframes
6. Recommendations for SC12
7. Review of key report recommendations (as time allows) in plenary
8. Meeting close

5. Timetable

15 October 2026: In preparation for the workshop, the SIOFA Secretariat will distribute a background document for consideration by the Workshop.

24 November 2026: Deadline for the submission of Workshop papers.

1 December 2026: Deadline for registration of participants to the Workshop (via email to the SIOFA Secretariat Science Officer, marco.milardi@siofa.org).

08 December 2026: Meeting of the Workshop via videoconference at 07:00 AM UTC

18 December 2026: Distribution of draft Conveners' report for review and finalisation.

15 January 2027: Deadline for the submission of participant comments on the Draft Conveners' report.

13 February 2027: Submission of Conveners' report to SC12 (deadline for the submission of SC Working Papers).