

From SC-5 REPORT
Shanghai, China 23-28 September 2017

9. Observer Programme and Monitoring approaches

9.1. Observer Programme

164. The SC was requested to comment on the 2017 2nd Draft CMM for a SPRFMO Observer programme (Document SC5-Doc12), which was introduced by the Executive Secretary. The SC noted that the Draft was an improvement from last year's version because it focused on the administration of the program, rather than the scientific need for the program, which is dealt with in other CMMs (such as data requirements and observer coverages). The SC recognized that its advice should focus on the scientific aspect of the Draft, and not provide drafting suggestions, but general recommendations.
165. A question was raised whether observer coverage rates would be included in the CMM, and the belief was not directly, but that the SC could provide guidance on the adequacy of the observer coverages for individual fisheries.
166. The SC was informed that an action item from the Commission consisted of a simulation study to determine adequate levels of observer coverage. This simulation study has already started. It was noted that different coverage rates may need to be established dependent on the number of vessels in a fishery; i.e. 10% of a few vessels may not be representative, but 10% of many vessels would be more statistically robust. The SC discussed that coverage rates could be more flexible to meet statistical needs and flag state's sampling programs.
167. Concerns were voiced whether the current coverage levels were sufficient to address compliance needs or whether higher level of coverage would be required given that the CMM states observer program may be used for functions of the SC and CTC. It was suggested that discussion be moved to the CTC on that, but thought would be that the focus would be on science needs, as stated in the Draft CMM.
168. A small working group was convened to provide recommendations on the Draft. The group briefly discussed whether it should address the SC workplan item "Review scientific appropriateness of observer coverage by fishery (also consider whether transshipment data would be useful for scientific purposes)". It was decided that observer coverage for scientific purposes would be better addressed by other CMMs and not by the observer program CMM.
169. The small working group noted that many means are available to collect scientific information. There was a discussion on the degree to which the draft CMM focused on human observer versus alternative means. Some methods may not be able to gather all scientific information that other methods may be able to collect. Note that a combination may be valuable.
170. Concerns were voiced that in some fisheries it might (at least currently) not be possible to place a human observer on board vessels. Participants noted that in such cases the use of alternative means of observation could be used but that these should also meet minimum standards and should require a process of accreditation, similar to that established for human observers. It was unclear if the CMM, in particular Annex C, addresses these other programs. It was discussed that the type of observation method was dependent on the type of data being collected, and that a combination of human and other methods could be considered to address specific data needs
171. For paragraph 11, the small working group expressed concern about the timeframe allowed. There was uncertainty about the extent of what is required within the time period.
172. Under paragraph 12, the group agreed that it would be favourable if observer

programmes already accredited by other RFMOs would be cross-endorsed by SPRFMO provided that the standards for data collection and submission are sufficient.

173. For paragraph 23, a question was raised why measuring effort was specifically addressed in the Observer CMM and not in the Data Standard CMM or elsewhere as all the other specific data collection requirements for observers. The small working group recommended that the language in paragraph 23 be replaced with “the SC will periodically review and provide advice on the appropriate level of observer coverage that is required to support the work of the SC” to be general yet ensure activities are appropriate for the SC.
174. Point 1d in Annex B was also discussed. There was concern that allowing a captain to see the data before the observer left the boat could impact the quality and impartiality of the data and potentially result in biased data. It SC5 report 28 was discussed whether to remove this or whether to possibly modify the language and specify that after the observer has left the vessel, the captain would be informed about the findings of the observer and be given the opportunity to provide any additional data and explanations, if appropriate and desired
175. Recognising that the primary function of the SPRFMO Observer Programme is the collection of scientific data, the SC notes that these can be collected by diverse means.
176. The SC recommends that well trained and accredited human observers shall be the basis of the SPRFMO OP; for some fisheries (to be defined by the Commission with the advice of the Scientific Committee), other means of accredited observations can be considered as an alternative to human observers.
177. The SC recommendsthat Annex C of the CMM should eventually include minimum standards for alternative means of observation. 9.2. E-monitoring, self-sampling and study fleets
178. These issues were discussed under the OP CMM item and it was agreed they need to be addressed in more detail at the next SC meeting.