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Pacific
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16th Regional Observer Coordinators Workshop

Honiara, Solomon Islands

February 8th – 12th

Theme: Changing Roles

Venue: FFA Headquarters Conference Centre, Honiara

SUMMARY RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION

The workshop was jointly organised and facilitated by the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and the Pacific Community (SPC). Representatives from Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI), Nauru, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu met in Honiara, Solomon Islands from 08 – 12 February 2016 for the 16th Annual Regional Observer Coordinators Workshop (ROCW16). Observers from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA), Parties to Nauru Agreement (PNA) Observer Agency, and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Secretariat also participated in the meeting.

The list of participants and observers is appended as attachment A.

Opening

The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) Director of Fisheries Operations Division, Mr. Noan Pakop, officially opened the ROCW16 and welcomed participants on behalf of FFA's Director General (DG) and Deputy DG, who were away at a critical United States Treaty (UST) meeting, which will impact future funding for observer programmes. He emphasised how holding ROCW at the beginning of the year enables outcomes from the Tuna Commission meeting to be discussed, and for the ROCW recommendations to easily flow on into other important meetings such as upcoming Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Working Group (WG) then Forum Fisheries Commission (FFC), Management Options Consultation (MOC), and the WCPFC meetings including the Science Committee and then the Technical Compliance Committee. He stated that observer safety issues will feature largely in terms of mechanisms to address WCPFC decisions. The theme of 'Changing Roles' was considered timely and reflects how United States Treaty (UST) arrangements can affect observer placements among other things.

Meeting Formalities

The Pacific Community (SPC) presented the agenda outline, highlighting some topics that require critical recommendations. Some of the issues dealt with at the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) meetings the week prior were expected to shorten discussions around some agenda items.

Rapporting would be led by SPC with FFA support and assistance from members as the need arose. Apologies were extended to New Caledonia for the absence of bi-lingual facilities from SPC. Participants were asked to ensure that main decisions were raised if they wanted them reflected in the record and presented to other meetings. Clearing of the recommendations and the workshop records were planned for Friday morning.

Election of Chair

Participants endorsed the nomination of Mr. Monte Depaune of Nauru as interim Chair of the workshop in the absence of both the Chair (FSM) and Vice Chair (Kiribati).

Adoption of Agenda

Participants adopted the agenda (attachment B) with an amendment for sessions to commence at 0830 each morning.

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM ROCW15

SPC presented the status of recommendations and there was discussion on the following points:

- Part B and Part C for debriefer training was shelved for further discussion the next day
- National cost recovery mechanisms needed to be built into ROPs
- Observer programme management using the OPM database records training and placements but national use needs to be gauged
- TUBS implementation is supported by SPC with updates due on Wednesdays
- Gen 6 pollution data is now being used by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and WCPFC mentioned the SPREP request to keep Gen 6 going and to change a few data fields. Gen 6 data is captured in TUBS and reports are submitted to SPREP on a regular basis
- Certification and decertification of national observers is still largely unknown although WCPFC confirmed that they maintained a database of active observers – OPM seems to work for FFA members but not for other countries
- Training funds to bridge the gap has led to cost recovery mechanisms and some countries decided to use their own funds. FFA built a regional cost recovery mechanism as adopted at FFC 94 and will start gathering funds from July 2016 to support national capacity development.
- Maritime training institutions to train PIRFO as certified training providers is happening. PIRFO FLM training commenced last year and lessons learned were used to try to provide a skill set for OM to manage their programmes especially in administrative and leadership functions. The mentoring portion of the training needs more awareness though.
- PIRFO CMC met last year and adopted TORs with SPC providing secretariat services. Need to investigate a suitable oversight body to get international recognition abroad.

MCSWG supported ROCW15 recommendations and all issues were addressed during the year but at different levels. A question was posed with regard to CMC – what was the purpose for international recognition? SPC explained that the concept was formed when PIRFO was launched to assist PIRFO structure and framework in terms of the need for improved recognition and to meet needs of international institutions. WCPFC and IATTC recognises PIRFO standards and uses certified observers

onboard vessels. However the need for a recognised vocational qualification that can lead to further academic pursuits is yet to occur.

The annotated status of the ROCW 15 is attachment C.

RECOMMENDATION 1: ROCW tasks CMC to continue investigating recognised vocational qualifications for PIRFO standards.

NATIONAL OBSERVER PROGRAMME UPDATES

Cook Islands

The programme is at 6 observers and one debriefer. The main issue is not knowing who is responsible for the administration of the programme.

Pago Pago Field Office – Funding remains a problem. There has been a full time PIRFO debriefer since May 2015. Lyndsay Mundri (PNG) during the period of 7 months has debriefed 43 PS and 8 Llers and 9 DUS. 20 Portside Inspections were completed up to end of Jan 2016. Change of roles: Gordon Yamasaki has retired with some transfer of roles to CIFFO (tag seeding account). However the complete breakdown of duties to CIFFO is still unknown. The MMR Offshore Director position has recently changed from Andrew Jones to Tim Costelloe. The office is currently recruiting 6 potential observer candidates from Samoa and American Samoa. CIFFO has also completed 6 e-Tunalog trips in Pago, 3 were also successfully trialled in Cook Is. CIFFO was also given MTU/VMS training by FFA but have yet to obtain VMS clearance through Cook Is.

Fiji

Fiji have signed an MOU with Tuvalu to deploy observers on their vessels. The first trips have been made under this arrangement. FAO e-monitoring system (5 cameras per boat) is on 5 licensed vessels and observers have the capacity to download the information and transfer the data to the database.

Compliance issues have been investigated in conjunction with the Investigation Unit. In an effort to maintain observers, the programme is currently exploring increases in their levy, contributions to their provident fund and provide more additional or complementary training.

French Polynesia

Absent

FSM

Apologies were offered on behalf of Bradley Phillip for his absence and thanks were offered to Nauru for stepping into the role of Chair.

- FSM had 76 observers at the beginning of 2015, 9 are no longer with the programme (some for misconduct, some voluntary) so now FSM have 67.
- Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certified observers increased to 33 total.
- 4 certified debriefers including 1 trainer.
- 2015 there was a low number of observer placement/trip requests so no recruitment for new observers and basic training.

- FSM wished to follow-up on status of pending FSM observer trip payments from FFA and also would like to request a copy of payment breakdown or payment summary for their record.

Kiribati

Absent

Marshall Islands (RMI)

RMI reported a busy year with CDS transhipments with NFA assistance in training as RMI is trying to implement 100% coverage of all transhipments. 68 observers left after some moved on to greener pastures and others were removed from the programme due to disciplinary issues. Looking forward to using FIMS for reporting in 2016. Expecting training and certification of debriefers (Part C) in 2016 and all future training would be conducted at the maritime college

Nauru

Five new Recruits, trained by NFA and a new Assistant Coordinator who is 6 months into his role. Office Space: renovated new office space, but currently waiting for furniture/stationery. The previous office was actually the “Board of Directors” Conference Room. In 2015 there were 14 national trips, 14 PNA trips and three USMLT trips. Expect to train new candidates with NFA and Malgram the new colleague.

New Caledonia

Last year there were some issues with vessels refusing to take observers, but after dealing with these issues through a series of meetings the programme expects to make deployments on 15 of the 17 of their LLers in 2016. New Caledonia expects to reach their target coverage level of 5% by the end of the year. E-monitoring trials have been taking place with good results starting to emerge.

Palau

Absent

Papua New Guinea (PNG)

- **Current Manpower**
 - 275 PIRFO Certified Observers
 - 55 PIRFO Certified debriefers with 24 who have completed Part C but are yet to be certified
 - 222 MCS Certified observers
 - 4 Debriefers Assessors
 - 17 Permanent staff and will recruit 11 more permanent staff this year
 - Recently recruited 2x Electronic Reporting & Monitoring Officers
 - Recently recruited 2 x Data Entry Technicians/female observers
 - Recently advertised Assistant Observer Manager position and will have it filled soon.
 - 1 x Critical Incident Analyst to be recruited this year
 - 5 x critical incident officers to be recruited this year
 - 2 x Debriefers Assessors to be recruited this year
 - 2 x Data Quality Officers to be recruited this year
 - 1 x Observer Data Coordinator to be recruited this year

- **Placements**
 - Continued to place observers on national trips including FSMA and UST in 2015
 - Reduced placement on FSMA fleets due to Home Party Rules not to place observers on own flagged vessels. That is the disadvantage for PNG observers
- **New Observer Rates**
 - PNG now paying observer at USD \$75 per sea day
- **Electronic Reporting**
 - PNG is using the Fisheries Information Management System (FIMS) for observer e-reporting
 - PNG will be trialling its electronic transmission in PDF format by end of February 2016
 - Electronic debriefing format currently underway and should be completed by this year
- **Video monitoring**
 - PNG will start trialling video monitoring on PNG licensed long line vessels this year 2016, and this will become mandatory in 2017 for all long line fleets.
 - PNG will trial video monitoring on PNG licensed purse seine fleets in 2017 and will become mandatory in 2018.
- **Resource/Material**
 - All Workbooks/forms/journals/ are printed locally
 - All aluminium callipers and manufactured locally
- **Training/workshop**
 - PNG basic Observer training put on hold, and will only be conducted when there is a need. However, training can be facilitated on request as long as the minimum number of 12 – 15 trainees is met.
- **Observer and debriefers Assessment benchmark**
 - PNG ensures all its PIRFO Debriefers undergo annual refresher training and are assessed from time to time and MUST score a minimum performance rate at 85% in order to maintain PIRFO debriefer status.
 - PNG conducts refresher training to ensure observers score minimum of 80% when assessed to be able to remain as PIRFO observers
- **Training**
 - PNG is running the following training in 2016;
 - Debriefers Refresher
 - Observer refresher
 - MSC
 - Fisheries Information Management System (FIMS)
 - Evidence collection and preparing statements
 - Report writing
 - Data Quality workshop
- **PIRFO Trainers**
 - 3 PIRFO and Nationally Certified trainers to Cert IV level, available on call to run training at requesting party's expense
 - Manoi and Glen now re-joining the PNG programme which increase the trainers to 5, however, they (Manoi and Glen) can also be used as freelance PIRFO trainers
- **Observer Manual and Administration Procedures**
 - PNG has reviewed its Observer Manual and Administration Procedure and developed a new Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) in 2015 and will be reviewed from time to time.

- **Work attachment Invitation**
 - PNG is inviting other national programme to come for an attachment at PNG-NFA to get a glance at how the PNG observer system operates.
 - Previous attachment;
 - Marshal Island, (MIMRA) sent one officer for a 4-week attachment in 2014
 - FSM, (NORMA) sent one administration officer for a 2-week attachment in 2015 and Fiji sent an observer trainer for an attachment of 6 weeks in 2015

Samoa

There are now 3 observers (but only 2 are active) within the Samoan Program, from the previous year. There is work in progress to get a debriefer for Samoa, but the candidate still has to go through 2 more phases before becoming certified. Observers have been certified since 2014 to carry out bio-sampling onboard fishing vessels.

Given recent developments with Samoa fisheries, Samoa's observer programme has now been given priority for its proper set-up and establishment through observer recruitment and cost recovery process. The main challenges are that observers are also fisheries officers so they have other duties besides observer work. However, work is underway to rectify this. The lack of a qualified debriefer is also a concern.

Solomon Islands

Important Programme Updates: Solomon Islands are down on staff numbers this year i.e. they've lost their hard-working Programme Coordinator Mr Derick Suimae who has taken up another post to oversee Fisheries Operations in Noro port, in the Western Solomon Is. Solomon Is are currently doing 100% observer coverage on local NFD PS fleet based in Noro (these are all MSC trips), and requires MSC observer to monitor unloading.

Solomon Islands is now doing 50% - 100% monitoring of unloading on 2 of the foreign locally-based long-line fishing companies namely Solfish and Global in Honiara. (Observers are assisting due to shortage of permanent staff). In addition to that, Solfish has 4 other fishing boats, not sure of the correct gear type name but here they're called "**light Seinners**", and this is quite a new gear to our observers. They fish mainly using underwater and deck lights. They're on trial trips however they're also required to always carry an observer on-board. So these boats also have 100% coverage (**Need to develop a new form for this gear type**). A new programme policy, which is a requirement for compliance purposes by the Ministry, is in place for observers to remain on board until a fisheries officer arrives onboard for inward clearance; this applies to all foreign boats entering Noro and Honiara port with an observer onboard.

Solomon Is has currently engaged some MSC observers to monitor transshipment of MSC cargo in Honiara port. After recruitment last year, 31 new observers were taken onboard, and 2 separate training courses have been run for them. Data submission by the observers has improved a lot compared to previous years. Tablets have been issued to observers for FIMS and trials are continuing.

Programme Urgent Issues:

- Still face a shortage of observers and need to recruit more
- Need to complete certification for trainee debriefer (Part B and C)

- Daily operations were often slowed down due to government payment process which is quite prolonged.

RECOMMENDATION 2: New forms need to be developed for the new gear type “light seiner” after investigations and assessment of the fishery by SPC (even though this is a trial fishery only for Solomon Is).

Tokelau

Absent

Tonga

There are five foreign fishing boats and three local tuna LLers. Last year one debriefer training was run and the result was four new debriefers and one debriefer trainer.

Tuvalu

There were two training courses during the year. One was a basic observer training (15 new recruits) and the other was for FIMS. The programme now has 46 observers. It is hoped to have another basic training for 20 recruits this year. Tuvalu also intends to run MCS training and they will fully fund all 2016 training. There is 1 certified debriefer and 5 trainee debriefers. FIMS training and debriefer certification will be conducted in 2016.

Vanuatu

The number of observers has increased to 34 and observers are deployed on LL and PS vessels under the national, US treaty and WCPFC carrier programmes. Observers are also used for sea cucumber fishery. One training during the year was run by Harold with SPC in attendance. Training is still one of the issues. Need national training for this year, debriefer to be certified and outstanding observer placements.

NOAA

Biggest challenge is a shortage of staff, most especially with data editing and this has slowed considerably so the intention is to contract some observers to gain additional assistance in this area. There are 60 contracted observers and they cover 100% of all shallow/swordfish sets and 20% of all deep/tuna sets. Overall programme funding is also an issue. Indonesia is currently requesting assistance to re-ignite their observer programme with financial aid from USAid. Enforcement has been busy with a sexual harassment case as well as other cases of interference. In one case the interference re-occurred when the observer was deployed onto a sister vessel. It was not appreciated when the vessel told the observer “you know you could disappear out here”. US recently became involved in a large and detailed shark tagging study with some of the sophisticated tags costing \$2,000 USD. The US have continued with the lessons learned from the first phase of e-reporting and are hoping to push phase 2 during 2016 and expect to have full implementation of this method of data collection in the near future.

NOAA Pago Pago office – Gordon Yamasaki has retired and his duties have been re-distributed internally with some sharing of duties with the Cook Is field office. Four observers managed to get 20%

coverage over 12 boats. A restriction on longline fishing within 50 nm of the coastline has been pushed back to 12 nm in recognition of the fact that the local artisanal fleet (alias) are no longer operating so the gear conflict issues have been resolved.

FFA

FFA welcomed participants to the home of the FFA observer programme. He noted the departure of the FFA observer programme manager who had yet to be replaced. At the time there were four staff, the observer programme coordinator, two data entry officers and the assistant observer programme officer. The programme work with the US boats was in question as the status of USMLT is not clear and an important meeting was taking place this week. However the FFA programme is still active and making placements. Workbooks and visas are being issued and assistance provided. There are currently 4 observers out in the field who were deployed at the end of 2016. FFA observers made 284 trips from January to December 2015 and out of those FFA have received 130 trip reports, so 150 plus are outstanding. FFA appreciates NOAA's support from the Pago Pago office and recognises the work done by Gordon Yamasaki and Peter Sharples. FFA will provide a list of outstanding data to participants noting that about 10% of data is lost every year. From mid-2012 to date, annually respectively 18, 34, 18 and 154 trips are outstanding. FFA was requested to put names against trip numbers and to provide these to observer coordinators for followup. The incentive is that if data is recovered then there are funds left to pay the observers.

PNA

A full report was made in a Tuesday session.

SPC

Recent staff changes include the recruitment of Tim Park as the Observer Advisor (a post previously held by Peter Sharples) and the section Manager being taken by Mr. Neville Smith after Tim Lawson's retirement. SPC are still supporting observer training, but this role will be reviewed in the coming months and the continuation of the service will rely on whether national programmes pay into the regional cost recovery or alternatively fund national training. SPC noted that during a time of changing roles that support is still available, but how services are delivered will change with an emphasis on greater coordination and cooperation with national observer programmes

WCPFC

The WCPFC runs a transshipment observer programme. In 2015 there were ~ 50 trips on carrier vessels that were carrying out transshipping on the High Seas, but there was still some reluctance from some vessels to take observers onboard. Details and information on the collected data is available from the Commission website. Kiribati and Vanuatu have been good with supplying observers. Vessels continuously approach WCPFC for observers, but they not always available and vessels are looking towards using non-PICT observers now. It is known that not all transshipment carriers carry observers. Vessels are monitored by VMS, but their actual activity – transshipping or just bunkering etc is not known. The WCPFC suspects many transshipments remain unmonitored.

In response to a question WCPFC clarified that there was no such thing as a cross-endorsed LL carrier observer. Carrier vessels needed to carry one observer for IATTC and one for Commission areas. Requests for MSC observers is not facilitated by the WCPFC carrier programme.

WCPFC DEVELOPMENTS

a. Observer Sea Safety and Emergency Action Plan requirements

While always an important issue to be considered by observer programmes, observer safety became a major topic for the WCPFC this year when an observer went missing after an IATTC placement. This brings to three the number of observers that have gone missing in the last two years. As a remedial and corrective action a number of new requirements were recommended by the WCPFC meeting (attachment D – WCPFC12-2015-11 p2), and while these may seem onerous WCPFC reminded the participants that they were voted for by all member countries.

- By mid-year all programmes will be required to share their GEN-3 forms with the WCPFC and flag countries required to show that they have followed up on the incidents.
- All observers must be issued with two-way communication devices. The 'Delorme' devices already present in some PICT programme are acceptable, but other devices are available. Costs were estimated at \$300 for the units and \$300 per year for communication.
- All programmes must have a plan of action for observer safety at sea.

NOAA noted the large challenges that lay ahead. It was necessary to have an observer safety plan of action in place and to take the time to sit down and to think through and steps what will be done if various incidents happen. Buying two-way communicators is not enough. For instance, for threatening situations in the US, observers call the US Coast Guard first and then the programme. You need to have someone in place to take that call as time may be limited. It is true that setting off an EPIRB gains some attention and that even if they go off accidentally, that can be sorted out. NOAA made a commitment to help PICTs with these action plans, which must be submitted to the WCPFC by 1st January 2017 so there is a full year to do it, although programmes should probably have these prepared before the TCC meeting in September. WCPFC and SPC are also available to help. NOAA was directly affected by the death of Keith Davis as he had been a NOAA observer and member of staff for a number of years. Many sources tried to place responsibility on NOAA and a number of high level calls had to be fielded including the CIA, FBI and international media. In reality Keith Davis was employed under the IATTC programme when he went missing, and likewise even though the incident happened outside the WCPFC jurisdiction they were also asked to comment publicly on it. PICTs need to be prepared to act responsibly if such incidents occur. The US along with WCPFC and PICTs will develop a CMM on sea-safety for observers to be submitted to TCC later in 2016.

Cook Islands expressed concern that some of their boats could be three days away from any support, but NOAA assured them that they also have boats that are 8 days away from shore. After one far-out incident they saw the power of the Coast Guard to identify and ask other vessels in the immediate area to rescue the observer. During the specific incident they were able to get the observer off the boat within 45 mins and the vessel steamed towards Hawaii until it was met by a long range US Coast Guard (USCG) helicopter. This shows the need for forward planning to assure the best outcome.

RECOMMENDATION 3: FFA was requested to develop new model observer sea safety emergency action plans for national programmes to customise for use.

b. ROP identification cards.

This item was originally proposed by the ROP and the IWG amended the idea to suggest that the WCPFC should develop guidelines for identification cards and that cards should be reasonably similar to help with recognition by officers on boats etc (refer to attachment D pp3). The guidelines outlining the required minimum fields were noted. An issue and expiry date were deemed compulsory, and the addition of a number of logos WCPFC, national programme and PIRFO accepted. However, the idea to add an observer signature and their current qualification was not thought necessary. Identification cards help to prevent unauthorised personnel boarding fishing vessels as an observer, something that has happened in the past. NOAA supported the use of ID cards and noted that they were helpful when the vessel was boarded by the Coastguard or other similar boarding parties. US observers carry US transport identification which helps if they arrive to a foreign port.

c. Transshipment

During the IWG the CMM on transshipment was reviewed in an effort to improve placements on carrier vessels. A number of amendments were proposed for the CMM, but consensus was not achieved. The IWG chair has directed that the proposed amendments are reviewed at the TCC meeting.

d. 5% ROP longline coverage

The WCPFC has set 5% observer coverage of longliners (refer to attachment E – ROCW issues pp8). Recently guidelines on the methodology for attaining the 5% coverage was documented. Guidelines for PS observer coverage is not required as the 100% coverage ensures that 100% of days, sets, fleets etc are covered.

Guidelines for attaining 5% longline coverage

- Five per cent of all sets. Australia is 5% of the sets. This requires logging the total number of hooks and then calculating 5% of those.
- Five per cent of days fished, so transit days are not included. The observer programme must be prepared to calculate the number of days fished.
- Five per cent of the total number of trips. This method has been used by many PICTS in the past and it is probably the easiest way to ensure compliance of the 5% coverage.

It is not acceptable to cover five per cent of the vessels (only cover 5 boats out of 100 boats and then only one trip per vessel).

SPC noted it was necessary to tease out the coverage by defined fishery. WCPFC replied that coverage had to be across all fleets, areas etc, but noted that there may be some cross-over by vessels between fisheries. WCPFC noted that an increase in the LL coverage to 20 per cent has been discussed, but the DWFN are against this. Fleets fishing in the High Seas are also required to have 5% coverage, but much like the carrier vessels they are finding it hard to get PICT observers, and are expanding their search for observers to other Asian member countries. Nauru noted that they do not have an MOU with countries fishing/transshipping on the High Seas and that previous efforts to communicate with such fleets were not fruitful due to lack of ongoing communication from them. They have also requested that the observers be cross-endorsed and MSC certified, but failed to provide any reason for this. SPC

noted that it was difficult to calculate the percentage coverage attained by PICT flag states as many do not provide full placement data to SPC.

e. ROP Audits

The WCPFC audits national programmes on a 4-5 year revolving time frame. At this stage some programmes have been audited twice. The sea-safety issues will not be audited before 1st January 2017. The timetable can be flexible, depending on the Coordinator's availability. In 2016 the WCPFC will audit Indonesia for the first time. NOAA noted that they had supported the programme's start up, but they are currently having difficulty in placing observers due to vessel resistance. The reason for this is not clear and further support from NOAA will be provided this year. They have trained 400 observers already, which may be a case of too many too soon. Japan currently uses 15 Indonesian observers on their high sea carrier vessels. The WCPFC noted the good programme run by the Philippines with 220 observers and the fact that they are starting to get jobs in the Pacific.

f. CMM booklet

The first CMM booklet was published in mid-2015 and it is now out of date, at least some items are. A new booklet will be shipped by mid/late March. US suggested that a binder system was more effective for replacing out-of-date pages. This was accepted by the WCPFC but they noted the booklets were often taken by Captains and this improves awareness (while observers can get new copies) and that in the near future electronic versions will become the norm.

g. IATTC Cross Endorsement.

Cross endorsement training allows PIRFO observers to continue to collect data when the vessel moves into the IATTC jurisdiction. Training is targeted to ports that are most likely to accommodate such vessels. The nominated observers must be able to get a US Visa, as they mostly have to transit through the US after arrival in South American ports. Micronesian observers have an advantage in this area. The 2016 training schedule is not known, but June or August is being proposed. It was noted that despite training, some cross-endorsed observers have stopped recording PIRFO data when they move into the IATTC zone. However, observers are advised that they should continue to do the exact same work when they move across the boundaries, otherwise the trip is not complete. A cross-endorsed observer is expected to collect data in both jurisdictions.

WCPFC OUTCOMES

Misconduct and corruption: This item was originally discussed at a number of ROCW meetings, most especially ROCW15. Many of the misconduct issues are to do with alcohol problems, although it is recognised that things have improved enormously and this is likely to be directly due to the greater focus national programmes have put on enforcing their programme's code of conduct. The IWG suggested there was not enough emphasis put on the Code of Conduct, most especially in basic training.

It is worth remembering that observers do have their rights and the right to defend themselves should be upheld. It is well known that vessels are more likely to complain about an observer that is particularly vigilant and meticulous in their work. NOAA stated that they aim to investigate every single

complaint on an observer and they have found that the truth often surfaces once they separate the crew from the captain.

Observers may need assistance in dealing with alcohol and a three strike rule is perhaps acceptable, as long as the incidents are not too severe. A lot of observers say they never see the code of conduct and programmes are asked to ensure this is rectified most especially at the time of departure from their home country or during placement meetings. Encouraging observers to stay on boats during port calls has been found to improve behaviour (the US experienced an opposite affect), and restricting any advance payments is recommend.

RECOMMENDATION 4: ROCW strongly encourages observer programmes to ensure that observers are aware of, understand and have a copy of the code of conduct before they depart on each trip.

IWG-ROP4

a. Outcomes/Recommendations/Implications

WCPFC presented (attachment E –pp10) the outcomes and recommendations plus issues under decisions from IWG as slightly amended and endorsed. The only thing discussed at IWG that did not go anywhere were the source of observers and words like independent, occasionally, regularly as different countries had different viewpoints so there was no consensus. Source of observers is an issue where a programme puts their own observers on their flagged boats when out fishing. Original ruling was by majority and some countries disagreed with the ruling.

Source of observers as per the hybrid model is the main outstanding issue. IWG-ROP decisions sent to the Commission on items like ROP ID card were accepted (and documented above). However the issue of the Gen 3 report created some discussion as in the past it gave the captain the right to view observers' reports without specifying when, where or how. In fact at IATTC, the captain actually signs the report. How can this allow the observer to report non-compliance if the captain has to sign it? This approach only works if observers are limited to scientific work only. Captains want to know earlier about any infringements by observer sending reports to flag states immediately after the trip but the Commission decided that they should not get the whole report but instead the Gen 3 that is attached to the back as soon as possible after the trip is finished when an observer has been debriefed – and not necessarily to the captain and only after the observer has safely disembarked the vessel. Then it will be up to the flag state to communicate what they will do and to discuss things with the captain etc thus sparking the incident earlier if the boat wishes to respond. But there needs to be some structure around this pre-notification process as an observer trip monitoring summary.

[What was agreed is boxed in 'ROCW issues' paper – attachment E] Programmes must also provide a copy of Gen 3 to the State whose waters in which the fishing was undertaken. Gen 3 is tracked by trip number and trip dates. Observer provider can send it to the DWFN but also to the Commission who ensures everyone gets the correct copy. Debrief, pre-debrief or non-debrief needs to be added to this form. How do observers know which coastal state is involved? Need to get it off the trip number and journal entry. This comes into effect by July 2016 with a database set up to handle it all. If it is a domestic trip then it has nothing to do with the Commission and the nation state handles it themselves.

Pre-notification diagram (attachment E – p12) shows how and what should happen when. It covers confidentiality, the process and who handles what information and sending data on. When the Commission sends the information to the flag state they take off the observer's name so the report remains anonymous and the Flag State can contact the vessel and see if the infringement becomes a legal matter – depending on infringement, country laws etc.

SPC sought clarification on the time it would take to go through this process as it was the outcomes from the WCPFC Bali meeting. WCPFC responded that this has been an issue for five years going through TCC and Commission meetings as DWFN captains have wanted copies of observer reports to learn early if there had been an infringement and so prepare for investigation etc. This helps get rid of delayed (up to two years) notification of infringement but some issues will still take a while to sort out. However it is a start. Participants were urged to read the paper as there were some implications for advisers and debriefers.

US questioned whether the vessels wanted to see the observer reports only if there was an issue or all the reports. WCPFC replied that initially vessels wanted the whole report including journals etc which FFA members did not agree to. However members agreed that the vessels do need a summary if they have done something wrong so that they can follow up or be investigated at the time. And it concerns vessels only if there are issues. If the Gen 3 forms have no “yes” checks then there are no issues.

US asked how summaries would be handled for a trip that had not been debriefed. The US gets notified by observers even before the vessel gets into port so the Administration knows ahead of time if there has been a problem. WCPFC responded that it expected a high percentage of observers would be debriefed as debriefer training has been in effect for a few years now and there are more certified debriefers available. Getting debriefed as early as possible is the target.

RMI mentioned that they encouraged pre-debriefing to be done in between multiple trips so that they can identify if an observer needs to be taken off the vessel as soon as possible. Debriefing is becoming more critical as it is tied to salary percentage received so more observers are completing the process. WCPFC reiterated that the process already happens but there is a need to report issues to the Commission so that vessels know they have to deal with it as WCPFC will report on whether issues have been dealt with by perpetrators and what the outcomes are. Participants were urged to read the paper and to understand the process as it will become part of their reporting requirements to the Commission.

The status of active observers needs to be reported every three months to the Commission to keep the database updated – now reporting is compulsory, even new trainees and anyone who has been removed (decertified) due to breaches of the code of conduct needs to be reported to the Commission as soon as it happens. When reminders are sent out, WCPFC would appreciate if countries could respond even if only to say there are no changes.

SPC asked whether any national observer appraisals were done. WCPFC clarified that the observers are not audited just the programmes, although the original Convention states that every observer needs to be certified by the programme as authorised by the Commission. WCPFC needs to know immediately if an observer is removed so that they are not used on UST, transshipment or other Flag State vessels. SPC tries to keep a database of observers who have been trained and those still active.

Information from new fields that need to be added or existing ones that need to be changed for data collected mainly to do with shark catch and bird life international concerns (72 new fields were reduced to 4). Observer workload is expanding in scope but it should still be recognised that monitoring the tuna fishery is the main focus. Some instructions need to be changed as per the list in WCPFC's ROCW issues paper (attachment E – pp14). Most information is to be collected on a trip basis and not daily but there are still some bits that are per set. Most relates to LL as birds and sharks are mainly caught by LL.

The US mentioned that US boats do most of this stuff now and are reviewing the extent of data being collected by observers. The science centre may not want the information but they never tell the observers to stop collecting it as the collected information might become useful in the future. But this was laying too much workload on observers. The US encourages the Commission to ensure that the data is being used for analysis and not something that might be useful down the line.

Four new LL fields – strategic offal disposal but instructions are changing details from trip level to set level. TCC will need to discuss how to handle all this data collection.

b. IWG-ROP5

At the IWG-ROP, it was suggested that there was no current need to have any further intersessional working groups for the regional observer programme. This was validated by the TCC, so no future IWG sessions have been planned. However, there are a few outstanding issues so there is always a chance there will be a future IWG. For the time being however the only forum for PICTs to discuss and move observer issues onto the WCPFC is the ROP.

COST RECOVERY UPDATES

a. National Cost Recovery

SPC discussed the funding model that was developed by FFA to help countries calculate the costs of running their national programmes and to spread those costs across the different fleets. Training in the use of the model had been delivered both at FFA and in-country. Initially one of the tasks was to actually get each of the costs as historical flight costs, DSAs etc. SPC emphasised the need for detailed costs (where these were not available then a proxy was used) to build a relevant cost recovery model.

The participants noted that the model was a helpful budgeting tool and that it gave useful financial data. However, the issue for many SIDs was still getting the money back from the Government in a timely manner to run the programme. Some of the smaller countries have run the model and properly calculated their costs, but the funds did not always make it back to their operational budgets. Nauru encouraged programmes to work with their Finance Departments every step of the way. This helps to explain why each budget line is important and to make sure they don't cut anything out before the final budget is signed off. Finance persons rarely understand the financial needs of a fishery programme but they do develop this knowledge if communication remains open. PNG said they understood that national cost recovery is difficult for smaller programmes, but reminded programme Coordinators that they must work out their own budgets and be prepared to explain and fight for the budget with their supervisors and beyond.

In PNG cost recovery to monitor the fishery is a legal requirement and this was suggested as a good starting point for countries. The Cook Is stated that they have used the model, but it was difficult to push it through, and while it has gone to parliament, it came right back and other similar approaches have not worked out yet as it does not synchronise with national budgeting and financial acquittal models. What are the alternatives or solutions to these issues? SPC mentioned that the Cook Islands Fisheries Field Office (CIFFO) was set up as cost recovery without going to government and that SPC can help to look at the matter.

Industry expects observers to be cheap, as previously observers were subsidised so industry rejects the higher costs quite strongly. PNG suggested that there must be legal support for justification of increased wages or otherwise it is difficult to get support. Industry will accept this if there is a legal basis for the payment. They found that the model was helpful. Nauru have managed to internalise the cost of recovery into their budget, so the payment has become part of the fishery budget and as such, declared that they will not have a fishery if the cost of monitoring is not paid by users. FFA asked the group to work towards a strong recommendation that can be directed to the next level. There were two issues. For the national cost recovery it shouldn't sound like something that we is imposed, but it should be clear on what the benefits will be. It should explain why cost recovery is important and that message should go to other government administration beyond fisheries.

WCPFC found that the model was good, and placing it within legislation should be helpful. During the audits it was found that while programmes had worked out the amount, and the money had come in, the money often stayed within the government coffers and it was hard to get the money from government finance departments. This needs discussion at the Ministerial level incountry. Cost recovery was a recommendation from a previous ROCW so the recommendation should be re-worded and added again. (prioritise recs for MCSWG – 1.)

RECOMMENDATION 5: National cost recovery models needs to be discussed at Ministerial level with commitment by Ministers to refine internal national processes and procedures to ensure timely disbursement of funds collected for observers to be utilised by national observer programmes.

b. Regional Cost Recovery

A new mechanism to recover costs from industry to support Regional Coordination of the Observer programmes comes in to place in June, 2016. SPC explained (attachment F) some of the background for the need to have a regional cost recovery model and the basis of appropriating the costs and rationale to this. The gap in donor funding from FFA and SPC regional support activities is in the order of \$883, 409.

- Donor project funding for observer programmes has mostly dried up. There was an FFC94 decision that regional agencies should divest responsibility of observer programme development. Along with the fact that the aspirations of national programme independence is the ability to drive their own national development. A National Cost Recovery Model that was developed by FFA to meet national aspirations, incorporates direct placement costs, travel, debriefing, training, equipment and data management. BUT there has been limited uptake by national agencies.

- There is a gap between what donors have supported and where national and regional agencies are able to cost recover. FFC85 (2013): FFA reported that a funding crisis for the continuation of regionally-delivered support of national observer programmes was imminent. Among the fleets the US Treaty is fully cost recovered and resultantly bears a disproportionate burden for supporting training and regional agency support activities. The beneficiaries of a sustainable fishery are the long-term lessees and the lessors of the resource; i.e. the fleets and the coastal states. Cost recovery principles place the burden of the cost of maintaining the sustainability on the beneficiaries of this sustainability. This can be further weighted towards the party whose activities creates or exacerbates the risk to sustainability and hence the need for the monitoring activities, ie the fishing industry. FFC94 endorsed regional cost recovery from the fishery as the sourcing mechanism for developing comprehensive management schemes and supporting national observer programme development. Observer programme expansion and development was traditionally provided by donor projects to regional agencies however these have since been exhausted.
- There is still a need for training, technical and quality assurance support for national agencies, coordinated at the regional level. Provision of training services through subregional observer and debriefer training courses, are tailored to the needs of national programmes. Coordination of observer trainer and debriefer “on-the-job” development opportunities also needs to be done at the regional level.
- Other regional activities include monitoring and further development of PIRFO training standards; further development of national programmes cost recovery; the provision of technical advice to national programmes on the design and implementation of up-to-date at-sea data collection protocols to meet the dynamic regional and national fisheries management needs; and analyses of observer data for independent transparent quality assurance for Members to meet their regional reporting obligations.
- The consequence of the loss of regional support services would be loss of transparent quality assurance of information collected for biological and compliance monitoring purposes. This could impact Members detrimentally. Regionally, stock assessment quality and their perceived ability to implement fisheries management initiatives are analysed and nationally, programmes provide ROP services in meeting WCPFC CMRs, MSC compliance monitoring and EU traceability requirements.
- Medium-term sustainability are still needed to maintain observer, debriefer and trainer/assessor certification standards, quality assurance of all levels of PIRFO, regional coordination to meet dynamic data requirements and up-to-date technical support through regional workshops and national infrastructure development costs.
- Activities to be supported through of Regional Cost Recovery would be national infrastructure support (13%), observer training and certification (48%), debriefer training and certification (8%), and regional coordination (31%.)
- The presentation went on the reasoning and the calculations to derive the cost burden across the different vessel types/gears.

- The most appropriate source for regional support of fisheries monitoring is a cost recovery model applied directly to the 'Risk Creators' (e.g. the fishing fleets) through a regionally managed MCS Control tool, such as the FFA regional register.

c. Discounting domestic vessels

Domestic vessels of Members operating from Members ports are better monitored. Better monitoring results in a lower biological and compliance risk. Application to domestic fleets creates incentives to fleets to reduce their 'risk exacerbation' for the fishery. The carrier vessel fees could be included in the equation or used to discount the domestic longline and purse seine fleets to reduce their financial burden.

The arrangement was to exempt the national fleets, but also to include other vessel types like bunkers, carriers, motherships etc.

The area where the funds will be used will include salaries, travel, training support, training assessor, debriefing standards, debriefing training, reviews of programmes and frontline observer management. These activities will change over time. The information paper gives an idea of the type of areas that will be supported. WCPFC asked whether there was a budget to show how the money will be spent. SPC stated that a budget would be developed and this might reflect changes in the future.

PIRFO DEVELOPMENTS

SPC made a presentation (refer to attachment G) on types of training in 2015 and 2016. It was an overview of existing human resources in the region. Types of training included: basic observer, debriefing: Parts A, B and C, refresher (on request over one or two weeks), Upgrade for biological sampling/tag seeding, MSC, cross-endorsement, FIMS, electronic monitoring and reporting (EM and ER), train the trainer and debriefer assessor.

Training achieved in 2015:

- 8 national basic training courses & 1 sub-regional
- 3 refresher – national
- 2 Part A Debriefing – 1 sub-regional and 1 National
- Part B – Ongoing
- Part C- 3 (1 PNG, KI & TO)
- MSC 2 conducted under basic, plus training by PNA
- BS – 1 refer to Caroline S

Resources – PIRFO Trainers

- Kiribati -1
- PNG – 5 (3 fulltime and 2 freelance)
- Nauru-1
- WCPFC – 1
- MRAG -1
- FSM – 1
- Fiji - 1

- SPC-2
- Solomon Islands -2
- RMI – 1 (Solomon Islander)

PIRFO Trainers & Assessors (certified)

- Manoi Kutan
- Adrian Naguromo
- Peter Sharples
- Elton Clodumar
- Iamo Airi
- Harold Vila
- SPC

PIRFO Debriefers

- PNG – 55
- Solomon Islands – 6
- FSM - 5
- Marshall Islands - 1
- Kiribati - 6
- Tonga – 3
- Cook Islands – 1
- Fiji – 1
- Nauru – 1
- Tuvalu – 1
- FFA – 2

PIRFO Debriefers Assessors

- Lucas Tarapik
- Manoi Kutan
- Richard Aisi
- Kevin Kisekup
- Glen English
- Harold Vilia
- Iamo Airi
- Apenisa Sauturaga
- Ricky Narruhn

PIRFO Certification

- For a basic training there must be a minimum of 3 trainers and one must be an Assessor.
- Debriefing – Assessments in Part B and C must be carried out by an assessor
- Part C – Manoi Kutan (Lucas Tarapik)

PNG noted that they will significantly reduce basic training as their observers can no longer observe on their own vessels (POA), but their trainers are available on request. They will continue to provide

debriefers and other training. They can invite and run training for other countries at cost. SPC noted that most countries paid for their training last year. SPC's role is to help facilitate and manage training. In response to a query from PNG on fisheries MCS operations, SPC noted there were no new trainers in the pipeline. Some countries have declined to get more Trainer/Assessors due to a lack of funds. It is the most expensive part of the training path. SPC was left short when Manoi Kutan was unavailable due to sickness. One country noted that when the certified debriefer is also a trainer there is a risk that they will not be available when required. Should people multi-task? PNG did not think so and mentioned that debriefers should remain as debriefers and not take up other jobs. You can also say that limiting multi-tasking creates positions for others. Nauru noted the difficulties in having the full cadre of staff in a small administration and confirmed that they are trying to get another debriefer, but that this is not currently possible. When experienced observers act as an observer, debriefer and trainer, such resources need to be managed at the regional level. SPC periodically calls on national trainers to help with the regional efforts.

a. Evolving relationships with marine schools

Relationships with national fisheries training colleges were further developed in 2015. There is still a need for these colleges to use national trainers and some effort will need to go into improving the lack of Trainer/Assessors. Training materials are continuously been updated due to changing requirements from WCPFC and others. PIRFO should continue their role and there is no current reason to transfer it to any other body, but ROCW should continue to recognise the collective ownership of PIRFO. Perhaps effort should go into improving the perception of the qualification from the outside. Work on reviewing the standards for Trainer/Assessors will give the CMC a chance to review the training and the way forward for trainers. Participants were asked if a review of PIRFO, the training assessments, the training equipment was required, but no response was offered. A structure to audit training will be developed and this will be implemented.

The priority for 2016 is to bring all trainers together as well as debriefing assessors and work on everyone's teaching. This work could be tied up with DCC as it changes the forms, in any case this will be a priority item for SPC during 2016.

The Vanuatu Maritime College (VMC) in Santo has been hosting PIRFO training for 5 years. More recently schools in Kiribati, and Marshall Islands have joined the ranks of Marine Schools offering PIRFO training (also available in PNG). The RMI school is a vocational college and is still developing what courses they will run, but recently they have looked at offering PIRFO courses. All vocational training schools have improved their relationships with PIRFO and are more open to working with observer training. The newly approved PIRFO training schools in Kiribati and RMI are very well run and have good facilities. It is important that we retain ownership of the PIRFO standards.

b. True Costs

Costs for sub-regional courses for seven weeks in various venues have been quoted below and are detailed in attachment H.

For 15 trainees a 7-week sub-regional training course was calculated as approximately (USD):

Country	Trainee Tuition, Travel and Living Allowance	Trainer/Assessor Fee, travel and DSA	Contingency
Fiji	60,670	33,141	1,000
Vanuatu (Santo)	77,794	32,380	1,000
PNG (Kavieng)	64,000	54,000	1,000

National training is cheaper as the only air fares to pay are for the trainers. Training is not cheap, and funds have been found randomly in the past, or through donor projects but a new era has dawned. NOAA noted that their training is over a 3-week period and suggested that their training cost are seen as a significant financial budget item. SPC stated that the way that training is being conducted is not financially sustainable. WCPFC suggested that there should be more emphasis on training in-country trainers. PNG supported WCPFC and says there has to be more national trainers. However, this would require auditing to ensure standards were maintained. The process of certifying debriefers is still slow, recognising that not everyone is appropriate to become a debriefer (criteria includes data quality, ability to critique reports, personality etc and not just number of sea days completed). Nauru stated that although they did have a trainer they did not have the appropriate training facilities, so they could not conduct basic training nationally.

Cook Is suggested having alternative years for basic training and more advanced training. RMI supported the idea of 'the year of the debriefer' and wondered if this was a short lived issue and if the cost recovery model would pay for this in the future. SPC said that the regional cost recovery includes two sub-regional training courses directed at smaller countries. There are also monies for a consultancy or outside training support. The Cooks noted that under the MCS NTIS a system of shared resources has been applied. Under that model a trainer from Cook Is could be used in Tahiti and Samoa. SPC noted that PIRFO was essentially using shared resources. There are informal agreements in place with training institutes around the region including PNG, Fiji, Vanuatu and Kiribati. And originally the CIFFO was a place where we could do more training. PNG reminded participants that observers trained in PNG will also receive a seaman's book. NOAA suggested that if debriefers come through Pago Pago then they could stay longer to do debriefer training. SPC supported the idea that Pago Pago was a good place to get through part B debriefing training and there are also ample opportunities to deal with GEN-3 incidents. The current interim debriefer assessor to Pago Pago from PNG noted that observers had benefited a lot from the debriefing.

c. Other PIRFO training issues

Trainers on contract to SPC need to arrange their own medical insurance. This is being highlighted for everyone to notice. PNG said this is a matter of importance. It must be done individually, if working with SPC/FFA. But if working for the national governments insurance is normally covered under normal Public Service conditions. Insurance is to protect both parties. SPC does not provide medical insurance for trainers and debriefers under short term contracts. SPC has identified suitable insurance that is no more than \$100 for 90 days.

WCPFC DECISIONS

Changes in training driven by new/amended CMMs are likely to be limited this year. The CMM on blue shark does not affect PICT observers, and this is a similar situation to amendments to the CMM harvest rules. CMM 2008-01 has now been re-labelled 14-01 but the changes are minor and do not affect observers.

a. PNA-MSC training – how it fits with PIRFO

To open the session SPC offered a number of questions they would like answered. These include how to integrate MSC into PIRFO generally, and how to access the list of MSC trained observers. Is it up to the PNA office to determine who will be certified? In reply PNA office said that the training had already been handed out to national trainers and there is no reason why that shouldn't continue. A list of trained MSC observers is available from the PNA office. The data is held and the PNA office should be contacted for any information. SPC noted the strength of qualifications comes from mutual recognition. There were also some challenges when vessels at ports outside of the PNA asked for MSC observers and the list of certified observers was not available. The PIRFO chain of custody standard can be applied to both PNA and non-PNA trainees but non-PNA members will not be issued with the branded PNA MSC certificate.

RECOMMENDATION 6: PNA are requested to compromise with FFA on the issue of MSC certificates to non-PNA members who have been or can be adequately trained even though PNA will make the final decision on placement for PNA trips.

RECOMMENDATION 7: ROCW requests consideration of placing non-PNA countries MSC certified observers on vessels that require PNA MSC certified observers.

The forms used are the PS, 2, 3 and PS-5 forms with some minor additions. It would be best if plenary directed the CMC to come up with a regional strategy for this training. It was good to hear that this might be integrated into PIRFO. The PNG trainer/assessor can certify someone in Pago Pago easily. PNG agreed that many vessels are requesting a MSC observer and now the US trips are asking for this.

b. Progress with transshipment observer training

The training requirements for transshipment observers is not significant. The data fields are the same that observers have used on the standard PS or more so the LL forms. The format is different, but the data fields are the same. Training could be examined to assess whether a basic PIRFO refresher training needs to be conducted. Vanuatu said the forms are okay.

PIRFO WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

SPC showed the new PIRFO website, which is being developed by SPC, although it won't be hosted at SPC and will be independent of regional agencies. It is expected to go online soon. The website will prompt PIRFO training and certification and act as a repository for the documentation (training materials, manuals, assessor materials) with restricted access. For instance a debriefer will not have access to the debriefer assessor materials. Forums for observers will be available through Facebook, Twitter or other instant messaging/social media applications. One page may show the current location of Coordinators (to help observers locate them when arriving into a foreign port). The website may

provide contact numbers and SOP for emergencies. PNG stated that the website should tell the world who we are, why we exist and where we are heading.

PNA DEVELOPEMENT

PNA stated (attachment I) that their PNA Observer Agency (POA) was growing and had a record breaking year in 2015. POA coordinated 16,153 compared to 12,300 observer sea days in 2014 which leads to 29,000+ sea days since inception. Strong support was shown by all Parties for POA throughout the year and excellent observers were provided. There is ongoing development of regional staff and facilities, with new staff recruited, and more staffing needed in 2016.

There has been continuing cooperation and advice received from ROP, SPC and National Programmes and POA will aim for this collaboration and cooperation to continue into 2016. A feature of 2015 has been the shift to Christmas Island and Funafuti. Excellent assistance was received in both ports. More PNG boats are taking Regional Access Licenses (RAL's) later in the year.

a. FIMS Database

The FIMS database was online and available for all coordinators. It provides access to all PNA observer coordinators for real time viewing of observer status. Further development is planned for 2016.

b. POA Operating System

A cloud based operating system supports efficient programme management with staff able to access and operate the system. It allows entry of debriefs, creates payments and trip documents. There is a national trip report register but it needs rules. FIMS tablets were rolled out in 2015. It is providing excellent feedback for developers and real time reporting. A train the trainer workshop was held in Noumea in 2014. PNA Coordinators developed a proposal for 2016.

POA established accounts with Bank South Pacific in PNG/Solomon Is, and Bank of Guam in Pohnpei. Application to ANZ in Tarawa was not approved. This allows fast transfer of funds by reducing transaction costs (TT fees) and reducing reliance on Western Union which can be troublesome. All observers are encouraged to open bank accounts. Wherever possible the use of VISA debit cards is encouraged, but only 2 observers are currently using this and it may not be available from all banks.

Payments were made to observer bank accounts and debriefing improvements have sped up payment to observers. Payment time should be a **maximum** of 10 business days from receipt of evaluation forms. Advance requests cause continuous headaches and is strongly discouraged.

Accommodation and meal arrangements have been made with service providers in key ports. Hotel fees are a big cost. POA pays bills direct which reduces the need for observers to have cash on hand. Accommodation is not generally provided on back to back trips except in Majuro, where there is a big discrepancy in vessel accommodation arrangements, which is a source of discomfort for some observers. There are bed bugs and accommodation complaints for some vessels. Is there a need for vessel audits/penalties? Bunkhouse arrangements commenced in Majuro with 8 bedrooms and a debriefer apartment now providing accommodation on back to back trips in and/or out of Majuro. Restaurant arrangements in Majuro also exist.

67 RALs have been issued to date, 42 of those to PNG boats. Delays in issuance of these licences at the commencement of 2016 caused huge delays to trips with some observers getting stuck in port for a month. They are to be commended for their patience. It was suggested to the Authorities that the opportunity to license boats earlier in the year should be investigated. Activity is expected to increase with trips out of PNG ports with so many PNG boats. Some vessels are requesting POA observers for bilateral trips, which is currently not available to bilateral trips. Workbooks are causing a continuous headache in addition to very expensive freight costs, highly labour intensive scanning and the fact that many more workbooks than trips are being purchased. Callipers are now registered to vessels. Efficient, secure management and transfer of workbooks continues to be a key challenge. Courier movement of workbooks is expensive. POA workbooks/forms are submitted electronically to SPC for data entry; hard copies will be sent to PNAO for longer term storage. SPC providing good feedback on scanning quality. Need to investigate seriously the increased use of e-reporting.

Internet speed is a problem in some ports for uploading. However there has been a huge improvement in the amount of missed flights and immigration issues. Improved Nauru Airlines connections is a massive help. POA is increasing system development and the network of representatives in transit countries. All GEN 3 data is systematically sent out to the Home Party and WCPFC. There is a need to follow up on further information causing problems and increased administration and the MCS role is still an outstanding issue.

There was a proposal to make all scanned workbooks available to Parties. All observers on trips were to be issued an inflatable lifejacket with a light to be worn at all times on deck. All observers would be provided with a Personal Locator Beacon buoyant and with 10 year battery life. The use of these needs proper placement forms, registration and training. Performance monitoring is critical for continuous programme improvement with key indicators monitored through the POA database and updated continuously. All figures from period 1st January – 31st December 2015 are:

- Number of trips commenced 610
- Number of observer sea days 16,153 Days
 - Av. number of sea days per trip (completed) 27.2 Days
 - Number of observer shore days 6,006 Days
 - Av. number of shore days per trip incl. debrief days 9.8 Days
 - Number of observers used 241

Country	Nationality
Federated States of Micronesia	100
Kiribati	49
Marshall Islands	143
Nauru	23
Papua New Guinea	55
Solomon Islands	202
Tuvalu	38

- POA required to comply with three main observer nationality requirements – PNA, FSMA and WCPFC

In 2015, POA trips were:

- **100%** PNA Nationals (PNA)
- **100%** Non-Flag state observer (WCPFC)
- **100%** non-Home Party (FSMA) – (note: if a non-Home Party was not able to be sourced in a practical timeframe, authorisation was possible from FSMA Administrator before deployment.)

It was essential to monitor and strengthen data quality and identify compliance issues. Auditing is still to be addressed. Debriefing in a timely manner has shown huge improvements with very few trips now not being debriefed immediately. With more existing debriefers, PIRFO certified debriefing is happening within a proper time frame. Average score over all trips was 90.4%.

The PNA Observer Coordinators Meeting in Nadi (05 and 06 February 2016) submitted the following:

- **Recommendation 1:** *It is **again** recommended that an MCS analyst be employed on a full time basis to administer GEN3 and critical incidents for the FSMA fleet for the PNA Office.*
- **Recommendation 2:** *A dedicated MSC officer should be recruited to the PNA Office to run the PNA MSC programme due to the increasing workload required for the scheme.*
- **Recommendation 3:** *Observer pay rates for 2017 should be increased, the rates should be set on an incremental scale based on observer data scoring with a minimum level of USD\$40, to a maximum of \$80. MSC payments will be on top of this rate.*
- **Recommendation 4:** *From June 30 2016, a target figure of 50% of all FSMA trips should use e-reporting and be paperless. In 2017, 90% of all FSMA trips should be paperless. Noting that there is a large amount of developmental work needed, a position within PNA/POA needs to be created to work on this project.*
- **Recommendation 5:** *The Chair should attend the next PNA meeting in Kiribati to present the recommendations from POAM3. If the Chair is unable to attend, a replacement coordinator from another Party should be appointed.*

RMI mentioned the issue of MCS analysts but it was not followed up. RMI suggested that this be carried over to the ROCW. If it was flagged clearly then WCPFC can flag it as non-compliant to the relevant CMM. ROCW16 noted the PNAOC meeting recommendations.

OBSERVER SAFETY

PNG experienced 3 observers missing at sea and are also dealing with suicidal incidents. PNG observers go through medical checks every six months. This is part of observer protection due to the stress of leaving their families to collect vital data and video monitoring for vessels, which are deemed to be high risk. Lost one observer onboard a Taiwanese LL (domestic) in 2015 who just disappeared and cannot be traced at all. Another one was lost on a Japanese PS in 2014 and one was recorded as missing in 2010 on an RD fishing vessel based out of Madang. PNG sent a specimen of human remains to Australia in 2010 on RD fishing, based out of Madang. There was some evidence to suggest that he was

murdered. Six crew were locked up but there was not enough evidence to prove the case. The vessel continues to fish and there were an additional three cases of attempted suicide. These were found after 8-9 hrs of the observer being onboard. These observers have been delisted. This is one of the reasons observers opt to go with longline. 150 units of personal communicators air time cost approximately USD110,000. Currently the USCG are informed, but they don't want to deal with false alerts. PNG aims to continue to fight against bureaucrats as observer safety must be a priority.

NOAA commented on an incident where no EPIRB went off. After three days of investigation the US authorities were asked to leave the boat. Action plans need to specify who observers can talk to about incidents as many people were speaking publically about incidents prior to formal investigations. NOAA have 2-3 things to help observers survive and encouraged the office that deployed the observer to have emergency action plans that observers were well versed with. This was brought up at the WCPFC meeting and the recommendations were circulated and are available on the WCPFC website. Pressure was put on the Commission even though the incident happened outside the Commission area. The audit will be very strong on observer safety at sea. But first, the commission needs to do something about penalising offenders before others incidents occur.

There was a query on whether it was feasible to run observers through a psychological test before every trip but this would require a specialised person who might not always be available. Other tests are compulsory and the medical status must be checked every six months. New Caledonia mentioned issues from 2014 whereby an observer committed suicide the same year. There were tests and the fleet did not want to accept observers due to the manslaughter charge. New Caledonia found a specific person who could deal with regular psychological testing whereby observers were certified fit for duty for a period of one year. It was considered important to ascertain if observers were psychologically healthy. This was linked to how their family situations and the stress and isolation of being away at sea for long periods of time, sometimes working in an environment where language could be a challenge and food was not what they were used to. In the US observers cannot be mandated for psychological testing due to the privacy act. They did have an instance of this issue, but managed to get the observer home and handed him over to the family. Observers are asked if they want to be notified if there are any significant issues in their family. Many observers don't want to know about this while they are sea.

a. Sea Safety Plan

SPC said that WCPFC12 endorsed the development of an emergency action plan for observer programmes, two-way communication and a PLB as a requirement for ROP audits from 2017. There is a paper on the WPCFC website which shows the costs and different units available for personal two-way communicators. The country is responsible for these costs. However, it should be possible to get reduced rates for significant orders. Any trips that take place without sea-safety devices being issued to observers will not count towards ROP coverage. PNA mentioned that the PNG communication costs were very high, but that includes the transfer of data. SPC said that participants should consider adding questions on observers' welfare during the briefing, reporting and debriefing processes.

RECOMMENDATION 8: SPC was tasked to develop questions for debriefing on observer welfare.

There is a protocol in place so how the information comes in is known. POA gets weekly reports but these are not always sent to national programmes. Codes for observers feeling uncomfortable, harassed or in imminent danger can be introduced to ascertain how serious an incident is between one and ten. Normally the observer personally calls the Programme Coordinator directly.

RECOMMENDATION 9: ROCW16 proposes that a code for observers is created by SPC and FFA (consistent with 'Delorme' or similar devices) and included as part of the briefing process.

b. Observers at sea

When the observer is at sea, (s)he must keep in communication on a two-way basis with the Programme Coordinator. All observers are to avoid all dangerous areas and chemical/fuel storage hazards. They must maintain harmony with all crew members, wear appropriate safety gear and must avoid alcohol, illicit drugs, or recreational drug use as fights can start resulting in being thrown overboard. Observers must also maintain confidentiality of their report and journal from the Master and crew until they reach port. Self-harm, suicidal tendencies etc needs to be recognised as an observer safety issue and mechanisms to identify developing problems need to be inherent in observer programmes.

OBSERVER PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

FFA presented the various needs for data management – regional and national (accountability, transparency, meeting reporting obligations). Observer Program Management (OPM) is a module within the Information Management System (IMS) portal, where Members can access all this information in one place. OPM provides the foundational level tools, and has various other useful functions (observer information, observer placements, trip payments, assets & equipment, reports, alerts and notifications, data integration).

12 FFA Members have access to OPM (developed by FFA). 7 Members are actively using OPM. Total number of trips entered were currently 4,116. OPM needs to be broadly adopted if it is the standard tool for FFA members and SPC and FFA are committed to rolling this out. Further details are contained in attachment J.

Some questions that were answered centred on the current inability to access training records straight away, functions that were currently not operating, access and training requests, the need for

integration of the three main databases and future work that could enable real-time access to information.

Access to OPM is obtained through national IMS portals. Data uploading (historical) can be done with assistance from FFA. In-country training is also provided for use and data quality issues. OPM can be customised for specific Members' needs.

There are Commission rules on how access is given to ROP data. The request must be submitted to the Commission first.

Future for OPM: improve utilisation through OPM-focused national training from SPC/FFA.

A recommendation from last week's compliance discussions was that scanned copies of workbooks be made available to licencing/flag state parties. This is a feasible action.

OBSERVER DATA MANAGEMENT

SPC provided a presentation (attachment K) highlighting why they need to access OPM Data. Access is needed for training information (planning, monitoring and evaluating experiences) and placement information (assist data processing, assist data tracking).

With regard to how the total trip number was calculated, SPC said for PS, VMS data can be used to determine whether a trip is occurring – through use of an algorithm in conjunction with logsheets. Other scenarios (e.g. transiting) are taken into account.

With regard to provision of Observer Data to SPC, data is important for various reasons:

- in order to provide timely reports
- a lack of data means uncertainty in stock assessments
- satisfy WCPFC and national reporting obligations

SPC can help with scanning equipment and also in other ways (if communicated by Members)

With regard to the TUBS Reporting Online Tool, this was a web-based tool (access anywhere online with no installation required), generating quick reports, providing tables, maps and charts. For the January 2015 statistic report, 4,231 reports were produced. Most popular reports include summary of trips, PS catch statistics and shark catches by national fleet.

PNG commented that this tool shows the importance of observers, as they gather a lot of the important data. MCSWG must stress the need for observers – so a good recommendation should be made to MCSWG.

RECOMMENDATION 10: There was agreement that observers are vital to the role of monitoring compliance for MCS purposes and strong emphasis needed to be provided to industry to continue supporting observer programmes through the cost-recovery mechanism.

Data provision will be much easier when things become paperless. At the moment, there is a problem as to how to provide the information to SPC. Another problem is the lack of mentoring as to entering

data into the system (whether OPM or otherwise). Request to SPC (proposed by PNG and supported by RMI) that it send Members a list of which trip reports are missing.

SPC responded that data provision was a serious problem, and this will flow on to problems with Commission obligations. Data should be provided (even if it is considered to be bad data). The use of OPM was to be able to track data provision. Monthly updates are currently only provided by POA. SPC requests members to grant them access to national IMS records.

RECOMMENDATION 11: Members need to give SPC a monthly figure of the number of trips being made.

FIMS demonstration by PNG showed a high security system with online access. Observer data can be entered into FIMS – as part of the data management system. This system is similar to OPM but with the observer workbook already in an electronic format.

However, the data needs to be updated. Quick Access, the developers have two backup systems – one in PNG and one in Sydney. Since it was cloud-based, observers could log in from anywhere. PNG have recruited two new Administrative personnel to help with data entry. FIMS also captures observer medical records and discipline procedures. The main purpose of FIMS is to track all information on the observer. However a new system is being developed to capture observer recorded data, video data and information like the journal that can be sent by in PDF format. The use of the ‘Delorme’ device involves monitoring using an android device with google maps showing the location of each observer. It works well if you have a good internet. SPC asked about compatibility with other regional systems. PNG replied that it was okay to move forward together and it was for the pertinent IT personnel to be in contact with POA who are using two systems as they will be in a better position to report on comparisons. It seemed that it would take too long to develop everything they wanted on the operational side like issuing code of conduct, polices, dates of placements etc, so when FIMS catches up these fields can be developed

Observer actions are restricted so they can only take official actions (i.e. calls related to duty, and not personal calls). All are linked to administrator’s android devices. Current work is ongoing to ensure that different systems are able to be formatted the same way so that they are compatible.

RECOMMENDATION 12: ROCW16 requests that the three different information management systems be integrated and that the regional agencies (FFA, SPC and PNA) and FIMS developers meet to work out how to get the three databases (IMS, FIMS and OPM) can be made compatible.

a. Electronic Monitoring (EM) and Electronic Reporting (ER)

Trials are being conducted in countries and updates are to be provided by Members regarding the status of their EM/ER. A report on EM has been tabled at TCC and further trials are happening. New Caledonia was trying to place EM devices on vessels that won’t take an observer but safety concerns were causing issues with some vessels. The size of the boat is an issue because the previous boat was much larger, there were some species identification issues, water drops on the lens of cameras and dirty lenses. The video analysis is taking a long time (a comparison trip was conducted). Dry observer trips took 10 months while the wet observer took 2 months. The problem was that the dry observers

were being paid by the day in a comfortable office. There was a suggestion that dry observers should have extensive observer experience.

WCPFC commented that electronic monitoring in Taiwan was good as it only records when the fish was landed and had the ability to measure fish size. The use of high definition footage was very costly and another high cost is using a photo per second. Some footage obtained from Denmark was jerky and the cost of storing was much lower so it afforded the ability to do one year of monitoring. In Australia EM has replaced observers on tuna vessels. NOAA stated that the cost of their first phase test for EM was quite expensive but did not meet the science standard. Top scientists stated that observers are still required and EM is intended to enhance what observers do, not replace them. WCPFC said EM can be used to enhance observer work, even if they have 100% observer coverage on vessels. It might meet the need in lieu of discussing having two observers on board to help stop bribery.

PNA – in the Mediterranean two observers were forced to go on very small vessels and that went ahead as those were the rules but EM could be good to address this issue. PNA are pushing hard to have 50% coverage of ER WCPFC mentioned that the chair of ER is an Australian and the role of the commission is to develop a set of standards. PNG has the PDF format and it includes the ability to capture data. Observers however saved this on a flash drive which could raise data security or risk of corrupted files. The GEN-3 can be sent separately as it is exported in PDF. PNG mentioned that there are separate checks as observers needed to complete one page before the next one. If there is a mistake in data entry, the observer will not be able to save that page when he saves the GEN-3 form. Updates are made through the Cloud. The rugged tablets are shock proof and cost approximately US\$700 plus import tax but lithium batteries cannot be air freighted in bulk.

The US was undergoing a pilot trial for EM as part of the observer programme. EM can save time for an observer, which opens up time to report on other issues. US is not looking at replacing human observers, but instead using EM to enhance what observers are doing as well as covering vessels that do not have observer coverage.

RECOMMENDATION 13: Members were strongly urged to use EM and ER as tools to supplement observers work as opposed to replacing them on board vessels or to use EM on vessels that are not suitable to carry human observers.

RECORDS OF ACHIEVEMENT AND OFFICIAL ID

With regard to the status of PIRFO ID cards, the layout has been finished, but none have been printed. It would be good to link this with OPM sampling. SPC can print ID cards as required once a printer is obtained.

The status of proposed Observer Record Books that were proposed are to be in a similar format to a passport and the ID card is in normal plastic licence format (credit card style).

NOAA PAGO PAGO SUPPORT OFFICE DEVELOPMENTS

Gordon Yamasaki who was NOAA's tuna biologist in Pago Pago for over 30 years retired during 2015. As mentioned earlier, his duties have been mostly re-distributed at this stage. The two observer

programme staff had some experience with the work and they had replaced Gordon when he was off island in earlier years. More duties were recovered once Gordon had fully left the office. The CIFFO has been helpful with distributing payments, making placements etc. It is likely that there will be a few more changes with the assignment of duties in the port, but nothing extensive.

NOAA reminded national programmes that they need the itinerary, passport and request for entry letter to help with the observer's entry into Pago. They requested that all observers have shoes and bedding. SPC noted that NOAA was doing their own work, but also supporting the USMLT placements, which will change if US vessels opt for bilateral agreements, however NOAA are happy to continue to help with any such placement or it could be done through the CIFFO which was set up to provide sub-regional support. What happens with the CIFFO office will depend on the outcome of the USMLT, and a meeting on its status was currently underway in Fiji. NOAA mentioned the number of advantages they found in having a PIRFO debriefer based in Pago and they could not stress enough how important this has been for Pago. There is storage for callipers, workbooks etc at both offices.

One issue has been the distribution of funds. The account was in Gordon's name so obviously that created problems, but solutions like opening a business account also came with challenges. Getting visas can be a slow process. Cook Islands mentioned that their main issues are similar as they work across three countries (i.e. the Cooks – Administration, Samoa – home of observers, American Samoa – port of departure). The Administrative processes are burdensome. For instance at times it is not possible to get a visa/permit until the flight has been paid for. So timing can be stressful. SPC suggested that the Cooks Islands is not supporting the field office as was originally hoped for. It was set up as a sub-regional office. The model was good, but support has been lacking. It is the same in Nauru. They also deploy observers in overseas ports. They have an MOU with the PNA office and this has helped them transfer the required funds to other ports easily. SPC discussed the possibility of PICTs being deployed from Hawaii. It would be advantageous if PIRFO observers were accepted by more overseas observer programmes. NOAA uses the SPC/FFA placement form and submits that as a record of placement to relevant observer programmes.

OBSERVER FRONTLINE MANAGEMENT (FLM)

FFA gave an overview of Observer Frontline Management (FLM) training that is part of the PIRFO standards with the aim of improving competencies and skills of observer coordinators. Content of the upcoming FLM training includes how to create and deliver a presentation, or how to speak in public and gain other skills needed to administer national and regional programmes. The training is competency based, so participants need to show that they have acquired certain skills before they can be certified. The intention is to get the full suite of PIRFO certification recognised internationally as vocational qualifications, and discussions are under way to do that with The University of the South Pacific (USP), Pacific TAFE faculty which will help to get worldwide recognition.

The approach to frontline management has changed direction during the last year. The usual two – three workshop format will be replaced by an ongoing year-long mentoring programme. A mentor is someone who is senior to the person aiming for accreditation and who uses the required skills on a regular basis. For instance, a mentor will help observers gain any new skills that are pertinent to their new role as programme administrators. In this vein, a mentor can show mentees how to master new skills like working with Excel sheets to create budgets. Observers will generally have good technical

skills but not necessarily administrative or organisational skills. This could be things like talking with airlines, communicating across a number of different culture etc. There is an assessment record book and generally the tasks have to be completed by the throughout the year. One challenge for the trainees was providing evidence of competency. Some mentors will be present at the FLM training and they can offer tricks for preparing and delivering powerpoint presentations. SPC mentioned that the skills learned go beyond observer programme management, and includes areas like leadership skills.

STATUS OF BIOLOGICAL SAMPLING

a. Tagging

SPC introduced their overview of the status of tagging. Last year new green sonic tags were deployed. Since 2006 a total number of 404,182 tags have been recovered, with a tag recovery rate of nearly 18%, which is considered a great effort by all. The 2015 tag recoveries showed that tags from as far back as 2008 were recovered, so tag recovery initiatives need to carry on. Tag seeding gives an idea of how many people are reporting the tags and if there are false reports. The results from the tag seeding project were shown along with the recovery rate of the seeded tags. SPC tagging plans for 2016 were outlined. The emphasis will be on deploying more archival tags in the West (normally PNG). The tagging website was displayed and plans to develop a mobile phone app were mentioned.

b. Biological Sampling

SPC continued presenting some biological sampling issues. WCPFC Project 35 was put in place to better understand growth, maturity and ageing and to develop a repository of samples. The type of samples that were originally required was displayed. SPC is currently working on a project with a French Science institute (IRD) which studies mercury level across the Pacific and they require muscle and blood samples. The results of this sampling initiative to date were displayed, which shows that further samples were required from French Polynesia. The number of required samples for the WCPFC Project 35 has been achieved except for swordfish. However, there will be an ongoing sampling project to update the WCPFC tuna tissue bank repository and the results of this ongoing project will be shared online. SPC asked why the number of swordfish otoliths samples were lower. WCPFC thought this might be because these otoliths are generally small and SPC agreed it might be worth changing the sampling protocol to remove the head instead of the otolith. No biological samples have been received from the port of Majuro.

The Solomon Island PIRFO trainer will do the training in RMI, however there seemed to be more merit in re-training the FSM Trainer in biological sampling than sending the FSM Trainer over. With regard to challenges when samples arrive into port, SPC mentioned that better port notification procedures ensure that the samples are retrieved in an appropriate manner. RMI suggested that observers must be reminded to make port notifications on time themselves. Clarification on the role of WCPFC funded Port Coordinators suggested that these persons are employed in various ports but their job description varies and generally they are not the most appropriate person to manage biological samples. The use of the tagging recovery officers and electronic monitoring officers (SPC funded) persons for this role was proposed, however RMI suggested that the proper process is for the observer to contact the office as soon as they arrive and mention that they have samples that need to be removed from the boat.

DATA COLLECTION COMMITTEE (DCC) STRATEGY MEETING

SPC presented some background information on the upcoming DCC Strategy Meeting. The SPC/FFA DCC meeting has been running since 1995 and has provided standardised data collection forms for the region and PIRFO observers since that time. The DCC recognises that its role will change with the increasing use of e-tools to collect data. The DCC Strategy meeting will allow DCC to consider how to work under this changing model. The meeting will decide how to set data standards so developers can produce compatible products, and what other standards need to be considered – i.e ISO, WCPFC. The possible changes with sampling protocols will also be considered. Most especially PIRFO's or the CMC's role as an accreditation body will be explored, along with the impact on data quality processes.

REGIONAL AGENCIES FUTURE ROLES

In line with the theme of the ROCW16, roles are changing and while the outcomes of the USMLT meeting were not yet known, the USMLT paid for a lot of training and debriefing in the past and employed ~7 people at FFA for placements, data entry, data analysis and policy positions (refer to attachment L).

In the past SPC ran a lot of the training, but now the role is shifting to coordinate the training, assess the needs and ensure the right assets are available for the training. A quality assurance role is also maintained. Nauru asked about auditing and data quality assurance. In reply SPC stated that there are data quality checks that are run after debriefing. There is also the need to ensure the quality of the debriefing and the strength of the information that ends up in the international regime.

a. SPC

Some of the changing roles for SPC was discussed during the cost recovery sessions. SPC now wanted to look at the basic minimum work that should be achieved through the regional cost recovery. The main areas will be under observer and debriefer training and certification, regional coordination work, for instance this ROCW meeting and national infrastructure support that will include items like programme reviews and the use of OPM etc.

b. FFA

FFA noted that Kiribati sought an exemption as they were concerned about double-dipping, most especially in areas like observer training where they already have mechanisms to recover these funds under national cost recovery. In response to this FFA stated that Regional Agencies will be tasked with developing a business model to improve national cost recovery models and to ensure that there is no double-dipping from the Regional model. FFA mentioned that over time, certain activities may flow down to national work and the business model will have to be updated. For instance the MCS data analysis work, but there will always be certain tasks that are best placed at the regional level.

Participants identified major deficiencies with the MCS processes in both the identification of the observer incidents and with the importance that is assigned to dealing with identified incidents at the national level. Many countries stated they needed an MCS data analyst position. Nauru also expressed frustration in getting the MCS support they need internally once an observer incident has been identified. They have found it difficult to keep the issue moving up through the MCS chain. They did recently act on an incident of illegal fishing on FADs, something that was picked up by the FFA MCS

analyst after using SPC's TUBS reporting system. In one case from January, Nauru talked with the observer provider (the incident took place in Nauru waters) and they asked for legal advice from Nauru and FFA. The lack of internet has made it difficult to access VMS locally. At this stage they have provided a report to the fishing company and have received an even lengthier reply. It is very difficult for small administrations to process these infringements. Nauru uses the services of FFA a lot and is appreciative of their support.

FFA stated that the first thing to do is to get the observer data entered then Regional Agencies can assist national programmes with their MCS capacity. At the last MCSWG meeting, FFA presented infringement data compiled from observer data, although the follow up on this was perceived to be strong. Follow up depends on national MCS focal points etc. FFA provided 26 cases of observer infringements back to national agencies last year.

RECOMMENDATION 14: Areas of concern raised by ROCW where regional support could be provided needs to be highlighted to the MCSWG.

c. Suggested areas where regional agencies should continue to work in:

Cook Is asked for an observer programme audit to provide evidence of their areas of weakness to their supervisors. The audit can be used to get the resources they need to run their programme. There are the ROP audits, but in this case an independent review of functionality may be better.

Fiji mentioned the large scale change in staff especially management which means programme issues are not fully understood and addressed for the programme to move forward. A solution could be for regional agencies to coordinate a fellowship at Coordinator level to share exchanges between programmes. PNG reiterated its invitation for national programmes to visit PNG to assist them learn how the NFA coordinates its programmes, if the region can identify funds.

FSM stated that their main needs are with training (MCS, MSC, FIMS etc)

PNG suggested that island countries will need support with their SOPs and integration of the different data management systems – TUBS, FIMS etc. They requested regional support to get professional recognition for PIRFO certification. Efforts into investigating how to track observers at sea would be appreciated. They encouraged the regional agencies to continue to provide assistance to small island developing countries and to help observers gain the required visas in a timely manner, most especially for observers travelling through Australia and New Zealand. They would like MCS analysis for data that comes through FFA for FSMA and proposed that PNA and FFA discuss this until such time as PNA have their own MCS analyst as they currently don't have the manpower to get the job done.

Finally, they suggested that since most people work for money the observer salary scale should be improved and a regional standard pay scale would be appreciated. SPC mentioned that this has been difficult to do in the past as different agencies have different ideas, but observer professionalism has to be considered. Negative reports on observers that have been circulated by the international press has not helped, but gaining international recognition for PIRFO will. Gaining international recognition of PIRFO will improve the professional profile of PIRFO observers.

RMI asked if standardised pay rates could be applied in line with the PIRFO standards. They wanted to explore the possibility of putting every observer under one unit so standardised pay rates could be

explored. (Similar to when UN forces from different countries are deployed to the same area). They would also like the advantages of unionising observer programmes. SPC stated that the international observers conference sought to combat unsatisfactory work conditions and the concept of a union is not new.

RECOMMENDATION 15: SPC and FFA were requested to conduct an analysis of the feasibility of establishing a regional observer union or joining the Alliance of Professional Observers.

New Caledonia stated that their requests for support with EM and the use of the regionally supported TUBs as well as relevant training.

Nauru suggested that most of their issues were internal, but they would welcome help with getting visa for travel through Honolulu, noting a case where an observer's vessel left while he was in Suva waiting for an interview for a US visa. They support the idea of unionising observer work.

Solomon Is noted that they cannot change their contract unless FFA completes their review of the programme/contracts. The next contract to come to term will be in June, so it will be helpful to get this done before that time. The programme would welcome further support in following up with MCS incidents internally. They are also requesting regional advice and capacity building for this year.

Tonga would welcome a fellowship and supported Fiji's proposal.

Tuvalu supported PNG's request.

Vanuatu asked for help to restructure the funding. They asked for assistance in drafting an MOU which would allow them to place observers from other programmes on Vanuatu flagged vessels LL and fish carriers. They supported the idea of fellowships to the PNG observer programme.

Samoa supported the fellowship idea as well. They would like more observers as they cannot meet the needs of foreign vessels with their own observers. Support for training of debriefers in Parts B and C was also needed.

IDENTIFYING ISSUES FOR MCSWG CONSIDERATION

Fiji asked for the possibility of their observers boarding more PS vessels. They noted that these are the preferred gear types for observers and locally LLers will be increasingly e-monitored. PNG noted that this mostly affects non-PNA countries, as most vessels fishing within PNA countries EEZ will be required to carry PNA observers. Since it was a human decision it can be over-turned and that the matter should be directed to the MCSWG. It was also noted that MSC trained observers are required around all PS ports in the Pacific, and not just in PNA ports. SPC noted that other fishery certification standards are also being used like the Chain of Custody in Fiji etc.

a. Anticipating potential WCPFC decisions impacting on Observer Providers

The intention of this section was to both inform the ROCW of developing issues with CMMS but also to ask Coordinators to highlight any impractical or illogical sections of the CMMs which were difficult to implement.

WCPFC noted that CMM 2014-01 has been updated to 2015-01 CMM. This CMM limits fishing on FADs. The new CMM stops fishing on FADs for three months a year. After that vessels can choose either one of two options: 1) they fish on FADs for a limited number of days a month or 2) they fish on FADs for an additional two months a year. This might confuse observers, but if the observer follows their normal duties and reports on what they see then they will be fulfilling the requirements. They don't need to know which FAD option the vessel has selected.

There are no major changes to the CMM that are of interest to PIRFO observer programmes. CMM 2013-08 has come into effect since the last ROCW. It defines silky shark as a protected species and observers must now treat it as a species of special interest. The guidelines for the release of whale sharks in accordance with CMMs 2012-04 have been updated. The main WCPFC changes for observer programmes to note is the requirement to submit the GEN-3 form to the WCPFC from mid-year.

FSM noted that observers are not equipped to handle questions from the Captains on the CMMs. For instance, questions around why FAL are a protected species is regularly put to observers. The WCPFC noted that ~ 28,000 FAL were caught last year and many of these were finned, so if anything else the CMM may help to stop finning of this shark.

PIRFO TRAINING SCHEDULE

SPC displayed the PIRFO training schedule (attachment M). During discussion participants asked to move the debriefer assessor training workshop forward to mid-year. They highlighted that there are not enough Assessors and they wanted more part B and C debriefing. Honiara was suggested as a good place to run part B (due to the current number of vessels in port) and part C (access to FFA facility and support services) debriefing training.

CLOSING REMARKS

Nauru was warmly thanked for stepping in as Chair at the last minute and FFA for hosting the workshop.

a. Venue for next meeting

The next ROCW meeting for 2017 will be held Fiji in early February.

Participants were urged to consider nominations for Chair and Vice Chair for the next meeting.

The workshop adjourned and the CMC meeting commenced.