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Establishment of a framework for scientific observation of SIOFA fisheries (SEC2022-OBS1 Draft Report)

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Abstract	
<p>The project “SEC2022-OBS1: Establish a framework for scientific observation of SIOFA fisheries” aims to ensure that scientific observers working in SIOFA fisheries operate using a consistent set of standards for observation and measurement.</p> <p>This report is structured to address the five objectives of the project in a hierarchical sequence that covers the high-level objectives for observer coverage as well as detailed data collection forms and operational requirements for an observer scheme.</p> <p>A draft CMM, based on the existing SIOFA CMM 02, provides a policy-level framework for a SIOFA Scientific Observer Scheme, and includes a ‘code of conduct’ for an observer scheme, clarification of the roles and responsibilities of observers and the categories of data that should be collected by observers. We suggest that the detailed sampling mechanisms and requirements should be specified through delegated responsibilities i.e. ‘as agreed by the Scientific Committee’ to allow greater flexibility in setting and revising scientific sampling priorities.</p> <p>The collection of consistent and high-quality scientific data by scientific observers in SIOFA fisheries should be based on standardised data collection processes. Based on feedback from CCPs, and experience in translating the requirements in CMMs into operational observer data</p>	

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collection programs, we have provided a set of fishery-specific Observer Logbooks in Excel workbooks, an instruction manual that describes how each field in the respective Logbook forms should be completed and a draft for an Observer Cruise report.

To provide assurance that observer data collected in SIOFA fisheries are fit for purpose we have outlined a set of minimum standards for CCP observer programmes that encompass the complete observer operation and data life cycle and include specific requirements of observer program infrastructure, training and performance. Metrics for the review of both the structural implementation of, and the outcomes from, observer programmes are also provided.

Electronic Monitoring systems that provide data on timing and location of fishing operations and counts of individual fish landed in line fisheries could be introduced in SIOFA and would help to optimise the work of observers and allow more time for biological and ecosystem-related data collection.

Recommendations for future work are divided into aspects that are 'structural', insofar as they are policy decisions on the obligations of CCPs for data reporting in SIOFA, and 'scientific', where they related to the detailed description of how those data reporting obligations are met.

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