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PACIFIC ISLANDS
FORUM FISHERIES
AGENCY



Pacific
Community
Communauté
du Pacifique



17th Regional Observer Coordinators Workshop

Nadi, Fiji

February 6th – 10th

Theme: The Evolution of Fisheries Observation

Venue: Best Westin Hexagon, Nadi

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, Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI), Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu met in Nadi, Fiji from 06 – 10 February 2017 for the 17th Annual Regional Observer Coordinators Workshop (ROCW17). Observers from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA), Parties to Nauru Agreement (PNA) Observer Agency, MRAG Asia Pacific 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 meeting opened with a prayer offered up by PNG. The Chair, Nauru made some housekeeping notices including the slight change of agenda for the WCPFC presentation which was moved to Wednesday. Countries were urged to submit their reports to the Chair. Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) Observer Programme Manager, Philip Lens officially opened ROCW17 and welcomed participants on behalf of FFA and SPC, delivering apologies from FFA's Director Fisheries Operations, Noan Pakop. Participants were notified that DSA's could be collected from Ambrose. SPC's Tim Park also offered apologies from New Caledonia who were not able to make it to the meeting. Participants were urged to check the agenda as there were some changes made.

Adoption of Agenda

Participants adopted the agenda (attachment B) with amendments to sessions.

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM ROCW16

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

- CMC being tasked to investigate recognised vocational qualifications for PIRFO standards – FFA and SPC will be organising a Certificate IV in training and assessing for observer trainers

- New forms have yet to be developed for gear type “light seiner” as this fishery is now operating in Solomon Islands after a year trial. There are 4 vessels and they all have observer arrangements in place. The setting technique differs from purse seiners and they don’t use bait but deploy flags and lights.
- The model observer sea safety emergency action plan (EAP) was developed by FFA and has been delivered to members for contextualisation before use. Implementation date of 01 January 2017 necessitates this being enacted for each member prior to WCPFC audits. US Treaty sub-regional trips are taken care of by the FFA EAP.
- The national cost recovery model discussions are yet to be progressed. It was noted that some attendees to previous training were not connected to observer programmes so it failed to deliver concrete results. Some countries capture cost recovery in their Acts but the interpretation is yet to be finalised through procedures. However it was stressed that cost recovery needs to be legally mandated before it can be implemented.
- With regard to MSC certificates being provided to non-PNA members who had been trained, there were many discussions but no change or progress made on this request.
- The placement of non-PNA countries MSC certified observers on vessels that require PNA MSC certified observers had been progressed for Fiji.
- SPC questions for a survey on observer welfare are pending.
- Since “Delorme” devices are no longer being used (instead of In Reach, new unit is Rockstar), there will be similar processes for using new satellite iridium phones (that operate the same but the useability is slightly different and can link with FIMS). The main advantage is that the rockstar can be used as a two-way communication device as well as sending emergency SOS alerts.
- In terms of data requirements, the baseline number of observer trips will be covered in a later presentation.
- The integration of data systems, FIMS, TUBS and RIMEF, is slowly being progressed.
- EM and ER will continue to be used as tools to supplement observer work and not replace them.
- Recommendations that go to MCSWG again need to be highlighted in ROCW17 records.
- The feasibility of joining the Alliance of Profession Observers will be presented later in the week.

NATIONAL OBSERVER PROGRAMME UPDATES

Cook Islands

There was a query on whether there is a place that can contain a group exchange (like Skype) for observer data purposes for example the availability of EAP. FFA mentioned that the EAP had already been sent to members and there is already an online site under PIRFO – hosted by SPC for group discussions. “Slack” is used more as a training tool. SPC is developing a similar tool like a chat site so can integrate this request into current work that will link observer workbooks to data. The Cook Islands will be receiving donated observer safety equipment that will be distributed to the observers once received.

Cook Islands had 2 observers being issued a final warning letter and one was fired for harassment so now only 3 observers, down from 6 last year. They had signed an MOU with Tonga to use their observers and were in the initial stages of implementation.

Fiji

Fiji had 51 observers and completed 245 longline trips and 4 purse seine trips in 2016. They are achieving 5% longline observer coverage on their domestics LL fleets as well as on Tuvalu bilateral longline vessels. Fiji's new Decree has given rise to new regulations so can improve observer work and the relationship with vessels and companies. Cameras have been installed on 5 vessels and Fiji is hoping for another 10 to be installed in 2017. Observers are working to analyse the footage now. The EAP has already been drafted and just needs to be endorsed by Management. Fiji is still applying for funding from Finance to cater for the purchase of the required safety gear – PLBs and 2 way communication devices.

French Polynesia

Absent

FSM

NORMA had MSC training which increased MSC certified observers. An observer safety workshop was planned for later this month. Cost recovery is being trialled this year. NORMA is happy that observer safety has been supported at the highest levels. FSM supports systemic access to electronic observer reports but highlights bandwidth and internet access issues that still exist in some member countries. FSM are drafting their EAP and it will be reviewed at the planned observer safety workshop.

Kiribati

There were 108 observers 29 of which were certified with 5 trainee debriefers and 4 certificated debriefers. Observer payments were often late – FFA were requested to investigate the possibility of setting up a bank account in Kiribati and to run legal training for national observers, as the collection of evidence for court proceedings is an issue preventing successful prosecution.

Marshall Islands (RMI)

RMI had 600 plus transhipments in 2016 from Majuro with the majority of observers behaving themselves. Thanks were expressed to all the coordinators for their work in this regard. RMI has been working with their legal adviser to set up draft contracts and will be requesting FFA to include EAP and SOP in the 2017 work plan. RMI were audited for compliance by WCPFC in 2016. The achievement of certified debriefers is an advantage. A job description for a PIRFO certified trainer to be based in Majuro will be released soon. Still building up College of Micronesia (COM). Discipline issues and resignation for greener pastures has reduced the number of observers but there are plans to train new observers (funded by COM). Looking at refresher training as well and will invite FFA to reactivate the bank account in Majuro to gather for observer's fees.

Nauru

Due to the absence of key senior staff members there has been limited feedback on the status of progress into this report (Emergency Action Plan). EAP needs further review to insert national

requirements. There has been some Gen-3 issues relating to FSMA licensed vessels and some vessels are currently under investigation so Nauru is working closely with FFA to assist with its investigation. The SOP for the NROB is being drafted and is awaiting input from Fisheries Management to clear it for endorsement. Nauru has received their PLB and life jackets but their consignment of 2-way communication devices are still being shipped.

New Caledonia

Apologies

Palau

Palau has had a very small Observer Programme (OP) since the beginning. The new Act for Marine Sanctuary has the Observer Programme incorporated into this Act. Need FFA assistance to resurrect the programme as there are currently only 2 active observers used for national trips. There have been no regional trips as a ban is still in place due to a past incident. Need to establish an MOU to share observers from other members. Palau will shortly advertise a national observer coordinator position for recruitment.

Papua New Guinea (PNG)

Updates from PNG include:

- National EAP is in final draft stage for review before implementation
- Completed 95% observer ER and rolling out tablets with remaining observers. Video monitoring trial commences on LL in March and may expand full implementation by the end of 2017
- Observer sea safety elements training in STCW (NMSA requirement) will commence with NFC starting in March for the 1st batch
- Harmonised programme with compliance officers for observer placement awareness and safety briefing on all PNG flagged vessels is in progress
- Cross- endorsement training request has been submitted to FFA
- Discipline issues were addressed
- Insurance cover is being looked at by legal counsel with the help from corporate services
- PLBs were ordered and registered with NMSA (licensing in progress) and these are linked to USCG

Samoa

EAP and Observer Policy is being worked on and hopefully implemented this year after review by upper management. EAP and Observer Policy will be passed on to FFA for their comments as well.

There is ongoing problem in regards to observer retention. This problem will be addressed through the policy and through a legal contract of sorts before sending them off for subregional training.

There is a need for a debriefer in Samoa and currently building up the current observer to get enough sea days this year to be eligible for Debriefing Part A. Request for assistance in getting over TVM's debriefer located in Pago Pago to come on a biannual basis to Samoa to debrief trips.

Ongoing issues with observers who are also fisheries officers and have other duties. There are plans to establish an observer unit due to increased foreign vessels coming into port.

Solomon Islands

Restructure is planned as only the Observer Coordinator and Assistant currently exists. Data entry, placements etc are required so PROP will fund a data entry officer. Completed 3 training workshops on PNA MSC CoC with only 3 observers left to be trained. Upgrade training planned for 2017 on PLB in addition to refresher training. PLB and safety issues (post Brisbane workshop) are being progressed and the EAP manual is in the drafting stage. Workbooks were costly to print, and coupled with the phone and photocopying services without cost provided to regional observers transiting through Honiara is getting expensive. Coordinators are asked to fully equip their observers with workbooks etc before they depart home base. Solomon Is also reported that they had:

- 30 life vests and 30 PLB's already in the office, being issued to observers
- Observer Accountant already recruited, started working on Monday 6th February to deal with observers finances only
- light seiner vessels still without forms, observers only using PS workbooks on these vessels
- 3 PL upgrade trainings/refreshers proposed for this year 2017

Tokelau

Absent

Tonga

Tonga had 17 active observers who completed 40 LL trips in 2016 (there were 4 certified debriefers but only 3 were active). An in country LL training was conducted in December 2016. There were 7 recruits with 2 from Palau who participated in this LL training. CoC training was also conducted in 2016. Cross-endorsement training is required, so request FFA to invite Tonga when this training is planned in 2017. Tonga was still attempting to source safety gear for their observers.

Additional Information

- Bio Sampling Training was also conducted last year, 6 were trained and certified
- CoC Training, 8 were trained and Certified

Training Needs

- 2 Debriefers to train as Debriefers Assessor, we had NO Debriefers Assessor at the moment.

Tuvalu

Tuvalu had 62 active observers, 13 trainee debriefers and 3 who completed cross-endorsed training. 54 of these observers are MSC trained. They operate on national and PNA trips. No FFA placements lately.

For training needs, Tuvalu requests that trainers be made available for 2017 to conduct the following training:

- National Basic Observer training (March – June)
- Debriefers training Part A, B, and C (March – June)
- PNA MSC training
- FIMS E-reporting

Safety Equipment such as life vests and In Reach have been deployed to observers placed on PNA trips. The EAP was in the early stages of development and the draft will be forwarded to the legal officer and FFA for legal and technical advice.

Vanuatu

Vanuatu has a total of 32 observers of which 2 were given permanent positions as placement and debriefing officers and left with 30 active observers. 7 from these 30 were trained for cross-endorsement in 2016). The EAP and SOP are currently in draft form and will be finalised this week. Vanuatu requested national observer training in 2017 for LL only.

NOAA

Maintains 60 active observers with 20% coverage of deep set fishery and 20% for shallow set. Employ observers from several US cities for deployment. Hawaii fishery was accused of running a slave programme of crews. Conditions were reported from desk reviews by reporters printing misinformation. Problems arise from observers seeing a lot of stuff and some vessels were harshly treating their foreign crew but the whole area of Hawaii was passed off as employing crew who were being mistreated. There was a regulatory condition that 75% of crew employed were US citizens so the observer programme came under scrutiny and had to spend a lot of time and energy talking to reporters to clarify the issue as sensational news stories based in misinformation went ballistic. NOAA are revamping and updating their EAP which is expected to be ready soon. ER is progressing to significant beta testing from March 2017 to test tablets and balance testing with using paper recording. 5 observers used tablets and tested the software then provided a list of recommendations to make the programme more user friendly and efficient so improvements were made. There are plans for initiating EM test aiming for collection of much more information in three weeks' time. NOAA has been mandated to work with a safety reporting system so any significant injury (putting observer out of the workforce) is reported. Training is conducted for new and as a refresher course for returning observers. 4 new staff in HQ and there are now 5 staff in the American Samoa Programme (Gordon retired so new staff work with FFA to provide support to observers).

American Samoa Support Office

Provides LL (2 observers maintaining 20% coverage) and international fisheries support. Crew are being picked up in American Samoa and taken to be distributed to vessels based in Hawaii.

PNA Observer Agency (POA)

2016 had 683 trips on vessels using 268 PNA observers for those trips. There were alcohol related incidents onboard and related problems with the use of new safety equipment. Looking at shifting more work load to regional offices and printing workbooks which are getting in short supply. Safety equipment rollout is not without problems. In terms of staffing – recruited new administrative officer and looking at a new MCS and new ER officer in 2017.

SPC

Most of SPC information will be discussed in other agenda items. LL EM-fields standards workshop was conducted to establish baselines. 3 DCC meetings looked at roles and relevance. Observer forms were reviewed and changed then approved at DCC meetings. 6 observer training workshops in comparison

to 15 the previous year. Certificates (54) will be provided. Data section for processing has new staff member. 2017 training needs, based on budgets, will be discussed in detail later in the week.

FFA

US Treaty Observer Programme update was presented by Philip Lens (attachment C). Discussions ensued regarding FLM training, scheduled for 06 – 15 March 2017 and nothing planned for the future. FFA explained that this training was for OP Coordinators/Managers and all existing incumbents had been trained so training this year was for future potential staff then there would probably be a 5 year hiatus as staff turnover for this position was not annual. When required funding could be allocated for future such training at that time and once currently training staff completed their workbook tasks and submitted the same with their mentor signed forms, the FFA could progress this PIRFO FLM mentoring as a recognised and accredited TAFE qualification.

OTHER ORGANISATION THEME

PNA Coordinators Meeting Report – PNOC Meeting Chair

POA presented their report on the PNA Coordinators Meeting (attachment D). There was a question regarding the structure of the percentage increments on the PNA observer pay scale. There was also a recommendation to increase per trip rates for certified debriefers but not trainees, to become effective in 2018. A point of clarification was made regarding scanned workbooks and the increase in the size of data being moved around, so a portal for members to log in and access the reports themselves has been developed.

DCC Strategy and DCC Meeting

SPC presented a report on a number of meetings that took place during 2017 with regards to observer data standards (attachment E). Full reports of the meetings are available on SPC's Oceanic Fisheries meeting webpage <http://www.spc.int/oceanfish/meetings>

a. Data Collection Committee (DCC) Strategy Meeting

This meeting was held in Noumea during April. SPC and FFA reviewed the need and relevance of the DCC moving forward noting the changing environment in the Western Pacific with regard to new organisations and electronic data collection systems since the inception of the DCC in 1995. After much thought and deliberation the group decided that DCC was still relevant most especially as it gives SPC/FFA member countries a platform to collect data above and beyond the WCPFC standards.

New Terms of References were developed for DCC during the Strategy Meeting. These note the membership (SPC and FFA, with invited participants from WCPFC, PNA, SPREP, NGO, industry and of course member countries). The core roles of DCC from 2016 to 2020 were explained as maintaining paper copies while moving towards developing data standards for ER and EM. The scope of the DCC was mentioned including; data standards for logsheet, observer, artisanal data etc but also advice and review for CDS, traceability and other certification schemes.

b. Longline Process Standards for Longline Workshop

SPC held a workshop on longline process standards for EM in June 2016. The meeting gathered staff from SPC, FFA and a number of electronic data providers together. The data providers were keen to have a set of standards that would allow them to submit data according to the WCPFC requirements. The meeting used the DCC observer LL data fields and generated processing standards for each data field. For instance, the source of the data (automatic sensors, recorded before the trip, manipulation of images etc), language of submission (xml) etc.

c. Mini DCC for observer form changes

In line with the Observer Trainers Workshop held in Noumea in November, 2016. SPC facilitated a review of all observer data forms. The outputs of the review were fed into the main DCC meeting. The DCC meeting were appreciative of the work and suggested that holding mini-DCC or focus groups for specific data types (MCS, Artisanal) should be a future of feature of DCC meetings.

d. 10th DCC

The 10th DCC was held in Nadi, in mid-December 2016. A number of organisations (SPC, FFA, WCPFC, PNA and member countries Fiji, Tonga and PNG) were in attendance. While traditionally DCC has been a small focused group the expanded participation brought in a greater range of skills, most importantly data management staff.

The main changes relating to the observer data forms were shared with the ROCW. These included:

- a discussion on whether observers were required to validate vessel registration data (GT, length of vessel, licence number)
- remove of SSI landing data to the PS-3, LL-4 and PL-3 forms
- new SSI Interaction codes
- request to WCPFC to review wording (and priority of incidents) on the GEN-3 form
- calibration of callipers
- higher priority for the GEN-4 form

The main recommendations from the 10th DCC were shared with the ROCW participants. The most relevant of these recommendations were that:

- *SPC and FFA* conduct a general review of the catch offloading processes (on-shore and transshipments) in the longline and purse seine fisheries with a view of updating DCC data fields and protocols. This review should consider the requirements for science, fisheries management, CDS and compliance.
- *SPC and FFA* request industry and national programmes to submit all non-DCC data forms used by industry and other entities in their national tuna fisheries (overlapping with data types covered by DCC forms) well in advance of the next DCC, noting that the introduction on non-DCC data forms / standards can impact current DCC data collection protocols.

- *SPC and FFA* conduct a more thorough review of current DCC data fields and forms to determine which fields are no longer used (redundant) for consideration at DCC11. This review will need to include scientists and consider the move to ER and EM.
- *SPC* include agenda items to review data collection protocols for each data type at DCC11.
- In regards to observer forms and data, *SPC* are recommended to enhance the database system to include the entry of debriefer evaluation form information
- *SPC* liaises with FFA and PNA to confirm access to their respective observer placement data through their respective systems (e.g. OPM) and plan the enhancements required to improve the observer document management process at SPC.

Pago Pago Support Office

- a. Current support update and options for development
- b. FFA observers – Logistics American Samoa
 - i. Changing visa issues
 - ii. Entry permits

The American Samoa Fisheries presentation was made by NOAA staff based in Pago Pago (attachment F). Entry permits required for observers to get on boats in American Samoa is getting more difficult to obtain efficiently. There was a question on visa requirements for RMI and FSM citizens and whether this is still required. The “ok to board” permit is what is required and this needs 3 days for processing but requires the entry permit and visa of the observer as a pre-requisite. A clarification was sought in using the Pago office staff hand-delivering documents to the AG office. This information must be hand-delivered and cannot be sent as an attachment from any US office unless it is encrypted in order to comply with US personal information protection legislation (although there was no requirement for US inbound emails to be encrypted). So members will need to access the database to access their documents using a password that is provided. Members wondered if the process could be streamlined with boarding forms/notification of arrival. Communication was vital so NOPS needed to copy all regional OP or all Pago office staff on emails in order for urgent work to be processed. Emailing a single individual does not allow for efficient processing especially if the individual is on duty travel and cannot access emails regularly. Countries also need to be aware of time differences with the Pago office and the possibility of flight delays or natural disasters. In an emergency, Lindsay can be used to transmit open emails back to members and the NOAA Pago office will keep this in mind.

Cook Islands mentioned that they were downgrading to a smaller office and they still employ Lyndsay Mundri. They agreed that communication was key. Members were welcome to email Tim Costello, the Director Oceanic Fisheries for more information on CIFFO.

Observer Safety

- a. EAP development requirements
- b. Two-way communication device / personal locator beacon (lifesaving beacon)
- c. Observer health (mental and physical) monitoring

FFA made a presentation on the generic UST EAP (attachments G1 and G2) that had also been circulated to senior officials at TCC and MOC in 2016 but sometimes it did not reach the national Observer Programme coordinator/managers which was why they were blind copied in on such emails.

Members were welcome to use this as the basis for developing their own EAP. With regard to different fishing operations, whereby observers were transferred to sister vessels out of port calls, members were urged to contextualise the generic flow charts to match their own operations.

There was a question about if the nearest military asset could be tasked to come into contact with the observer in distress through RFSC if there was a hotline. An observer safety officer needs to be recruited to be on call 24/7 to have a dedicated person to action the plan. NOAA shared their experience of when observers that have become very sick needed to be taken off the fishing vessel, the decision was made by USCG to request assistance from nearby larger merchant vessels in the vicinity to provide medical aid and transportation of the observer personnel to port where necessary. The QUADS have a close working relationship and can assess vessels in the vicinity in order to request assistance.

Interpretation for illness and injury or fatigue can be defined in national EAPs which can be reviewed periodically. Alertness during emergencies also needs to be considered. FFA is willing to provide assistance with their legal counsel if requested. NOAA has had observers that have become so sea sick but have not reported it to the Master until crew have notified the Master who then calls this in to USCG. The USCG can then meet the vessel part way to uplift the observer so it is important for the Master to be able to make that call if required as diligent Masters will generally not want the observer's life in danger while on board his vessel.

Funding is an issue for most NOPs and PLBs are expensive but these are still required for all observers to carry. Three units, including 2-way communication devices have been recommended based on robustness and reliability. Samples were shown and members were encouraged to base their choice on their budget and a combination of reliability and robustness. Members were also reminded to build in an observer safety officer to be on call 24/7 to be the first point of contact for emergencies from the observer, Master or responders.

Insurance is mandated for observers but in legal terms, observers are not seen as crew so the period out at sea is problematic. PNG and Vanuatu observers are insured under their respective workers insurance policy. However some licensing conditions are very general and payments are still pending as in Fiji's case. There are also limitations for workers compensation cover as this is applied to base salary and not overtime or food and other allowances etc. This could be an issue for MCSWG to discuss and resolve for Ministerial endorsement. NOAA shared their experience of observers being hired by a contractor who is required to cover insurance for medical but not travel and life. They are covered for 30 days after being back ashore but only for medical. The Chair intervened and requested that insurance be discussed at MCSWG since this issue was already tabled at numerous higher levels meetings including TCC.

RECOMMENDATION 1: MCSWG is requested to make a recommendation for FFC to resolve observer travel and comprehensive insurance coverage (including medical, life etc) port to port (i.e. from home port departure, while on board vessels out at sea – where they are not considered crew – and until their return to home port).

FFA emailed the recommended devices websites and PLB specification (attachments H1 and H2) for members to view and order as soon as possible. They also welcomed requests for assistance with national EAPs.

OBSERVER PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT THEME

Observer Conduct and Preparedness

FFA and SPC went through reminders (listed below) of how to be efficient in preparing observers for trips and maintaining communication at all levels.

- a. FFA US Treaty Programme
- b. Observer Deployment
 - i. Maintain communication
 - ii. Confirm observer availability
 - iii. Personal welfare (self/spouse/children)
- c. National Programmes
- d. Preparedness prior to departure
 - i. Contract signed/FFA observer contract
 - ii. Valid passport (not expiring in 6 months)
 - iii. Valid visa or entry permit
 - iv. Enough cash or debit card with sufficient fund
 - v. Emergency contacts
 - vi. Measuring calliper
 - vii. Sufficient workbook/forms/stationary/tablets
 - viii. Appropriate safety gear/equipment
- e. Observer Mandatory Reporting - PL
 - i. Mandatory weekly report (every Wednesday, copy coordinators/managers)
 - ii. Notify office when heading to port with (name of port and ETA)

Comments included the welfare of observers placed overseas to board vessels that may not only operate in the region. Proper placement and welfare meetings should be conducted especially if using agents located outside the region. FFA reminded participants that SOPs contain the “how to” on placement of observers. In Majuro placement is redone if they boarded fishing vessels overseas without proper placement procedures being followed. Coordinators are encouraged to inform their observers of the importance of such processes.

Members were reminded to pay SPC on time for the workbooks as this service can only be continued for large print orders where price can be negotiated with the NZ supplier and SPC cannot take on this cost. There was a discussion on callipers with regard to accuracy, storage and carrying them around.

RECOMMENDATION 2: ROCW requested SPC to explore options for lighter and cheaper callipers.

A suggestion was made to have a dedicated cabin for observers so that equipment could be safely locked away and on PS with 100% coverage, this would make sense. However, there were associated costs as well as the impact of making special requests so a cautious approach was better.

RECOMMENDATION 3: ROCW strongly encourages FFA to investigate the impact of ensuring FFA registration conditions for all vessels to specify a dedicated observer cabin with lockable cabinet for equipment.

There was an issue with weekly reports from observers who only provided these when they needed an advance of funds and who did not notify programmes of when they were due to hit port until they physically arrived. This makes it more expensive to retain observers until onward travel can be arranged. Some observers were concerned about the medications available onboard and vessels preferred that observers have their own first aid kit so this was part of the briefing prior to placement, linked to health and welfare.

RECOMMENDATION 4: ROCW strongly urges national observer programmes to conduct effective placement briefings including personal health and welfare checks that lead on to equipping observers with required tools, PPE and a first aid kit with medication that might be needed.

Regional Observer Personal Information Storage and Sharing

FFA stressed the importance of maintaining accurate observer records in terms of personal details and members who were using OPM had the advantage of being able to record, store and track these especially to process payments without delay. The OPM training from Monday 13 - 14 February would cover this content in more detail.

- i. All personal particulars, *(full name as shown on the passport)*
- ii. Passport and visa copies
- iii. Bank details *(with correct name)*
- iv. Reliable contact number
- v. Reliable email address
- vi. MSC and Cross Endorsement certified
- vii. Observer good standing/blacklist

During discussion it was noted that some individuals who are citizens of other countries do turn up for the regional pre-selection test, but subsequently (if they pass), their country of citizenship do not recognise them and do not want them sent for full training. FFA mentioned that they cannot deposit monies into another person's account (often the observer's spouse/family). A written letter (letter of consent) is required, otherwise the procedure will be deemed illegal.

Observer Placement and Personal Data Management

- a. OPM its use and usefulness – AO
- b. SPC' critical need for OPM programme training and placement data
- c. SPC support of user capacity development - IT

FFA presented a session on data management for placement and personal details. Previously these details were kept in paper copies. A new data management system was put in place and it assists with alerts for payments. It is helpful in coordinating placement both sub-regionally and nationally. At the national level data management improves accountability and transparency. OPM is the tool developed

by FFA to manage observer programme data within the information management system (IMS). It allows easy access to information on the observer, placements and trip payments and can inform observers on the status of their payment or identify any outstanding items required to complete the payment process. An email requesting personal details was sent to national programmes at the end of ROCW16, but so far the response has been limited.

12 member countries have OPM, and there are 8 actively using it. Nearly 5,000 placements have been registered in the system to date, with around 800 in 2016. SPC noted that the system was helpful, but that SPC could not access the data without permission from the countries. SPC supports the OPM for use, but have identified the challenges in getting access. A member mentioned that it was difficult to delete trips from OPM and this can be confusing. FFA replied that it was intentional that data cannot be deleted, as the system maintains an audit log, but the interface can be adjusted to show only modified trips. Nauru noted that there were some political and personal information reasons as to why they don't share/use OPM. Assistance to load historical data, modify for national requirements and general training are available. SPC noted the need to consolidate and assess observer placement data gaps to report observer coverage levels to the WPCFC. The main issue was access to the OPM. It was noted that FFA has a data sharing agreement with member countries, but this does not expand to sharing the data with SPC. It was hoped that approval to share data with SPC could be achieved at the Executive level. SPC also noted that OPM was potentially helpful for biological sampling and maintaining assets inventory such as callipers, safety gears etc.

RECOMMENDATION 5: ROCW tasks FFA/SPC to progress the integration of OPM, TUBS and FIMS by expanding the FFA data sharing agreement through FFC and/or HOF to release reports of required fields for SPC to access in order to more fully analyse observer trip data (vessel name, observer name and number, departure and arrival dates and ports).

FFA and NOPs MOUs / CSLA

- a. US Treaty MOU
- b. Strengthening of National Observer Programme(s)
 - i. Observer Manual & SOPs
 - ii. Other assistance

FFA presented explanations on the developments pertaining to the phasing out of UST MOUs with NOPs. Members could request administrative cost recovery to be paid direct to service providers (including debriefing and placement fees going to the programme and not directly to persons) from FFA which could also be included in CSLAs (attachment I1). This could assist in strengthening NOPs. Members raised the point that observer coordinators were paid less than observers and capacity development was limited so perhaps they deserved to be compensated for providing input into CSLAs etc.

FFA developed and shared an SOP template (attachment I2) in detail so that it could assist coordinators develop their own SOPs. Some members already had draft SOPs that were developed with assistance from FFA. The procedures catered for a broad range of observer programme management concerns. This included issues such as training selection, certification, medical checks, placement procedures, travel arrangements, critical incidents during the trip (i.e. GEN-3) etc, observer tracking, data handling

procedures, refresher training, discipline and equipment inventory etc. For a more detailed list please see attachment I2. A member noted that there can be political intervention with some procedures (selection of candidates for training etc). SPC responded that the cost of training warrants good selection procedures to make sure that the right trainees are identified. SOPs are helpful for programme audits and reviews.

COST RECOVERY UPDATES

FFA and SPC presented some examples of provisions on observer fees and cost recovery and how these can be implemented based on what was contained in national Acts in relation to national and regional cost recovery. FFAs past efforts around supporting national cost recovery for their national programmes were mentioned and participants were reminded that assistance was still available. The approach and tools which were looked at in more depth during previous ROCWs, can still be used to calculate costs and distribute them appropriately across industry either through attachments at FFA or during in-country travel.

a. National Cost Recovery

- a. National Cost recovery
 - i. NOPs to update (if any)

FFA highlighted observer legal fees as an area where challenges were still being faced in terms of accommodating cost recovery. In the long run, NOPs need to be self-sustainable so this was considered important. FFA stressed that, in order to implement cost recovery at national level, the review of national fisheries legislation or relevant laws is required. As a great concern by some members, although the funds recovered through cost recovery will go directly to the national treasury, and the programme will have difficulties accessing those funds for the programme, or sometimes these funds are diverted to other course.

SPC reiterated that a spreadsheet was developed and used during the national cost recovery workshop held in 2014. However this was contextualised to align with national legislation, needs for services and financial procedures.

b. Regional Cost Recovery

The regional cost recovery programme (attachment J) was driven by the cost of regional observer monitoring support. The total costs of observer programmes are determined by regional instruments outlining coverage requirements (mostly CMM 2008-01, 3IA). True costs of monitoring need to consider coordination and support while noting that industry (the main beneficiaries) are liable for these costs.

Over time traditional donor funding sources have declined and is being re-directed to other areas like EM. At the same time, national programmes were looking for more autonomy. Recognising that there was still a need for regional support these were identified as:

- coordinating and conducting training workshops
- maintaining training standards
- developing sampling protocols

- developing national cost recovery models
- ensuring independent and transparent quality assurance for programmes and data

Lack of regional support could ultimately affect stock assessments, other fisheries management initiatives and for national programmes – the ability to provide OP services, and meet compliance and traceability requirements. The total cost to a vessel, by gear type, to fully cover regional support costs, while considering vessels different exposure to regional CMMs was shown in a table.

As agreed at FFC, FFA clarified how regional support funds can be spent and it was specific about what can be funded. There are funds for regional coordination but less for national support. For instance coordinating training was supported, but there were very few funds for running any national training.

STATUS OF TAGGING

SPC provided an overview of the status of tagging (attachment K) and reiterated the importance of returning tags as these provided valuable data. SPC first started tagging as early as 1977 and there have been three major tagging projects since then, with the 3rd project ‘Pacific Tuna Tagging Project’ still ongoing. Tagging efforts provide important scientific information on fish mortality and growth rates etc.

Essential information on fish recovered with tags can be recorded on a ‘tag recovery form’ available from the SPC website or within the observer workbook. Observers and others are trained in the use of this form. Different rewards are available for different types of tags, generally identified by their colour. Rewards range from 10 USD to 250 dollars for an archival tag which gives information on depth and location.

In 2016 a cruise was undertaken in the Central Pacific targeting NOAA TAO buoys and ISSF dFADs in the waters of FSM, Nauru, Tuvalu and the Solomon Islands. The majority of approximately 2000 tagged fish were bigeye. Sonic tags were deployed and these will assist scientists to better understand tuna movement around FADs. Future 2017 tagging projects will include poling in Micronesian areas and targeting sharks.

Tag seeding projects continue to be an important aspect of tagging as they estimate how well vessels are reporting on any uncovered tags (reporting rates). Coordinators were encouraged to continue to identify suitable observers to deploy tag seeding kits and to ensure tag information was debriefed, noting that administrative and funding support for these activities is available. Information on tag recoveries over time along with other interesting aspects from the tagging website www.spc.int/tagging

PIRFO TRAINING SCHEDULE

SPC presented a comprehensive list of the 2016 PIRFO training schedule (attachment L). During discussion participants provided their requests for training to be scheduled for 2017. There was a request for transparency around trainers’ rates. FFA confirmed that they were putting categories of rates together for different conditions to be used under specific TORs. PROP projects will also need defined guidelines for national training and trainer costs. FFA confirmed that they would continue to manage the funding for many of the currently conducted national training so they also needed early

confirmation of funding requests, noting that their fiscal year is from July to June of the following calendar year.

RECOMMENDATION 6: ROCW encouraged FFA to get early approval for the TORs resulting from the reviewed increase in observer and PIRFO trainer pay rates as these were required to complete training budgets.

OBSERVER DATA THEME

SPC provided compelling arguments (attachment M) related to differences between workbook data received from members and the number of trips recorded in OMP. The high difference in information provided to SPC observer data services as opposed to the actual number of placements could be attributed to common issues such as re-sending the same data (which may suggest there is no log of data sent to SPC at the national level), bandwidth restrictions for file transfer, broken scanners and delayed submission of re-scans. SPC have a number of solutions and are motivated to work with countries to overcome these issues.

The quantity (submission of information from all trips) and quality (without missing pages) was important in order to provide members with accurate analysed data. In addition SPC scientists did modelling based on this data from observer trips so missing data was a concern. SPC provides an online system (Dorado) for countries to access an array of reports for submitted observer data. Reports for specific national needs can be created on request. Demonstrations on how SPC can access OPM (noting the restrictions) and using Hightail for file transfers was given. When bandwidth is a problem files can be hand delivered on CDs at regional meetings.

There was some concern surrounding the apparent reduction in deployments over successive years. Some members conceded that changes in staff meant that not everyone was aware of the status of their data. The number of vessels fishing under the UST has recently reduced, although that should have been offset by more boats under the FSMA. Overall the total number of PS vessels actually fishing in the Pacific has increased in recent years.

RECOMMENDATION 7: SPC and FFA were tasked to analyse the percentage of missing data that did not get submitted to SPC (noting the need to amend the OPM report criteria of reading actual only and not including planned trips) as well as to NOPS by observers and to propose solutions to address these issues. Furthermore, if funding could be confirmed, SPC and FFA were requested to do a detailed in-country assessment of the status of current and previous years' observer data.

WCPFC DEVELOPMENTS

WCPFC provided an overview of issues from WCPFC inclusive of those listed below (attachment N1):

- a. Observer Sea Safety/Emergency Action Plan
- b. Transshipment observers
- c. ROP audits – 2017 time table
- d. CMM booklet progress - DD
- e. IATTC Cross endorsement

WCPFC began their presentation with a reminder that observer safety measures were now in place having come into effect on 1st January. All FFA members must now provide their observers with a two-way communication device and a waterproof PLB. Some programmes (MRAG) have already ensured that good quality equipment has been distributed, while recognising that some NOPs are still finding it difficult to implement these requirements. They were advised to look to FFA (or others) for support as this may be a concern when WCPFC audits are carried out during the year.

EAPs were also required and should mention how 24-hour contact for emergencies will be covered. Emergencies may include harassment or intimidation along with safety and medical issues. There were 61 observer emergencies reported to the Commission in 2016, but not all were deemed to be critical. Observers need further training to identify real emergencies as opposed to what might be seen as every day occurrences (stolen property etc). FFA mentioned that their EPA applies to any observer placed by them, but they would revert to other placement programme’s EAPs when deployed by them. Programmes are encouraged to contact FFA for any required support to ensure compliance with the WCPFC observer safety measures.

Transshipment observers

The requirement is outlined under CMM 2009-06 (attachment N2) and requires 100% observer coverage on vessels transshipping on the High Seas. They collect Commission Area catch details, logsheets for catches from coastal states, the vessel position, and the intended port of landing. The forms are available on the WCPFC website. Placements are done through authorised ROP providers (NOPs).The salary is based on the provider rates. In 2016 there were 19 vessels boarded. Some trip data is still outstanding from the vessel. Workbooks are available and shipping details would be appreciated as some have been miss-sent. WCPFC noted that while there are some moves to end transshipping on the high seas, it will continue for the interim. Some NOPs are not supplying observers as they are against the Commission decision allowing such HS activity, which is acceptable, but it does leave the door open for non-FFA member observers to be employed. And some Chinese observers were deployed last year.

ROP Audits – 2017 time table

WCPFC audits apply to members of the ROP. Noting that Samoa, French Polynesia and Niue are not part of the ROP. The 2017 schedule was shown. The programme plans to audit Palau, Tuvalu, PNG, Australia, New Zealand, Cook Is, Chinese Taipei, China, Korea and FSMA. WCPFC asked for suitable travel dates. Reviews now take place every 3-5 years. If the programme does not meet the standards they are at risk of being delisted from the ROP, but in reality the WCPFC tries to work with programmes and assist them to find the support they require. There are 90 days to rectify any outstanding issues. POA have a number of difficulties making placements in non-FFA ports and asked whether the WCPFC could assist with local contacts in these ports. WCPFC agreed to assist with contacts of the countries concerned.

ROP audits – 2017 time table somewhere between March and August

Programmes listed were asked to give a tentative date that suited them for an audit.

Palau	TBO
Tuvalu	TBO

Papua New Guinea	TBO
Australia	TBO
New Zealand	TBO
Cook Islands	Science Committee
Chinese Taipei	Organising
China	Organising
Korea	Organising
FSM Arrangement (PNA)	TBO

CMM Booklets progress

A request was made for appropriate print numbers, noting that shipping charges were excessive. The booklet will be made available electronically. The 2017 printed cover will be green. There have been a very few changes since 2016, but new booklets should be used to avoid confusion. The booklets only include CMMs relevant to observers. SPC noted that the electronic version will be distributed on flash drives for new trainees.

IATTC Cross-endorsement

The 2016 training was provided by WCPFC during 2016. The training certifies observers to continue to collect data when or if the vessel moves to the IATTC area. At the moment IATTC observers are not certified to collect data in the WCPFC area, but this may occur in the future. Cross-endorsement resulted from a 2011 MOU signed by both RFMOs based on a request from industry suggesting that there was no need for a second observer. 17 observers were trained in 2017 joining the 54 observers that have previously been certified. Extra training in Vanuatu and FSM was made possible with assistance from FFA. IATTC are the training implementing and certifying agency.

NOAA noted that observers are being put under pressure to stop sampling with verbal harassment etc. So observers need strong skills to understand their role and rights when engaged in cross-endorsement trips. There was a suggestion for a letter explaining the observer's role to be provided as part of the placement process. WCPFC ROPC agreed to supply a letter explaining the roles of the Cross Endorsed observer. The US, Spain and El Salvador are the main users of cross-endorsed observers, with Spanish vessels increasingly using observers from both areas (so having 2 observers onboard). FFA mentioned that programmes looking for more cross-endorsed training should supply their current training profile to FFA through OPM and a training needs assessment will be conducted.

WCPFC 13 Outcomes

WCPFC provided a briefing on observer safety issues arising from WCPFC13 based on that meeting's summary report annexes (attachment O). These covered issues pertaining to:

a. New measures

WCPFC advised that there were four updated and one new CCM. The Commission agreed to adopt CMM 2016-01 CMM measure for BET, YFT and KKJ tuna which replaces CMM 2015-01 from 2008-01. There was discussion about separating CMMs by species and taking the observer coverage items out.

CMM 2016-02 replaces 2010-02 giving a timeline for the Eastern Pocket to be closed. CMM 2016-03 is a new CMM, a hard fought one which was the first CMM that went to a call for a vote for the first time

in a WPCFC conference. The Japanese agreed with it, but were concerned that it went against some of their legal instruments, although the vote did not come up, as Japan finally agreed.

CMM 2016-04 has replaced 2015-04 which was for blue fin and does not have a lot of relevance for observers. For observers the main CMM to be aware of is 2016-03. WCPFC explained the main features of the CMM. It applies to ROP observers operating under the WPCFP ROP, noting that national laws may go above and beyond this CMM. In the event of an observer going missing or dies, a vessel is required to search for the observer for at least 72 hours unless very bad weather prevents this. The Master must notify the flag state and alert other observers, cooperate and come back to port for an investigation without touching any of the observers personal effects. These measures are in keeping with the law of the sea etc. If the observer dies under natural circumstances the body must be preserved and brought back to port.

The CMM also provides direction in the case of serious illness or injury and stipulates the appropriate contacts for notification. The flag of the vessel is responsible for the safety of the observer when seriously ill onboard at all times and cooperates with any investigation. Although there is nothing in the CMM, there was some discussion that if the observer is not genuinely being harassed the costs of transit to port etc, could be at the observer providers expense. Where harassment events are found out after the trip the flag state and the WCPFC must be notified in writing (which could mean an email). The observer trip report has to be provided noting the data access rules. Some complaints have been submitted where the provider does not inform the flag state about the incident.

With regard to the CMM referring to High Sea boarding, support from different flag states was coordinated. Observers now have something in place to protect them, while previously most vessels did the right thing this CMM support is a definite advantage. The CMM will be available on the WCPFC website in the near future. In terms of flag state vessels having the right to access reports in the event of harassment or other reported incidents, it is important that Coordinators deal with requests for access professionally and in a timely manner.

b. WCPFC13 Decisions (relevant to observer programme)

These following items were agreed at WCPFC13 and can be found in the summary minutes and/or attachments.

The obligation to provide operational data is assessed and member countries can be found non-compliant because of non-submission of observer data to SPC in a timely manner. It was mentioned that a couple of countries are continuously missing these targets. Programmes are encouraged to contact SPC to explain why there are issues providing the data. Data found to be of low quality during debriefing should still be sent to SPC and can be acknowledged as provision of data. FFA mentioned that they 'lose' 10% of data per year. FFA trip numbers can be used as a baseline number to calculate coverage. RMI suggested they have a list of all of their trips and this can be provided. WCPFC ROPC noted that the provision of baseline data is a ROP requirement. FFA said they captured six reasons for lack of submission (no dedicated person to do the job, lack of follow up with regards to GEN-3 incidents, slow internet, lack of focus on the job, and lack of feedback with the upper echelons after meetings and back to back trips).

Manta and Mobula Rays

DDM asked to record through the observer programs the number of discards and release of Manta and Mobula rays with the indication of species, length, sex, status (A or D) and location caught. This will be done in line with recent DCC changes. Manta Rays will be considered a key shark species for assessment and be listed under the Shark Research Plan. SC13 shall review the ROP minimum standard data fields and safe release guideline for these species with possible adoption at WCPFC14.

MOU with CCSBT

There was a Memorandum of Cooperation (yet to be signed) for observers to record any transshipment of Bluefin tuna on transshipment vessels. While very few Bluefin are seen during High Seas transshipments, training in species identification for frozen and processed Bluefin may be required. FFA will follow up and query what funding, training resources or trainers can be provided under this arrangement.

c. Outcome/Recommendations/Implications

WCPFC referred participants to earlier parts of the discussion.

d. Future Issues

Members were informed that a number of shark issues were developing. It was likely that there would be more CMMs on shark species especially hammerhead, thresher, tiger and other rarely caught sharks and also a possible ban on blue sharks despite their high fecundity, noting that this is not relevant to PS. With ER/EM the WCPFC will set standards and policy around this but it is unlikely to be involved at the operational level.

Evolving technology: Status of ER & EM- MH/TP/PL

SPC shared how fisheries data collection has been evolving rapidly over the last five years in the region (attachments P1 and P2) including:

- a. ER and EM definitions
- b. Why do we need ER and EM?
- c. Status of ER implementation
- d. Status of EM implementation
- e. Standards and processes for data collection using ER and EM
- f. Training in ER and EM
- g. Role of observers in ER and EM
- h. PIRFO standards for ER and EM

The terms ER and EM were defined as well as why it is essential to implement these new tools. The different ER and EM tools currently trialled in the WCPO were presented. The progress made with adopting the WCPFC standards for collecting fisheries data using ER and EM were presented. Members were reminded for the need to advise their ER and EM service providers to collaborate with the WCPFC and the SPC to ensure the ER and EM products are developed to these new standards. The current EM and ER data flow process were also presented.

Country	EM	Description	ER	Description	Coordination
Australia	Yes	EM programme implemented on 75 vessels (three types of gear)	Yes	Two private e-log software certified by AFMA are available for use by fishers	Dedicated staff
New Zealand	Yes	Integrated ER and EM programme to be implemented in 2017	Yes	Integrated ER and EM programme to be implemented in 2017	Dedicated staff

Country	EM	Description	ER	Description	Coordination
Papua New Guinea	Yes	EM programme to be implemented in 2017. Initial trials on 2 LL vessels starting in Q1 2017 and expanded to 8 LL vessel by Q4 2017. Trials on PS vessels to commence in Q1 2018.	Yes	FIMS e-obs for PS fisheries observers and iFIMS e-logs for PS and LL fishers	2 ER Officers in post. 2 EM office observers to be recruited in Q2. EM coordinator consultant to oversee trials from Q1 to Q3 2017.
New Caledonia	No	EM trial on 1 LL vessel in 2015-2016	Yes	Three longline vessels using eTUNALOG and one LL vessel using TAILS e-log.	Observer coordinator and SPC Regional ER and EM coordinator
Solomon Islands	No	EM trial in 2014 on two LL vessels. EM programme on 100 longline vessel to be implemented in 2017.	Yes	FIMS e-obs for fisheries PS observers and iFIMS e-logs for PS and LL fishers	E-Reporting Officer in post since April 2016 and SPC Regional ER and EM coordinator
Vanuatu	No		Yes	TAILS application used for monitoring artisanal fisheries. TAILS e-log trials to begin on LL vessels in Q2 2017.	Data Manager
Fiji	Yes	15 longline vessels currently equipped. 50 vessels equipped by 2018	Yes	Four longline vessels using eTUNALOG. TAILS e-logs trials to begin in Q2 2017.	One dedicated staff. 6 EM office observers in post.
Tonga	No		Yes	Three longline vessels using eTUNALOG	One dedicated staff
Niue	No		Yes	TAILS application used for monitoring artisanal fisheries	One dedicated staff
Samoa	No		Yes	Three longline vessels using eTUNALOG	Observer coordinator and SPC Regional ER and EM coordinator
American Samoa	No		No	ER programme to be implemented in Hawaii and to be implemented in American Samoa.	Observer coordinator once implemented

Cook Islands	Yes	Two PS vessels equipped with EM. XX Longline vessels equipped with EM	Yes	Four longline vessels using eTUNALOG. TAILS e-log trials starting Q2 2017.	One dedicated staff and SPC Regional ER and EM coordinator
Tokelau	No		Yes	TAILS application used for monitoring artisanal fisheries. FIMS e-obs for PS fisheries observers and iFIMS e-logs for PS and LL fishers	?

Country	EM	Description	ER	Description	Coordination
Tuvalu	No		Yes	TAILS application used for monitoring artisanal fisheries. FIMS e-obs for PS fisheries observers and iFIMS e-logs for PS and LL fishers	3 dedicated staff
Kiribati	No		Yes	1 Longline vessel using eTUNALOG	?
Nauru	No		Yes	TAILS application used for monitoring artisanal fisheries. iFIMS e-logs for PS and LL fishers.	?
FSM	Yes	5 longline vessels equipped with EM	Yes	FIMS e-obs for PS fisheries observers and iFIMS e-logs for PS and LL fishers. 1 Purse Seine vessel using eTUNALOG	ER and EM coordinator being recruited in Q2 2017. One EM Office observer recruited in February 2017. A second EM office observer to be recruited in Q1 2017. E-Reporting Officer in post from April 2015 until December 2016 and SPC Regional ER and EM coordinator
RMI	Yes	6 longline vessels to be equipped with EM in February 2017	Yes	FIMS e-obs for PS fisheries observers and iFIMS e-logs for PS and LL fishers	E-Reporting Office in post since September 2015 and SPC Regional ER and EM coordinator
Palau	Yes	4 longline vessels equipped with EM	Yes	iFIMS e-logs for PS and LL fishers	One dedicated coordination staff. Two EM office observers.
FP	No		No		

PNG provided a brief update on iFIMS stating that they were at 95% of the rollout phase and were aiming to be completely paperless with observer data by the end of 2017. Cook Is explained their use

of the FFA Android based application BOJAK (linked to RIMS) and how synchronisation of data can easily be accomplished instead of constantly filling out relevant fields in duplicate copy. This will make the boarding inspector's job much easier and more efficient.

PIRFO standards for assessing and certifying observers working with EM and ER were presented. It was mentioned that observers will need to have or obtain required competencies to use EM and ER systems. In regards to EM, observers tasked with analysing EM records will need to demonstrate minimum proficiency in IT skills as well having sufficient at sea experience on the vessel gear type they will be analysing EM records off. New EM/ER officer positions can be created in Observer Programmes with a pre-requisite of IT skills for experienced observers (with an appropriate level of sea days) to coordinate EM and ER. It will be essential for members to build this internal capacity so that they will be able to harness the implementation of these new technologies without the continuous support from the service providers beyond the trial phases. In regards to ER, the transition into full implementation will continue to be challenging as observers will still be required to complete their workbooks until such time as applications have been fully debugged.

The impacts on observers were related to the training and implementation processes. PIRFO EM and ER standards have been adopted as specialist skill sets and endorsed for observers already certified with core PIRFO units of competency. However there were already examples where persons were being used as EM analysts without appropriate at sea experience. The terminology for observers tasked with analysing EM records is not standardised at this stage (EM analysts being referred to as office observers tended to blur the two roles). Both of these monitoring methods have their own strengths and these strengths should be recognised separately. A proper analysis of the strengths of observers, ER tools and EM systems should be done on all required data fields, both those used for science as well as those used for monitoring compliance. This will be addressed as these roles and capacities become more evident and data is accumulated with the ongoing expansion of trials. Furthermore a cost/benefit sample size and power calculation could establish statistically robust coverage rates for all aspects of monitoring on both purse seine and longline vessels. Members are encouraged to place onboard observers on vessels equipped with EM systems when conducting trials in order for further comparative analyses between EM data and onboard observer data to be published. EM systems are powerful tools for providing data needed for both scientific and compliance purposes. As more EM and ER trials are conducted these comparisons would improve.

PNG shared their experience of launching EM trials on two LL vessels. Members can explore working with EM service providers and LL vessels operators on a voluntary basis initially. Incentives for vessel operators to implement initial EM trials include fisheries authorities (or other donors) procuring the EM equipment, to be installed onboard the vessel. SPC and FFA reiterated the support they are able to provide to members for progressing the implementation of ER and EM systems.

SPC NEEDS FOR OBSERVER DATA– IT/TP

a. Quality Assurance process implementation and debriefing evaluations for quality assurance

SPC presented their quality assurance processes (attachment Q) as it relates to both training and observer data records. This process also ties in the CMC verification of trained observers, debriefers and trainers. FFA suggested that SPC and CMC put a period of validity on observer certificates to force

them to get refresher training after so many years in order to ensure that they were updated on all the new developments and forms or electronic systems.

RECOMMENDATION 8: ROCW tasks CMC to put a period of validity on observer certificates to make it mandatory for them to get online refresher training after 3 years.

It was noted that SPC data entry staff rated the data quality based on the fields provided and this system on a trip basis. However debriefers were trained specialists in assessing the data quality and the debriefing assessments and evaluations were needed to be able to identify the data quality for every field in a trip and hence was a much more valuable tool in providing quality assurance of the data collected. Journals were also a necessary reference tool for SPC data entry staff to verify questionable data.

RECOMMENDATION 9: ROCW recommends that placement information and debriefer evaluations are sent with the observer data to SPC to validate their observer data.

Additional issues include training records for CMC to verify certification, and provide a centralised warehouse of PIRFO observers. This and baseline placement information were not being received by SPC and hence the completeness of their data was not known.

RECOMMENDATION 10: ROCW proposes that MSCWG instructs their membership to ensure that observer biodata and training records are sent to SPC and FFA for the regional repository with CMC.

b. Status of data provision and submission issues

SPC showed data pertaining to the status of data entry at SPC. For instance, some trips may require re-scanning, some are in progress and for some entry has not been started. It was suggested that 30% of workbooks were not debriefed based on the SUP-2 form records. PNG replied that this form is not always filled in and new scanning procedures are required. FFA stated that programmes must respond to the issues raised by SPC and that if they cannot meet the requirements they should ask for support. Coordinators were responsible for getting data debriefed and data sent to SPC. Some countries asked for clarity about the procedures for filling in the SUP-2 form and journal scans etc. In response to a question for data submission deadlines SPC responded that an agreement had been made two years previously at the observer tuna data workshop for a **100 day data submission deadline**.

STATUS OF BIOLOGICAL SAMPLING

SPC presented some biological sampling issues (attachment R) covering:

- a. Biological sampling and tagging
- b. Biological sampling status
- c. Future of biological sampling (national and regional targets implementation, biodays interface)
- d. Tagging status
- e. Biological and tag seeding training – CS

There was also a live demonstration of graphical representation of data from biological sampling for each member according to the target numbers contained in the signed SPC-member MOU. SPC welcomed requests for biological sampling training for observers. SPC agreed to provide individual password protected accounts for observer coordinators to access their own observers' biological sampling quality data. The question of giving observers extra payment for work that was already part of the duties was questioned by FFA.

Sampling Protocols – SF/TP

a. Spill Sampling requirements

SPC provided a brief presentation (attachment S) on WCPFC Project 60 which looks at the purse-seine sampling protocol for tuna species composition. Under the project the current sampling regime (5 fish per brail) is carried out alongside a higher frequency of sampling obtained by spilling fish directly from the brail into a large bin. Normally ~250 fish from this bin will be sampled for species and length. The data from the last project is currently being analysed and depending on the results further trials will be carried out. It is expected that a few observers will be asked to partake in these trials.

b. Conversion Factor collection

SPC have turned their attention to increasing conversion factor data, as collected by the GEN-4 form. Data collection on this form has been low in recent years, but the information is critical to create up-to-date conversion factor tables, which helps to convert processed fish, most especially from longliners. The data should be collected at the national level and efforts should be made to achieve full conversion data for each relevant species. The collected data can help with converting processed fish length/weight where total weight is required for catch documentation or validation schemes for instance.

c. Bird ID Guide

SPC presented the new identification guide for birds which was being developed to meet regional obligations on collecting bird interaction information. A draft copy has been released, but further work is required as original drawings are required to overcome copyright issues. The guide include the proper length measurements to take for birds. NOAA noted that queries and interest on bird landing are increasing most especially from conservation groups. They are putting more efforts into collecting good data on the issue and are happy to share their acquired knowledge. WCPFC noted that they cited 14 bird interactions in their data in 2011, but this increased to 54 in 2015, most likely because of the inclusion of NZ data. The FFA member programmes currently record data to the species group level, but this will improve with the new ID guide. They noted that Bird Life International have been very vocal on the topic and continue to apply pressure for better monitoring and reporting.

REGIONAL AGENCY FUTURE ROLE

- a. SPC's role in observer programme support - TP
- b. FFA's future in observer programme strengthening & support - PL
- c. Other organizations recent news relevant to observers - PL
 - i. PNA

ii. Te Vaka Moana

SPC's vision for the next three years were noted as mostly discussed under the Regional Cost Recovery component. Most work will be in the area of observer training and coordination along with quality assurance of both training and data.

FFA provided some feedback on the future role of ROP based on directions provided from members which could easily be encapsulated in the CSLAs. FFA work is mostly funded by the UST so future work will be driven by their time-frame. It is expected that focus on FLM training will continue as NOPs were assessed as having weaknesses in the principles of management and planning. There were a number of explanations as to why the current FLM trainees have not achieved certification, mostly related to the excuse of having limited time to complete the tasks while busy at work. A request for blocks of time away from the office was rejected by FFA as gaining competencies is best done on the job. It was accepted that an in-country visit by an external mentor would help. PNG requested support to visit other countries to review and assess their protocol as a learning exercise. FFA responded that this can be considered when the FLM modules have been fully submitted.

TVM remotely provided a very brief status update noting that they hosted a training workshop in data analysis in August 2016 which was facilitated by SPC. They are currently in a funding vacuum and no work has been scheduled beyond August 2017.

PNA provided their work plan earlier. They reiterated the request for FFA to cost the option of employing and MCS analyst for PNA members. And they will develop a compliance action/protocol to work with GEN-3 issues. They are also developing a sea-safety video. They appreciated that other members wanted to be part of the MSC coverage and they are currently considering this and fully intend to be open and work with other member countries.

PIRFO DEVELOPMENTS

FFA provided an overview (attachments T1 and T2) of PIRFO development with regards to training.

- a. What areas need development – TP/SF/PL
- b. Curricula, Assessment, lesson structure – MS/TP/SF
- c. Technical requirements - TP
- d. Human resources – PL
- e. Presentation requirements - SF
- f. 'PIRFO Trainer' vs. 'PIRFO Trainer and Assessor' TP/SF
- g. PIRFO standards – what do they mean? TP/PL
- h. Proposed APTC Cert IV Trainer & Assessor training
- i. True cost of training – MS/TP/PL
- j. PIRFO Standards – what do they mean – TP/PL
- k. Who can deliver training? - MS
- l. Evolving relationships with Marine Schools - MS
- m. PIRFO training affiliation with Tertiary Institutions (USP/NFC) - MS
- n. **PIRFO Frontline Management: completing PIRFO career structure - MS/PL**
 - i. Selecting/Changing suitable mentors

- ii. Submitting of assessment tasks
- iii. PIRFO-FLM certification
- iv. Advance FLM

With regard to FLM mentoring, the tasks do not have to be Observer or MCS related as staff can multi-task. So for example the Department of Finance will write the procedures, but Observer Coordinators do day-to-day tasks of making payments etc. These documents can go to FFA to demonstrate that the trainee has the skill to track income and expenses. Since it is for training purposes, confidentiality is not an issue. Members were urged to continue with professional development on a regular basis as things change over time and skills need to be updated.

Now that the competency standards had been revised, the next task was to look at curriculum and lesson plans and standardise these. Specific skill sets are required for training. Being a technical expert in any field does not make one a good trainer. Our aim is to get the PIRFO career path accredited by recognised educational institutes, so more transparency in training is required i.e. the lesson plans, delivery and assessments. Training is expensive as is professional development and the costs must be accounted for with donors. A cost-benefit analysis needs to be applied to assess feasibility of training options. This can be an issue if people don't turn up for training. Unscheduled costs like flight changes can also add up.

Competency based training is based on learning how to do the job, not just gaining theoretical knowledge. The training also needs to be contextualised to fit local situations such as national legislation. Suitable trainees should be chosen who have the aptitude and desire to do the job. There can be additional national training requirements to fit national qualification frameworks. PIRFO is a certain career pathway with built-in pre-requisites that do not need outside certification up to a certain level but for wider acceptance, accreditation of these certificates will increase the value attributed to this qualification. Experience does help to augment training over time. Attachment opportunities to qualified personnel is a recognised part of training.

FFA and SPC are pursuing partnerships with TAFE, marine and fisheries training schools in the region. Most countries with fishing vessels must have crewing qualifications based on international standards. Crew must be trained to this level, but a number of marine schools are struggling to supply this certification. PIRFO certification has now mostly been matched to national training frameworks and can be converted to a University qualification. SPC is not a recognised training entity (but a technical organisation) so they do not comply with a qualifications framework. Competency training includes three attempts to demonstrate skills, and does not include an assessment grade. Current work is making sure the competencies and assessments are completed to a high standard to get accredited qualifications.

In terms of FLM, the choice of a good mentor is essential. Choosing local mentors within fisheries has not really worked to date, so the use of external mentors to travel in-country is being considered. Candidates are encouraged to self-assess and to change their behaviour based on this. Regular meetings with a mentor are encouraged. FLM is certificate IV qualification. Training with NZ for middle management on leadership and management will be a level higher (diploma). The mentor does not have to be in fisheries, as the skills are generic and someone who has leadership skills you admire or aspire to emulate. At the diploma level the training will follow the student even if they change jobs. At

the moment students have to leave the Cert IV course on MCS if they resign from their job in fisheries. Palau expressed appreciation for the work that has been done on FLM. PNG asked about when the funding for incountry visits by mentors will be available. FFA replied that this will depend on the number of completed workbook tasks submitted by current FLM students.

An Observer Coordinator Job Description is required and duties/roles are listed in the PIRFO standards. FFA encourages Observer Coordinators to write this themselves for their HR personnel or Directors. The list contained in the PIRFO standards can be used for self-assessment against existing JDs and a formal list of the areas where evidence of competence is required. FFA was willing to assist members with developing this if required.

The PIRFO career pathway starts with basic observer training and ends with the Observer Manager level. There can be other career paths outside of this scheme that become available once certain PIRFO levels have been achieved. (ie Fishery or MCS Officer). Participants were asked to take note of the opportunities available through the PIRFO career path, most especially FLM and to complete the pre-requisites to gain access to the next level of training.

RECOMMENDATION 11: ROCW urged all FLM trainees to complete their submission of workbook tasks to FFA so that they can be certified and gain RPL with an accredited qualification.

The Chair reminded plenary that observer coordinators can work at a high level of competency like writing submissions to cabinet to gain official passports for travelling fisheries officers and observers so they are encouraged to reflect on the level of competency that has been achieved. SPC reminded participants that generally more than one trainer is required for courses of more than a week in length. A five week training course is too much for one trainer to do, especially considering that most trainers (Marine Schools etc.) are only responsible for 3-4 training sessions a day. The roles of trainers also differed from that of assessors so trainers need proper support.

- o. WCPFC CMMs – what’s new that requires extra training?
- p. Catch Certification Schemes
- q. MSC training – how it fits in with PIRFO
 - a. Sharing MSC certified list - PL
 - b. MSC US Treaty Fleets (PNA/TMI issue) - PL
- r. PIRFO website development – TP
- s. Observer Professional Affiliation - PL
- t. PIRFO Certification Management Committee (CMC) – TP

NOPs requested personal financial management training and post-trip counselling but some members had privacy laws so members were advised to achieve this at national level. Debriefing should also cover wellbeing of observers and not just focus on data collected. Experienced debriefers can provide advice to the observers. SPC mentioned Global Fund supporting training on ethics and personal financial management but part of the role of the Manager/Coordinator was to assist with advice as well. WCPFC supported the competency based training that the Pacific was pursuing. In their audits of several regions, where not everyone underwent CBA training, there were still noticeable gaps even in CBA trained observers and debriefers not providing quality work. SPC responded that there were quality checks and external audits done on observer and debriefer work.

SPC informed plenary of how the PIRFO standards had been revised through the developed table of equivalents. There were 26 standards, reduced to 15. This did not make the training shorter, it just simplified the language. There was also a change in the structure and language to reflect contemporary terminology. The document will be endorsed through HOF/FFC, but for trainers things have not changed. The change will be more relevant for those administrating training development and should be considered as re-packaging. The document helps with auditing institutions that want to deliver PIRFO training and is part of the approval processes.

SPC also presented the new PIRFO website, accessible at www.pirfo.org which hosts forums for debriefers etc as well as training materials, which might cover biological sampling training materials. The aim is to get better recognition for PIRFO across and beyond the region.

PIRFO 2017 Training Schedule/Regional Support needs

SPC presented the table (below) of planned 2017 training based on requests and needs from members (attachment U). There was discussion about various PIRFO training and new areas of training were considered for the future including Critical Incident Training (Processing GEN-3) and Biological Sampling Debriefing. Nauru mentioned that some observers were happy remaining as observers and did not want to climb the career ladder (i.e. to become a debriefer) and that their wishes should be respected. However, this can make it hard for NOPs to provide competent staff across all levels. FFA also mentioned that for all UST funded training, Kiribati would self-fund due to their prior arrangement of extracting the capacity building allocation from license fees.

	PIRFO TRAINING 2017	Month	Trainers & Affiliation
1	ROCW 17 (5-10 February.)	February	
2	Regional information Management Training (13-14 February)		
3	Kiribati MSC - COC (Tarawa -MTC)		Kiribati
4	*Marshall Islands National Basic Training	March	Marshall Islands
5	*Kiribati National Basic Training (Tarawa - MTC)		Kiribati
6	**Federated States of Micronesia (FM) Refresher Training	April	FSM
7	*Tuvalu National Basic Training (Funafuti)		PIRFO Trainers
8	FM MSC Training		FSM
9	***Tuvalu Debriefing Part A & B	May	PIRFO Debriefers & Assessor
10	***Sub-regional Debriefing Part A (Honiara)		SPC/FFA
11	**FM Refresher training		FSM
12	***FM Debriefing part C		FSM
13	MH Refresher (PS & LL)		Marshall Islands
14	Vanuatu National Training (LL)		PIRFO Trainers
15	**Tonga refresher Training	June	PIRFO Trainers
16	*Marshall Islands National Basic Training		MH & PIRFO Trainers
17	**FM Refresher training		FSM
18	*Sub-regional basic training (Micronesia)		PIRFO Trainers & SPC/FFA
19	*Sub-regional training (Santo)	July/August	PIRFO Trainers & SPC/FFA

20	***Kiribati Debriefing training (Kiritimati)		Kiribati
21	***Solomon Is Part C		Solomon Islands
22	**MH Refresher (PS & LL)		Marshall Islands
23	**Kiribati Refresher Training - (Kiritimati)		Kiribati
24	*Fiji National Basic training	September	FJ & PIRFO Trainer's
25	***Debriefing Assessor workshop		SPC/FFA
26	Kiribati MSC training - (Kiritimati)		Kiribati
27	*Marshall Islands National Basic Training	October/ November	Marshall Islands
28	Trainer's workshop		PIRFO Trainers & SPC/FFA
29	**Kiribati Refresher Training - (Tarawa)	December	Kiribati
	Types of Training		
	* Basic		
	** Refresher		
	*** Debriefing		
	Summary		
1	Basic Training - National	5	
2	Basic Training - Sub-regional	2	
3	Refresher	7	
4	MSC - National	3	
5	Debriefing Training	5	
6	Debriefing Assessor workshop	1	
7	Trainer's workshop	1	
	Sub-regional basic observer training (VMC)	Number	
1	Vanuatu	2	
2	Samoa	2	
3	Cook Islands	2	
4	Fiji	2	
5	Nauru	3	
6	Tuvalu	2	
7	Palau	2	
	Total	15	
	Sub-regional Introduction to Debriefing part A		
1	Fiji	2	
2	Nauru	2	
3	Solomon Islands	2	
4	Marshall Islands	3	
5	Tonga	1	
6	Vanuatu	2	
	Total	12	
	Debriefing Assessor workshop		
1	Solomon islands	2	
2	PNG	4	
3	FSM	2	
4	MRAG	1	
5	Kiribati	1	
6	Nauru	1	
7	FFA	1	

8	Tuvalu	1	
9	Fiji	2	
	Total	15	

NOPs without funding for national training can request donor assistance to boost their cost recovery funds. FFA reiterated that training can be funded from the regional level but the selected candidate needs to be committed, competent, with potential to succeed and an invested interest in staying in the observer field. This is why it was important to store data on trained observers, debriefers and trainers/assessors with all their qualifications and experience as this would impact professional development. SPC supported the need to robust processes to identify trainees. There are also issues surrounding regional funding whereby monies can only be spent on certain trainees (national vs regional) which needs to be followed as these are reported and acquitted after each training.

RECOMMENDATION 12: ROCW agreed to collect and send SPC and FFA their records of observers, debriefers and trainers/assessors with all their qualifications (scanned copies of certificates) from training attended over the years, whether PIRFO related or otherwise as well as for extended training in using ER and EM systems that have been provided for existing observers.

PNG mentioned that when debriefers and observers were not permanent staff, it was expensive for them to travel into the office daily when required so it was better to make them permanent staff and give them duties to perform in the office when not out at sea. FFA confirmed that this was a national prerogative and if needed, training could be delivered and staff permanently employed. FFA also confirmed that there was funding to deliver training for observers and debriefers so the ROCW work plan needed to be finalised. A PIRFO Certificate IV in Training and Assessing was planned for April so trainers would need to attend this if they did not already have this qualification.

Exploration of Observer Union

The Alliance of Professional Observers with the purpose of advocating observer welfare (safety, compensation, etc) costs US\$10 to become a member – with two office executives. Disadvantage of joining a union are higher risks of strike action depleting 100% coverage of PS. NOAA mentioned that under the authority of US laws, observers belong to the wayfarers union but they cannot strike although they can protest and complain. The union investigates immediately any complaints of harassment, pay discrepancies etc and then presents arguments to Government. Any strike action is illegal and results in instant dismissal.

With regard to PNA MSC certification, best to leave the decision for PNAO as there was a finite number of placements and it was a labelling and marketing prerogative for PNA. This did not however detract from the MSC training provided in chain of custody as MSC training was applied across many sectors and not unique to tuna fisheries.

Extra training for WCPFC requirements are limited to manta rays. New metrological data collection requirements were a possibility as raised by US National Meteorological Office with NOAA. SPREP have been in contact with ex-ROCW chair and RMI, and were interested in continuing with data collection. SPREP have been active at the Commission level especially with pollution matters.

Tri Marine have a different marketing platform for their chain of custody certification. Noting that CoC is for industrial profit and not linked with observer core details, Tri Marine have agreed in principal to provided funding for training and intend to use non-PNA observers. Clarification found that UST is a multi-lateral treaty so it can carry non-PNA PIRFO observers. PNA will discuss the issue in Majuro next month, but some PNA national programme have already decided not to place their observers on Tri Marine MSC CoC trips. PIRFO provides training for chain of custody and it is not label specific.

The Way Forward

a. Identifying issues for MCSWG consideration

The recommendations were discussed and agreed to for submission to MCSWG. Members were interested in hearing more about how Nauru managed to get their observers official passports to which Nauru clarified that it was due to US port of entry conditions whereby interviews for visas were mandatory and there was no US diplomatic representation in Nauru, which made placements prohibitively expensive.

b. Use of EM

Members were reassured the EM will not replace human observers, but it will complement the work of observers. EM was really useful for the high seas and can be intended for small vessels which are not fit for human observer placements.

c. Chain of Custody and Observer Roles

Observers work is both science and compliance. CoC brings a new player into the observer work component for the industry. ROCW should recommend that they stop using observers. It is interfering with how observers collect their data, their independence and transparency. They should install cameras or employ someone from industry to maintain this chain of custody for marketing purposes. It is opening up observers to manipulation by industry. The role of observers was stated in Article 28 of the Convention and CMM 2007-01. NOAA noted that they had issues in American Samoa to certify marine mammals with the dolphin safe programme. Mexico had sued the US over this. So the US decided that observers should NOT do certification duties. It was hard to get out of it. It was agreed that the observer would not certify things as it was possible that the observer could be sued. In the US case you can't sue a federal employee. The Pacific would do well to ensure that they do not put observers in situations where they have no business verifying things in the first place.

More discussions on CoC ensued and a recommendation was proposed. All agreed that there was a high level of risk involved if observers continued to be used. As observer safety was a primary concern, payment of only 10 dollars on top of their observer allowances was really not worth the hassle and there had already been issues with coordinators and member countries not agreeing to MSC duties. The main message from ROCW was to look at other means for MSC certification. ROCW voiced strong concerns about the impact of MSC work on observers. They believe that the work is outside the core role of the observer with little financial benefit. More importantly it directly impacts on observer independence and has repercussions for their overall safety. CoC can expose observers to incidences of threats, intimidation, harassment and corruption and possible legal liability or proceedings.

RECOMMENDATION 13: ROCW strongly recommends that alternative methods of achieving MSC verification should be explored such as EM or dedicated industry monitors to carry out these Chain of Custody roles.

CLOSING REMARKS

Nauru was warmly thanked for chairing the workshop and FFA for coordinating logistical arrangement. The record was endorsed pending minor cosmetic editing.

a. Venue for next meeting

The next ROCW meeting for 2018 will be held in Palau from 05 – 09 February.

Participants supported the nomination of Palau as Chair for the next meeting.

The workshop adjourned and the CMC meeting commenced.