**Title**

Strategic support for implementation of Pacific Island Regional Fisheries Observer standards in 2010

# Background and needs

Sea-going observers collect independent and impartial fisheries data. The data is used to verify and augment other types of fisheries data.

The Oceanic Fisheries Programme (OFP) has traditionally provided regional coordination for the observer programmes of Pacific Island Country and Territories (PICTs) and supports the work of national observer programmes. To do this SPC and FFA offer regionally recognised observer training courses. SPC also offers on-going programme support, advice, programme evaluation and data quality feedback to national programmes and promotes the establishment of new observer programmes. Port sampling work is also supported.

Increased observer coverage demands resulting from several WCPFC Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) have lead to demand for observer training in Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) that greatly exceeds the capacity of the courses SPC and FFA provide. This project is aimed to build on the 2009 JTF PIRFO project to build and improve the capacity outside of regional organisations to deliver sufficient quality training to meet observer recruiting needs. To improve capacity Observer Trainers will be established within selected Pacific Island national programmes and suitable training institutions. National Observer Trainers will improve a national programme’s capacity to recruit observers and reduce the reliance on training from SPC and FFA.

In 2007, SPC and FFA embarked on a project to adopt a more formalized Competency Based Training (CBT) approach to the further development of fisheries Observer training. The initial focus of the project was to develop a competency standard based curriculum for Observer training with an associated training assessment and evidence guide. This curriculum, titled Pacific Island Regional Fisheries Observer (PIRFO) was developed and subject to initial trial in early 2008 and was subsequently endorsed by the 67th Meetings of the Forum Fisheries Committee as a regional qualification standard in May 2008.

Endorsement of the PIRFO standards as a regional Observer Qualification paved the way for SPC and FFA to work collectively with National Observer Programs and cooperatively with the WCPFC Regional Observer Program on the development and implementation of an agreed strategy for regional PIRFO implementation. The priority of PIRFO development and implementation was reinforced by the PNA commitment to 100% observer coverage for PNA vessels implemented in July and August 2008 and to continue indefinitely from January 1st 2010.

This five-fold increase over the previous rate of targeted coverage, never fully achieved, requires the training of many more Fisheries Observers, development of national capacity to manage those observers, including robust data quality control strategies, and the ability to manage the observer data generated. Further demands are inherent in the 5% coverage of longliners also required in the WCPFC Convention area by 2012. Regional coverage rate of longliners is currently 1%.

Due to lack of sufficient resources to undertake work in to develop the PIRFO standards this has been an extended process through 2008 and 2009. During 2009 a concurrent programme of implementation was commenced with the help of JTF funds. The process of implementation involves the following steps:

1. Observer Training – planned to deliver six courses to train 90 new observers in 2009, which will include enhanced training in biological sampling to serve the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) ideals adopted in the WCPO region
2. Certification of existing Observers to new PIRFO standards (estimated 150 Observers)
3. Observer Debriefer standards development
4. Certification of existing Debriefers – through an intensive data quality workshop so that participants will subsequently assume role as National Debriefer Certifiers
5. Development of Observer Trainers and Trainer certification
6. Institutional capacity building for Observer training delivery (training institutions)
7. Regional Moderation and quality control strategy
8. Institutional capacity building for Observer training delivery (training institutions)
9. Development of Observer Trainers and Trainer certification
10. Coordinate cost effective regional observer placements and management for Observer coverage to meet PNA aspirations (purse seine) and WCPFC mandated target coverage of longliners (600 annual longline placements by 2012)
11. Coordinate Observer Database development to support observer management and improve use of Observer data (further develop TUFMAN, TUBS and TOAD databases)
12. Observer Coordinators Workshop/s to strengthen National and Regional Observer programme coordination and launch the latest developments in PIRFO
13. Improve Observer processes, documentation and auditing mechanisms for debriefers

The priorities for implementation in 2009 were:

1. Develop a pool of certified Regional Observer Trainers
2. Develop Observer training course resource material
3. Develop a pool of certified Regional Observer Debriefers
4. Enhance fisheries Observer capability to undertake biological sampling
5. National Observer Coordinators Workshop

In October 2009 the PIRFO Certification and Training Standards were made available on the SPC-OFP, FFA and WCPFC websites, despite the demand on available resources that required 15 basic observer training workshops instead of the 6 originally planned (item 1., above).

During 2009 seven different trainee trainers were involved in 24 attachments in 16 different basic observer courses carried out in PNG, Vanuatu, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Fiji, FSM and Hawaii.

At these training courses OFP scientific technicians presented training in biological samples using enhanced training materials that corresponded to the PIRFO modules developed for this aspect of the observer training.

Trainers and trainee trainers attachments developed teaching and assessment materials during regular training activities throughout 2009.

Due to the doubling of training requirements over those originally planned for in 2009 not all of the other PIRFO goals for this year were met. The most notable omission was work to ensure that observer data quality is improved. The 2009 plan included:

* A data quality workshop for proposed National Debriefer Certifiers
  + to include communication skills (focused on interview techniques)
* Workshop participants to subsequently assume role as National Debriefer Certifiers
  + to be based on the quality of existing work by ‘Acting Debriefers’
* Enhanced recognition of data quality management through the debriefing process and debriefing documentation
* Developing and implementing a debriefing audit function
* Further development of the observer data management system to capture data quality attributes generated through debriefing.

To ensure that the vast amounts of data now being generated by the current three-fold increase (over the past two years) in observer numbers in our region is not wasted, this work is now vital.

# Work proposed for 2010 and Outcomes

Work on expanding the scope of the SPC and FFA developed PIRFO CBT standards to ensure Pacific Island training observer programmes, training institutions and Observer Trainers will have appropriate skills and provide appropriate training environments to meet WCPFC observer data provision obligations must continue. New training tools are required to address the expanding role that observers inherit with many of the new CMMs that WCPFC members are agreeing to and there must be processes in place such that there can be greater confidence in the quality of observer competencies – new and old – and subsequently the data generated from observer activities.

The major focus for this project in 2009 will be to refine CBT standards for Observer Trainers and further develop the regional pool of certified capable Observer Trainers with further attachments for current trainee Observer Trainers and commencing the development of three additional candidates. For most Observer Trainers the process will take over a year with a minimum of six training attachments, as per the PIRFO Training Standards for Observer Trainers, before they are confidently and consistently delivering training and assessing the competencies of their trainees.

As trainers build their recognised competencies the basic observer training role of SPC and FFA will progressively shift from extensive training to support, accreditation and auditing. It is important that the observer certification in Pacific Island countries is internationally recognised and a significant aspect of this is also to have the training and trainers accredited. Further work will be required to ensure that a suitable process is in place to properly carry out auditing.

It is expected that this work will continue well past the next 12 months but for 2010 we seek assistance for the following components.

1. ***Developing a pool of certified regional observer trainers***

To build the pool of nationally-based Observer Trainers available to the PIRFO region 3 more places will be offered to suitable candidates to attend up to six PIRFO basic observer training courses each, as trainee Observer Trainer attachments. Such active hands-on participation develops PIRFO CBT training skills and meets the recently developed PIRFO standard for certification of Observer Trainers. The three trainees will receive Certificate level IV training, as required in the PIRFO CBT standards for Observer Trainers

**Outcome**: Three additional fully trained national observer trainers to conduct national and sub-regional observer training.

1. ***Development of Observer Training Course Resource Materials***

A Training Consultant will, during a period of 50 days:

* Identify gaps or inadequacies in current teaching materials for each PIRFO module and locate tools that can be adapted to suitably address those needs in our region and/or design such tools. These tools will be presented as ‘Trainers Guides’ with accompanying reference materials, written or otherwise; and
* Refine CBT standards for debriefers and observer trainers, in attendance with appropriate workshops

**Outcome**: A report of the review of teaching materials and CBT standards and ‘Trainers Guides’ will be developed by the consultant.

1. ***PIRFO Certification Management Committee***

To ensure ownership of the PIRFO standards by Pacific Island members of SPC and FFA is properly recognised and the auditing functions within the ‘PIRFO Certification and Training Policy Manual’ there needs to be a transition of the PIRFO Certification Working Group to the PIRFO Certification Management Committee (CMC). In 2010 an inaugural one-day committee meeting will be appended to a Regional Observer Coordinators’ Workshop (ROCW), which is expected to be in Noumea. The CMC will comprise representation from FFA, SPC and one representative each from three Pacific Island regions of the WCPO, as prescribed in the PIRFO Certification and Training Policy Manual.

**Outcome**: National observer programme coordinators will share information and solve problems working in conjunction with regional trainers, debriefers and programme auditors.

**Budget**

A total of $141,647 is requested from the JTF in 2010 to support the work outlined above. The detailed budget is as follows:

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| **Item** | **USD** |
| **1. Developing a pool of certified Regional Observer Trainers** |  |
| Airfares – 3 persons for 2 Observer courses @ $ 3,000.00 | 18,000 |
| DSA on attachment – 3 persons x 28 day x 2 courses @ $ 150.00 | 25,200 |
| DSA to/from course – 3 people x 3 days x 2courses @ $ 150.00 | 4,800 |
| Trainee trainers support costs | 4,000 |
| Cert IV Train Trainer/Assessor course fees, etc @$2,000 x 6 | 4,000 |
|  | **$56,000** |
| **2. Development of Observer Training Course Resource Material** |  |
| Technical assistance – 50 days @ $ 400.00 | 20,000 |
| Airfares @ $ 2000 x 2 | 4,000 |
| Allowance – 20 days @ $150 | 3,000 |
| Publication and printing of materials | 30,000 |
|  | **$57,000** |
| **3. PIRFO CMC** |  |
| Airfares – 3 people @ $ 3,000 | 9,000 |
| DSA for CMC – 3 persons for 1 day @ $150.00 | 450 |
| Workshop expenses (IT support, refreshments, print, transport) | 720 |
|  | **10,170** |
|  |  |
| **Sub total** | **123,170** |
| **SPC management and administration** | 18,476 |
| **Total JTF funds sought** | **$141,646** |

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