
11TH MEETING OF THE COMPLIANCE AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (CTC)

Manta, Ecuador, 23-26 January 2024

CTC 11 – Doc 09

SPRFMO Observer Programme Implementation Report

Secretariat

1. Background

Paragraph 47 of [CMM 16-2023 \(Observer Programme\)](#) requires that the Secretariat shall prepare a report on the implementation of the SPRFMO Observer Programme (OP) for presentation at each annual meeting of the Compliance and Technical Committee (CTC), using information from annual reports, observer data, and all other suitably documented and relevant information in its possession. This document represents the fifth iteration of this implementation report and summarises developments in the SPRFMO Observer Programme Implementation since the conclusion of the Commission's 2023 Annual Meeting.

The CTC is invited to:

- **Note** the contents of this paper (particularly Sections 2.5 (constraints) and 2.7 (potential Challenges)) and make any comments it deems appropriate;
- **Assess** the Final Evaluation Reports provided by MRAG for the European Union; and
- **Make** recommendations to the Commission regarding whether these observer programmes have met the requirements of this CMM 16-2023 (Observer programme) and, where relevant, whether a recommendation based on paragraphs 35 to 38 is appropriate.
- **Note** that the 3-year contract with the current Observer accreditation provider has expired; and, that the contract could be extended.
- **Make** recommendations to the Commission regarding whether the contract for the current Observer accreditation provider should be extended.

2. CMM reporting requirements

2.1 Information on problems that have been encountered

None identified.

2.2 Recommendations for improving current standards and practices

The [11th Scientific Committee Meeting](#) discussed the current progress towards providing advice to the Commission on an appropriate level of observer coverage under CMM 16-2023, noting key limitations in understanding the observer requirements for compliance, biological sampling and bycatch rates. This discussion is recorded in paragraphs 171 – 177 of the SC11-Report and did not lead to any specific recommendations.

The SC **noted** that they have added to their workplan the task to explore the possibility of a pilot program on observer coverage levels. However, that plan was not supported by all Members and China submitted a statement available as Annex 10 [of the SC11-report].



The SC also **advised** that the Commission review the observer coverage [in squid] considering the percentage of vessels sampled and consider the feasibility for the future development of EM [electronic monitoring] to monitor the squid fishery bycatch in the Convention Area.

2.3 Developments in observer programmes and observational methods

The proceedings of the 10th International Fisheries Observer and Monitoring Conference (IFOMC) are available (<https://www.ifomc.aq/information/proceedings>). This conference was hosted by CCAMLR in Hobart, Australia from 6 to 10 March 2023. The conference was very successful involving 233 participants from 30 countries including representatives from many observer programs, fisheries managers, fisheries scientists, fishing industry groups, and end-users of the data that these programs collect.

The meeting had a significant focus on the growing role that technology is playing in the monitoring of fisheries, through communications, video, satellite and other high-tech means.

The meeting was attended by both the SPRFMO Data Manager (Dr. Vidal) and Compliance Manager (Mr Jenkins) and under the Session on “Harmonizing and standardizing monitoring programmes”, Dr Vidal made an oral presentation entitled “International collaboration to standardise high seas monitoring” explaining SPRFMOs establishment and development of a fully accredited SPRFMO Observer Programme. This presentation was well received and generated much discussion.

2.4 Accreditation process in 2023

The Data Manager was able to meet with MRAG on the margins of the 2023 IFOMC.

In response to the letter sent out by the Secretariat on 27 March 2023 (G28-2023) indications of interest to seek accreditation were received from the Cook Islands, Ecuador (2 programmes), the European Union, Peru and the Russian Federation.

Subsequently the only programme that MRAG was able to fully assess was the European Union programme (refer Annex 1).

No issues have arisen in the relationship between MRAG and the Secretariat, and MRAG has offered valuable insights beyond the current accreditation processes in anticipation of future needs and challenges, some of which are discussed in more detail below.

The final recommendations from the Final Evaluation Reports are as follows:

- **European Union – Recommendation for accreditation**
 - Comprehensive documents were provided to support all accreditation requirement criteria.
 - Four EU member States undertook the assessment (Poland, Germany, the Netherlands and Lithuania).
 - Observers are coordinated through a single organisation from the Polish National Marine Fisheries Institute (NMFRI).
 - No issues were identified, and the evaluator has recommended accreditation for the four member States who undertook the Assessment.



2.5 Constraints to accreditation

Funding:

As noted in paragraph 111 of the [COMM 7 Meeting report](#), “relevant expenses for accreditation will be covered by the EU contribution of 150,000 Euros for the first year, and Members’ contributions will be requested after that period”. The European Union, in response to a request from the Secretariat, has graciously agreed to extend the project to support costs associated with the accreditation process for most Members, through until the 31st of December 2024. This support includes costs related to translation of relevant information and material and all applicants have been advised of this opportunity. The generosity of this contribution continues to be acknowledged and appreciated, and it has significantly facilitated the implementation of the SPRFMO Observer Programme.

As per paragraph 22 of [CMM 16-2023](#) (Observer programme) the SPRFMO Observer programme Accreditation Evaluator shall be paid out of the Commission budget. From 2025 the costs to evaluate any remaining programmes or to renew programmes will no longer be covered by a voluntary contribution.

Accreditation:

The current Observer Programme Accreditation Evaluator has informed the SPRFMO Secretariat that, as a United Kingdom business, current government guidelines (The Russia [Sanctions] [EU Exit] Regulations 2019) prohibit providing any services, indirectly or directly, to a person or persons connected with the Russian Federation and this prohibition does include the accreditation of a Russian Observer programme.

The SPRFMO currently has no other Observer Programme Accreditation Evaluator, and this situation was not foreseen in the Conservation and Management Measure. Please note that there is a related proposal (COMM12-Prop17) that has been submitted for consideration by the Commission.

Contract

The current Observer accreditation provider was appointed following a call for proposals in 2019. The original call for proposals specified that the contract duration will be no greater than 5 years but will provide for the possibility of renewal. Negotiations between the Secretariat and the successful company resulted in a 3-year term being agreed. At the time this aligned both with the original term of the EU supporting grant as well as the CMM 16-2019 provision that “From 1 January 2024 Members and CNCPs shall only deploy observers from national observer programmes or service providers accredited under the SPRFMO”.

The current Observer accreditation provider has successfully performed 8 accreditations and, in the opinion of the Secretariat, is currently providing excellent value for money.

2.6 Any identifiable problem or obstacle in fulfilling the objectives and purpose of this CMM

There are indications that upto 6 programmes will seek observer programme accreditation in 2024.

The Observer programme Accreditation Evaluator has been appraised of this likelihood. However, Members seeking accreditation are encouraged to react promptly to the Secretariat letter initiating the accreditation process and look to engage with the observer accreditation provider as early as possible so that the process can be completed, and their programmes are able to be assessed during the 2025 annual meeting.



2.7 Potential challenges and considerations for the future of the SPRFMO Observer Programme

Two Members/CNCPs have expressed interest in accrediting observers for deployment on carrier vessels. To date, observing of carrier vessels has not been part of the accreditation process in SPRFMO. However, expanding observer coverage to carrier vessels in addition to catcher vessels would represent an important step forward for SPRFMO. The accreditation evaluator has been notified of this interest; there has been no indication that expanding the accreditation process to cover carrier vessels will pose any extraordinary challenges.

At this point in time, the accreditation process evaluates the current activity of a Member/CNCP with respect to the accreditation criteria. This approach to accreditation may need to be reconsidered if Members/CNCPs or observer service providers expand observer coverage into fisheries that were not covered as part of the accreditation process. For example, if a Member has been engaged exclusively in trawling within the SPRFMO Area, and has achieved accreditation with respect to their trawl fisheries, should that imply that observers could be deployed on squid jigging vessels without any additional evaluation? One potential consideration could be to explore the idea of fishery or gear-specific accreditations.

Accreditations are currently valid for a 5-year time period. For some Members, this time period will be expiring in January 2026. It would be prudent to begin thinking about what the renewal process for an accredited observer programme might entail. For example, an assessment of data quality and implementation of CMM 16 could be developed as part of the re-accreditation process.

Similarly, the Commission may want develop data quality criteria that could be used to continually assess whether observer collected data are meeting the objectives of the Commission and the needs of the Scientific Committee. Accreditation is an important first step, but continual development to ensure harmonization of the independent observer programmes, with respect to data collection, data quality, and coverage characteristics (e.g., representativeness) will be a continual challenge. Other RFMOs have made efforts to provide centralized training and refresher workshops for observers from different programmes. Such trainings could prove valuable for capacity building, information sharing, collaborative development of data standards and protocols, and to monitor and mitigate and potential institutional creep or divergence that can occur naturally when programmes evolve in isolation.

3. National programmes accredited under the SPRFMO Observer Programme

The Secretariat through the Implementation Reports submitted under the Convention and CMM 10-2020 (CMS) requested Members and CNCPs to identify in which year they were intending to begin the accreditation process of their National Observer Programmes. The results are summarised in the table below.



Table 1: Currently Accredited SPRFMO Observer programmes and expected timelines for other programmes

Timeline for Accreditation	Member/CNCP
Currently accredited	Australia, Chile, China, New Zealand, Korea, Chinese Taipei, CapMarine
Accreditation in progress	European Union
Seeking Accreditation in 2024	Belize, Cook Islands, Ecuador (2 programmes), European Union (potentially in relation to the exploratory fishery), Russian Federation
Seeking Accreditation post 2025	Peru
No plans to pursue accreditation	Cuba, Curaçao, Liberia, Faroe Islands, United States of America, Vanuatu

4. List of Annexes

Annex 1 – European Union Accreditation Report



SPRFMO Observer Programme Accreditation Assessment



Final Evaluation Report European Union

November 2023





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Executive Summary

European Union observers are supplied through a number of EU Member States and are coordinated through a single organisation from the Polish National Marine Fisheries Institute (NMFRI). Materials for the assessment were supplied through Wageningen University who coordinated the accreditation process between the participating Member States. Materials provided are based around their national training programmes for fisheries observers in general with specific additions and modification for SPRFMO observer deployments as required.

European Union submitted their application for accreditation between June and September 2023. There were 47 supporting documents to the application, some applied to more than one of the accreditation criteria.

The assessment team found the materials supplied to be very comprehensive and covered all the elements required for accreditation. It is assumed that this will only cover the four Member States – Poland, Germany, The Netherlands and Lithuania – who participated in the accreditation process.

The following sections break down the materials submitted by European Union against the accreditation criteria with brief comments where appropriate.

Introduction

The South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO) is an inter-governmental organisation responsible for the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fishery resources of the South Pacific Ocean and in so doing, safeguarding the marine ecosystems in which the resources occur. The SPRFMO Convention applies to the high seas of the South Pacific, covering about a fourth of the Earth's high seas areas.

Currently, the main commercial resources fished in the SPRFMO Convention Area are jack mackerel and jumbo flying squid in the Southeast Pacific and, to a much lesser degree, deep-sea species often associated with seamounts in the Southwest Pacific.

The Organisation consists of a Commission and a number of subsidiary bodies. The Commission currently has 17 Members (European Union, the Republic of Chile, People's Republic of China, the Cook Islands, the Republic of Cuba, the Republic of Ecuador, the European Union, the Kingdom of Denmark in respect of the Faroe Islands, the Republic of Korea, European Union, the Republic of Peru, the Russian Federation, Chinese Taipei, The United States of America and the Republic of Vanuatu). The Commission also has two Cooperating non-Contracting Parties (Country of Curaçao and Republic of Liberia).

From 1st January 2025, SPRFMO Members and CNCPs shall only deploy observers from national observer programmes or service providers accredited under the SPRFMO Observer Programme. Observer programmes may be accredited under the SPRFMO Observer Programme for a maximum of 5 years before undergoing re-evaluation. This document, consistent with the process outlined in CMM 16-2023 (SPRFMO Observer Programme), provides the basis for the accreditation process and the collection of information required for that process.

This report is the final report for European Union. The current report includes an evaluation of all of the information received.

Considerations and recommendations

The European Union submitted 47 documents at different times outlining their joint observer programme (representing Poland, Germany, the Netherlands and Lithuania) and the areas relevant to SPRFMO in particular. The Documents were well labelled and in English and cooperation EU contact was good. A summary of the evaluation is outlined in the table below with more detailed comments in the main assessment.

Requirement	Total requirements	Pass	Pass with conditions	Fail
1. Impartiality, independence and integrity	5	5	0	0
2. Observer qualifications	1	1	0	0
3. Observer training	2	2	0	0
4. Observer trainers	1	1	0	0
5. Briefing and debriefing	2	2	0	0
6. Data validation process	2	2	0	0
7. Observer identification cards	1	1	0	0
8. Coordinating observer placements and observer deployments	4	4	0	0
9. Observer safety equipment	1	1	0	0
10. Responding to allegation of observer misconduct	1	1	0	0
11. Dispute settlement	1	1	0	0
12. Observer safety	2	2	0	0
13. Insurance and liability	1	1	0	0

The submission covered all the main areas required for Accreditation under Annex 3 of CMM-16-2023. As such, a recommendation for accreditation may be made for any of the four Member States (Poland, Germany, the Netherlands and Lithuania) who undertook the assessment.

Accreditation Process

The accreditation process for European Union progressed as follows:

Proposed Date	Actions	Actual Date
Annual Commission Meeting	Members, CNCP or service provider provides notification of intention to be assessed.	07/02/2023
Within 30 days of Annual Commission Meeting	Assessor (MRAG Ltd) contacts each Member, CNCP or service provider and agrees a timetable for the assessment process (Starting at time T) and shares assessment guidelines.	09/03/2023
T + 0 days (Start of process)	Assessment process to begin with Member, CNCP or service provider.	05/04/2023
T + 14 days	Member, CNCP or service provider provides all required documentation to assessor, in country visits or online meetings take place to discuss information provided by Member, CNCP or service provider. Assessor may request additional documentation if substantive or essential information is missing	-
T + 28 days	Assessor receives additional documentation requested during assessment process and collates all materials	-
At least 100 days before Annual Commission Meeting (i.e by 21 st October 2023).	Assessor reviews all material and completes its preliminary evaluation. Following this Members, CNCPs and service providers will be offered 30 days for Bilateral consultations to ensure that they have an opportunity to provide additional information and corrections relevant to their evaluation	26/09/2023
60 days before Annual Commission Meeting (i.e. by 20 th November 2023).	Assessor provides all Final Evaluation Reports including recommended conditions and incorporating feedback received on the preliminary evaluation.	03/11/2023
Annual Commission Meeting (29 th January 2024).	The Commission evaluates all reports and recommendations and will decide whether to grant accreditation (including specified conditions).	

Summary of Evidence submitted.

The table below summaries the documents provided by European Union that contain the evidence of conformance with the SPRFMO assessment requirements. The relevant sections of these documents should then be referenced within the main evaluation tables 1-13.

Table 1 Summary of documents submitted.

#	Document Title	Please indicate which for which standards this document is used as evidence												
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1	Declaration impartiality, independence and integrity -Observer	X												
2	Declaration impartiality, independence and integrity -Observer provider	X												
3	Declaration-Observer provider-_KI_LT	X												
4	Declaration-Observer provider-_NMFRI_POL	X												
5	Declaration-Observer provider-_TI_DE	X												
6	Declaration-Observer provider-_WMR_NED	X												
7	Framework Agreement No. NP-A2-PPSE .1.DM.2017_signed	X												
8	NMFRI Data Collection Coordinator's profile			X										
9	Observer Report_Annelies Ilena 2021_wys			X							X			
10	Observer training_NMFRI_POL			X	X	X					X			
11	POL_NMFRI_Travel Insurance Policy_selected translation													X
12	Self declaration of good conduct -Observer-		X											
13	SPRFMO_data_quality_assurance_ver 1.2_2022			X										
14.1	ID_Card_01								X					
14.2	Observer portfolio checklist	X	X											
14.3	Observer portfolio processes and checks_WMR_Protocol	X	X											
14.4	Portfolio_01	X	X											
15.1	CMR 2015-01 Observer manual Pacific v6	X	X				X							
15.2	Declaration impartiality, independence and integrity -Observer- _Format	X		X										
15.3	Declaration impartiality, independence and integrity -Observer provider_Format	X												

#	Document Title	Please indicate which for which standards this document is used as evidence												
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
15.4	Deployments_SPRFMO_Year	X												
15.5	ID_Card_Template									X				
15.6	Observer safety equipment checklist								X					
15.7	Observertemplate_2021_EU vessel2_revised_C			X							X		X	
15.8	Self declaration of good conduct -Observer-_Format		X											
16.1	Manual for scientific observers on EU pelagic trawlers in SPRFMO_TB_IW	X	X				X							
16.2	Briefing form-Template-2023					X								
16.3	Debriefing form-Template-2023					X								
16.4	Vessel safety orientation briefing form-Template-2023					X								
16.5	Observer safety equipment Check in, check out list -Template-2023					X				X				
16.6	SPRFMO OP accreditation_std 6.2a_NMFRI_Data management and security						X							
16.7	SPRFMO OP accreditation_std 8 1- 8 2 - 8 3_NMFRI_observers deployment_rev								X					
16.8	Integrity_Observertraining_Observer placements_Data validation_Insurance_WMR_NL_20230616	X					X		X	X				X
16.9	Observertraining_Observer placements_Data validation_Insurance_TI_DE_20230526	X					X		X	X				X
17.1	Observertraining_Observer placements_Data validation_Insurance_KI_LT_20230710	X					X		X	X				X
17.2	CatchAdvice_SPRFMO_20230523	X		X										
17.3	SPRFMO-observer training_ Bias in sampling procedures_20230814	X		X										
17.4	SPRFMO-observer training_ Catch sampling_20230814	X		X										
17.5	SPRFMO-observer training_ CMM-17-2022_Marine pollution_20230814	X		X										
17.6	SPRFMO-observer training_ CMMs_20230814	X		X										
17.7	SPRFMO-observer training_ Fleet information_20230814	X		X										
18	ASFIS_sp_2022_REV1.xls			X										

#	Document Title	Please indicate which for which standards this document is used as evidence												
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
19	SPRFMO OP accreditation_NMFRI Safe handling of birds and mammals			X										
20	SPRFMO OP accreditation_std 8 1- 8 2 – 8 3_NMFRI_observers deployment_rev								X					
21	SC11-Doc24-Annual-Report-of-the-European-Union-to-SC11-2023			X										
22	Manual for scientific observers on EU pelagic trawlers in SPRFMO_TB_IW_rev	X	X				X							
23	Observer guidance and Emergency Action Plan							X					X	

Scoring Tables – Interpretation

The scoring tables in the next section of the report provide feedback on the assessment of EUROPEAN UNION in meeting the required levels to meet the SPRFMO minimum standards. Each table consists of four columns:

Indicator number

Minimum Standard – The definition of the requirement to meet the minimum standard defined.

Pass / Fail – A simple indicator, colour coded green for “Pass”, red for “Fail”.

Comment / Condition / Reason for fail – Any additional comments from the assessment team on the element. These could include details of the condition’s, reasons for failing an element, that can be addressed before the final assessment, or for elements that have been passed the team could briefly highlight examples of good practice for other programmes to follow and highlight the particular sections of documents provided these can be found in. Document numbers are referenced in Table 1.

#	Minimum Standard	Pass / Fail	Comment / Condition / Reason for fail
X.X	Observer programmes must XXX.	P	The requirements set out are clearly demonstrated in section 22 of document 3 and part 4 of document 4.

1 Impartiality, independence and integrity

#	Minimum Standard	Pass / Fail	Comment / Condition / Reason for fail
1.1	National observer programmes and service providers shall only deploy independent and impartial observers. This means that neither the national observer programme or service provider, as the case requires, nor the individual observers, have a direct financial interest, ownership or business links with vessels, processors, agents and retailers involved in the catching, taking, harvesting, transporting, processing or selling of fish or fish products.	P	<p>Declaration of impartiality, independence and integrity of observers and observer providers are included. For observers this is as part of their contacts (1). Signed examples provided in 14.2 and 14.4.</p> <p>Declaration that the companies involved have no direct financial interest, ownership or business links with vessels, processors, agents and retailers involved in the catching, taking, harvesting, transporting, processing or selling of fish or fish products (2). Signed declaration examples provided (3,4,5 and 6).</p> <p>The agreement between NMFRI and PP group for the provision of observers according to the agreement between Germany, Lithuania, The Netherlands and Poland that highlights the for independent observers (Article 3, paragraph 1) is provided (7)</p>
1.2a	<p>The national programme or service provider, and the individual observers:</p> <p>a) Shall not have a direct financial interest, other than the provision of observer services, in the fisheries under the purview of the Commission, including, but not limited to: i) any ownership, mortgage holder, or other secured interest in a vessel or processor involved in the catching, taking, harvesting or processing of fish; ii) any business selling supplies or services to any vessel or processor in the fishery; iii) any business purchasing raw or processed products from any vessel or processor in the fishery.</p>	P	<p>Declaration that the companies involved have no direct financial interest, in any of the listed services related to the fishing industry products (2).</p> <p>Signed declaration examples provided (3,4,5 and 6).</p>

#	Minimum Standard	Pass / Fail	Comment / Condition / Reason for fail
1.2b	Shall not solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, any gratuity, gift, favour, entertainment, inordinate accommodation, loan or anything of monetary value from anyone who either conducts activities that are regulated by a Member or CNCP connected with its services or the Commission, or has interests that may be substantially affected by the performance or non-performance of the observer's official duties;	P	Companies or observers 'Shall not solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, any gratuity, gift, favour, entertainment, inordinate accommodation, loan or anything of monetary value from anyone who either conducts activities that are regulated by a Member or CNCP connected with its services or the Commission or has interests that may be substantially affected by the performance or non-performance of the observer's official duties.' (2 (b)) Signed declaration examples provided in 14.2 (observers) and 3,4,5 and 6 (companies).
1.2c	Shall not serve as an observer on any vessel or at any processors owned or operated by a person who previously employed the observer in another capacity within the last three years (e.g., as a crew member)	P	Observers shall not work on any vessel they have previously been employed by in any other capacity, for a minimum period of three years.' (2 (c)) . Signed declaration examples provided in 14.2 (observers)
1.2d	Shall not solicit or accept employment as a crew member or an employee of a vessel or processor while employed by a national observer programme or service provider.	P	Observers 'Shall not solicit or accept employment as a crew member or an employee of a vessel or processor while employed by a national observer programme or service provider.' (2 (d)) . Signed declaration examples provided in 14.2 (observers)

2 Observer Qualifications

#	Minimum Standard	Pass / Fail	Comment / Condition / Reason for fail
2.1	The national observer programmes or service providers shall demonstrate that observers that are recruited into their programme have relevant education or technical training and/or experience for the fleets concerned; ability to meet the observer duties; no record of convictions calling into question the integrity of the observer or indicating a propensity towards violence; and the ability to obtain necessary documentation, including passports and visas	P	<p>Observer requirements clearly met by European Union providers.</p> <p>Criminal convictions or propensity towards violence (12 and 15.8) Checks made by observer coordinator (14.3)</p> <p>Example observe portfolios for eleven observers (ten requested) provided (14.2 and 14.4).</p>

3 Observer Training

#	Minimum Standard	Pass / Fail	Comment / Condition / Reason for fail
3.1	<p>National observer programmes or service providers shall demonstrate that observers are adequately trained before their deployment. Training shall include all the elements outlined in Annex 3 of CMM-16-2023, and that data are being collected in line with the requirements set out in CMM 02-2022</p>	P	<p>All observers are ichthyologists with a university degree and previous experience in other fisheries on the Baltic Sea and North Atlantic</p> <p>Training of Polish observers through NMFRI is in two stages, the first includes general maritime training such as personal survival techniques and first aid and also highlights the requirement for a seaman’s medical. The second includes practical training on the work the observers will be undertaking onboard. Training for both stages takes between 4 and 6 weeks. (10)</p> <p>Prior to each SPRFMO deployment, observers are briefed by the Data Collection Coordinator on the specifics of the fishery, including the latest relevant CMMs and the required data formats. Data are collected using the using the SPRFMO Templates. (9 and 15.7)</p> <p>Requirements under CMM 16-2023:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The relationship between fisheries science and fisheries management and the importance of data collection in this context; (17.2 & 17.3) 2. The relevant provisions of the Convention and SPRFMO CMMs relevant to the functions and duties of observers; CMM 16-2019 Annex 3 14 (17.5) 3. Importance of observer programmes, including understanding the duties, rights, authority and responsibilities of observers; (17.2 & 17.3) 4. Safety at sea, including emergencies at sea, donning survival suits, use of safety equipment, use of radios, survival at sea, management of conflicts, and cold-water survival; (Detail in 10) 5. First aid training, appropriate to working at-sea or in remote situations; (Detail in 10) 6. Species identification and record of species encountered at sea, including target and non-target species, protected species, seabirds, marine mammals, sea turtles, invertebrates indicating vulnerable marine ecosystems, et cetera; (SPRFMO-OP, Species guide, WMR 2023 NB: This is a live document and is continually updated. It was noted in discussions with the EU delegation that where additional photographs for ID purposes are needed then the observer coordinator has tasked specific

#	Minimum Standard	Pass / Fail	Comment / Condition / Reason for fail
			<p>observers to take such photos). (18 and 19)</p> <p>7. Knowledge of the different types and functioning of bycatch mitigation devices required by SPRFMO CMMs; (SPRFMO-observer training_ CMMs_20230814)</p> <p>8. Safe handling protocols to rehabilitate and release seabirds, marine mammals and sea turtles; (19)</p> <p>9. Fishing vessel and fishing gear types relevant to SPRFMO; (High level of detail on vessels in the fishery in 17.7)</p> <p>10. Techniques and procedures for estimating catch and species composition; (All observers basic training covers these methodologies according to descriptions (10)).</p> <p>11. Use and maintenance of sampling equipment including scales, callipers, et cetera; (All observers basic training covers these methodologies according to description of basic training (10)).</p> <p>12. Sampling methodologies at sea, i.e., fish sampling, fish sexing, measuring and weighing techniques, specimen collection and storage, and sampling methodologies; (17.4)</p> <p>13. Understand potential biases in sampling, how they arise and how they could be avoided; (17.4 & 13 on data quality)</p> <p>14. Preservation of samples for analysis; (19)</p> <p>15. Data collection codes and data collection formats;</p> <p>16. Familiarity with catch logbooks and recordkeeping requirements to aid observers' collection of data as required under SPRFMO CMMs; (17.2 – 17.7)</p> <p>17. Use of digital recorders or electronic notebooks; (Some in 17.6 but these are not currently used in this programme. If they were included at a later date the instructions would be added linked to data entry training (Pers. Comm.))</p> <p>18. Electronic equipment used for observer work and understanding their operation; These are not currently used in this programme. If they were included at a later date the instructions would be added linked to data entry training (Pers. Comm.))</p> <p>19. Use of electronic monitoring systems as a complement to their work, when applicable; These are not currently used in this programme. If they were included at a later date the instructions would be added linked to data entry training (Pers. Comm.))</p> <p>20. Verbal debriefing and report writing; (10 & 16.3)</p> <p>21. Training on relevant aspects of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL). (17.5)</p> <p>Manual for scientific observers on board EU pelagic trawlers in the Pacific provided (16.1) .</p>

#	Minimum Standard	Pass / Fail	Comment / Condition / Reason for fail
3.2	<p>Refresher training should be ongoing dependent on the qualification requirements. Relevant updates to CMMs and observer requirements should be communicated to observers before each deployment as part of the briefing process, for example in an updated manual</p>	P	<p>Observer training and the briefings they receive prior to each deployment are detailed. (10)</p> <p>Each briefing includes a refresher on data collection methodology in the SPRFMO area including formats and scope. It also addresses relevant CMMs for the <i>Trachus murphyi</i> fishery.</p> <p>Records of when this training is carried out are maintained (14.2).</p>

4 Observer Trainers

#	Minimum Standard	Pass / Fail	Comment / Condition / Reason for fail
4.1	National programmes or service providers shall demonstrate that observer trainers have the appropriate skills and have been authorised by that national programme or service provider to train observers	P	The European Union Data Collection Coordinator's profile (Ireneusz Wójcik, from NMFRI)) has been provided. He is responsible for providing and coordinating the training of for SFRFMO (and other programmes) (8)

5 Briefing and Debriefing

#	Minimum Standard	Pass / Fail	Comment / Condition / Reason for fail
5.1	National observer programmes or service providers shall demonstrate that there are systems for briefing and debriefing observers and communicating at any time with vessel captains.	P	<p>Before each deployment of the observer on the vessel operating in the SPRFMO Convention area, observers are briefed on the updated Conservation and Management Measures applicable to the <i>Trachurus murphyi</i> fisheries in the SPRFMO area and on observer's obligations with respect to the methodology, protocols, data formats and scope of the data to be collected. Another important purpose of these meetings is to refresh the observer's knowledge of the methodology of data collection contained in the Manual for scientific observers on board EU pelagic trawlers in the Pacific and to discuss any updates to sampling methodology. (10)</p> <p>On the return from each observer trip in the SPRFMO area, Data Collection Coordinator arranges a meeting with the observers in order to receive feedback from observers on the completed trip. An important purpose of these debriefings is to discuss any potential issues related to the performance of the observer duties and cooperation with vessel's crew and, in case of any issue detected, to discuss the most practical and efficient solutions. (10)</p> <p>Communication with vessels. NB: Observers have two-way communication devices provided as part of their safety equipment.</p> <p>Observer rights to access communication equipment on board defined in the observer contract (1) namely:</p> <p><i>d) Access to and use of communications equipment and personnel, upon request, for entry, transmission, and reception of work-related data or information; and</i></p> <p><i>e) Reasonable use of the communication equipment on board to communicate with the observer programme on land at any time including emergencies.</i></p>
5.2	The briefing and debriefing process shall be conducted by properly trained personnel and shall ensure that observers and vessel captains clearly understand their respective roles and duties	P	<p>Briefings and debriefing are conducted by Data Collection Coordinator. (10)</p> <p>Communications with vessel described in parallel to each deployment (20)</p>

6 Data Validation Process

#	Minimum Standard	Pass / Fail	Comment / Condition / Reason for fail
6.1	National observer programmes or service providers shall demonstrate that they have an observer data validation process in place. The data validation process shall be conducted by properly trained personnel and shall ensure that data and information collected by an observer are checked for discrepancies or inaccuracies that are corrected before the information is entered into a database or used for analysis.	P	<p>The data validation outline procedures have been provided (13).</p> <p>The collection of fisheries data from EU vessels in the SPRFMO area, as a commitment of EU Member States, is part of a wider EU fisheries data collection program – EU Data Collection Framework, implemented by the Regulation (EU) 2017/1004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017. This programme is well known and ensures good data collection procedures are built in to the programme.</p> <p>Data are collected in accordance with the SPRFMO standards, following the requirements under the CMMs for <i>Trachurus murphyi</i> and general data standards.</p> <p>All NMFRI observers and fisheries data collection or processing personnel, in addition to the standard provisions in the employment contract on data protection with which they come into contact in connection with the performance of their duties, have to sign an individual additional specific “The Employee's Obligation to Maintain Professional Secrecy and Confidentiality” (3, 4, 5 and 6)</p> <p>Data checking and validation are done under three stages. The first checks details such as the duration of the trip and vessel details and locations. The second ensures that the format complies with the formats are consistent with the ‘SPRFMO Data Standards’ and will correct any incorrect formats. The third looks at the biological details and highlights any outliers that may occur. Data verification is done in Excel using <i>Power Query</i>.</p>
6.2	The data validation process shall ensure that the data meet the standards laid out in Annex 3 of CMM-16-2019	P	Detailed outline provided (13)
6.2a	a) A mechanism that allows scientific data to be stored and transferred to the national observer programme (or service provider) in a secure and confidential manner	P	<p>Details provided in Guideline 6.2a - Data management and security (16.6), Data manual provided (15.1).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each computer used by NMFRI employees is secured with an individual password, • None of the NMFRI employees can independently install any software on their computer - each computer used in NMFRI is configured only by IT specialists, • Observers collecting data in the field or on the vessel register them in their secured computers and, after returning from the mission, transfer them (through the

#	Minimum Standard	Pass / Fail	Comment / Condition / Reason for fail
			Institute's protected internal network) to the Data Collection Coordinator or transfer it directly to the electronic database; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the electronic database is only through the Institute's internal network - no access from outside; the database is additionally protected with access passwords, access to it is limited only to observers and limited-person data management team - with different access rights (read only, data entry only, data processing, administrative), • Data provided to the Data Collection Coordinator in the form of Excel files are uploaded to a data folder located only on the internal NMFRI server - these data are not physically stored on the Coordinator's computer, access to this data is limited only to the Coordinator, Database Administrator and Data Analyst, • Apart from the official Data Calls issued under the EU DCF regulation, no fisheries data may be shared within the NMFRI or outside the Institute without the consent of the National Correspondent (DCF), also acting as the Data Collection Coordinator, and the approval of the Director of the Institute,
	b) Vessel information uniquely identifies the actual vessel from which the fishing occurred	P	All EU flagged vessels uniquely identified by a CFR number, linked through the EU FVR to other characteristics e.g. vessel name and callsign.
	c) Dates and times of fishing effort are included and internally consistent (for example an end time should be after a start time)	P	Script in Power Query was developed which automatically detects incorrect data formats and corrects them.
	d) Location of fishing is included and valid (for example, logical latitude/longitude combinations), internally consistent and entered in the correct units	P	Location data and catch weight are visualised on a map to verify that the fishing location is within the expected boundaries. This type of data check is implemented with application of the "Map 3-W" module. (Described in comments and confirmed during meeting).
	e) Effort data allows quantification of the amount of effort invested by the vessel, appropriate to the fishing method used, which is also identified	P	Logbook data for effort collected would allow this. Data are submitted according to SPRFMO standards, (15.7)
	f) Catch information identifies the fishery resource (to the species level where possible) and the quantity of that species retained or discarded. If used, species codes are accurate	P	Logbook data for catch collected would allow this. Data are submitted according to SPRFMO standards, (15.7)
	g) Where biological or length information is collected for a fish, it is directly linked to the effort in which it was caught – including date	P	Logbook data for length frequency of fish sampled collected would allow this. All linked to catch and effort on haul by haul basis. The methodology of all biological sampling should be recorded to enable assessment of bias to be accounted for, i.e. random sampling,

#	Minimum Standard	Pass / Fail	Comment / Condition / Reason for fail
	and time, location, and fishing method information, and includes the methodology of data collection		stratified random sampling or non-random sampling. Data are submitted according to SPRFMO standards, (15.7)
	h) If the observer programme extends to transshipment and/or landings, then the amount and species of fishery resources transhipped/landed is quantified and recorded according to a standard methodology	P	Not applicable as no transshipment allowed for EU flagged vessels.
	i) Interaction data involving marine mammals, seabirds, reptiles and/or other species of concern identifies the individual species (where possible), the number of animals, fate (retained or released/discarded), life status if released (vigorous, alive, lethargic, dead), and the type of interaction (hook /line entanglement / warpstrike / net capture / other).	P	Data are recorded according to the SPRFMO standards and recorded in the SPRFMO templates (15.7). Data manual provided (15.1).

7 Observer Identification Cards

#	Minimum Standard	Pass / Fail	Evidence Provided
7.1	National observer programmes or service providers shall provide observers with identification cards that include the full name of the observer, date of issue and expiration, the name of the national observer programme or service provider, a unique identifying number (if issued by the national observer programme or service provider) a passport style photo of the observer, an emergency phone number	P	<p>ID card template (15.5) and example provided (14.1).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full name of the observer ✓ • Date of issue and expiration ✓ • Name of the national observer programme or service provider ✓ • Unique identifying number ✓ • Passport style photo of the observer ✓ • Emergency phone number (Number is observer or organisation). ✓

8 Coordinating Observer Placements and Observer Deployments

#	Minimum Standard	Pass / Fail	Comment / Condition / Reason for fail
8.1	National observer programmes or service providers shall demonstrate responsibility and capacity for the timely deployment of observers and will ensure that the selected observer receives all possible assistance during the entire length of their placements	P	Demonstrated capacity and responsibility in 8 1- 8 2 - 8 3 and 16.8.
8.2	National observer programmes or service providers shall have in place a protocol to replace an observer if the observer becomes unable to perform their duties.	P	Noted in (8 1- 8 2 - 8 3) “The same procedure as in the case of the deployment of observers applies when organizing the return of the observer from the vessel to the home country and in the event of the need to replace the observer for health or other reasons . Although so far there has been no need to replace an observer, the NMFRI has a staff of experienced observers who can successfully serve as a replacement in the event of such a need.”
8.3	National observer programmes or service providers shall also seek, to the extent possible, to avoid deploying a single observer on multiple consecutive trips on the same vessel	P	Confirmed in meeting that this will not happen. Sufficient observers trained in pool to ensure this. Observer may be extended on a single vessel but not for an extended period beyond 35 days (20).
8.4	It is the responsibility of a national observer programme or service provider to administer observer placements, to maintain the independence and impartiality of observers as described in this measure and ensure that all placements are administratively finalised as soon as practicable after the observers return to port. The national observer programme or service provider is expected to communicate with the observer regarding upcoming deployments, coordinate observer travel, and provide the necessary supplies for observer duties.	P	Impartiality embedded in observer and company agreements. (1-6) Equipment list complete and provided to observer (exception for certain agreed equipment that is provided by the vessel).

9 Observer Safety Equipment

#	Minimum Standard	Pass / Fail	Comment / Condition / Reason for fail
9.1	National observer programmes or service providers must demonstrate that observers are provided with appropriate equipment, including safety equipment, which is in good working order, routinely checked and renewed to carry out their duties on board a vessel. Essential equipment includes a lifejacket, independent two-way communication device capable of sending and receiving voice or text communications, personal locator beacons (PLBs), immersion suits, hard hat, proper deck working boots or shoes, gloves and protective glasses (including sunglasses)	P	<p>Provided as standard by observer provider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifejacket ✓ • Independent two-way communication device capable of sending and receiving voice or text communications ✓ • Hard hat ✓ • Working boots or shoes ✓ • Gloves ✓ • Ear-plugs(Not required but provided as standard) ✓ • Protective glasses (including sunglasses) ✓ <p>Provided by the fishing company:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal locator beacons (PLBs), ✓ • Immersion suits ✓ <p>Responsibility of the observer to check the equipment provided by the observer provider and fishing company and complete checklist (16.4). Any problems with the vessel or equipment will be reported to the observer coordinator and the observer will not be deployed if any safety concerns are noted (Pers. Comm. – during online meeting).</p>

10 Responding to Allegations of Observer Misconduct

#	Minimum Standard	Pass / Fail	Comment / Condition / Reason for fail
10.1	National observer programmes or service providers must establish procedures for preventing, investigating, and reporting on the misconduct of observers, in coordination with observers, vessel captains, and relevant Members and CNCPs	P	Not provided in documentation, but during meeting with the EU team the communication mechanisms between observers (and their organisation through the observer coordinator) and vessels (and their companies through a fleet coordinator) were described. Any issues and complaints of a serious nature between the observer and the fishing vessel (and the master) will not be direct but will be through the observer coordinator (on the observer side) and the fleet coordinator (on the vessel side). Resolutions will be made between these two individuals and relayed to both the observer and vessel.

11 Dispute Settlement

#	Minimum Standard	Pass / Fail	Comment / Condition / Reason for fail
11.1	National observer programmes or service providers shall demonstrate the existence of a dispute resolution process fair to all parties that provides a process to resolve issues through appropriate means including facilitation and mediation	P	The communication mechanisms between observers and vessels were described. In the first instance to reduce antagonism on board any issues and complaints of a serious nature between the observer and the fishing vessel (and the master) will not be direct but will be through the observer coordinator (on the observer side) and the fleet coordinator (on the vessel side). Resolutions will be made between these two individuals and relayed to both the observer and vessel. It should be noted that the observers' communications are independent of the vessels; communications systems and therefore secure. Equally the vessels' communications systems are secure and direct confidential messages would not be available to the observer.

12 Observer Safety

#	Minimum Standard	Pass / Fail	Comment / Condition / Reason for fail
12.1	National programmes or service providers must demonstrate that procedures are in place to support observers in their ability to carry out their duties unimpeded and in a safe working environment, including an established Emergency Action Plan (EAP). The EAP must provide instructions on sending reports to the provider's designated 24-hour point(s) of contact to report unsafe conditions, including instances of harassment, intimidation or assault.	P	Full continuous contact and support procedure in place (16.9, 17.1, 20,16.8) with two way communication. EAP document supplied (23) which provides details to observers, including contact details of relevant staff, of what to do should an emergency arise.
12.2	National observer programmes or service providers must also provide a permanent delegate or supervisor on land to communicate with the observer at any time while at sea.	P	Observer coordinator detailed. Requirement for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact details of dedicated phonelines or series of contact numbers for programme supervisor with twenty-four hour access.- Number provided on observer ID card. • Clear emergency reporting pathways – Check this is part of the briefing process. (Pathways in place as above)

13 Insurance and Liability

#	Minimum Standard	Pass / Fail	Comment / Condition / Reason for fail
13.1	National observer programmes or service providers must demonstrate that observers have health, safety and liability insurance commensurate with the national standards of the observer programme or service provider for such insurance for the duration of any deployment before placing the observer on a vessel.	P	Insurance evidence provided for observers working under this programme (through NMFRI) are covered (current document up to 31/03/2023) (11) – Assumption is this coverage is maintained. The level of coverage meets the requirements.