



ROP-IWG7
23 September 2025 1pm – 3.30pm
Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia (Hybrid)

Chair's Summary Report

WCPFC-2025-ROPIWG7
23 September 2025

Agenda Item 1: Opening of Meeting

1. The seventh meeting of the WCPFC Regional Observer Programme Intersessional Working Group (ROP-IWG7) was held in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia (hybrid) in association with TCC21, on 23 September 2025. This Summary Report includes information from the extra time allocated during TCC21 on 29 September 2025 for the ROP-IWG to continue discussions.
2. The Chair, Mr. Lucas Tarapik, welcomed all participants and opened the meeting. He expressed appreciation to all participants for their continued engagement and support of ROP-IWG's activities. He noted that this virtual meeting builds upon the productive discussions held during the ROP-IWG6 meeting held on 20 June 2025.
3. The papers prepared for this meeting, initially posted on 8 September, reflected earlier discussions and were presented for feedback and further deliberation by participants.
4. In introducing the agenda, the Chair noted that while many of the proposed removals from the Minimum Standard Data Fields (MSDFs) discussed at the June meeting had broad support, some fields required additional review. The ROP-IWG would proceed with a preliminary recommendation to remove the subset of ROP MSDFs for which there was general agreement ([Chair's Summary Report](#) issued 25 June 2025). For this reason, it was proposed not to present this paper for discussion at this ROP-IWG, but to progress this to the Commission.
5. The agenda was adopted without amendment (Attachment 1). The Chair confirmed that the scope of discussions would include: Compliance Case File System (CCFS) process flow; MSDF refinements (including the Observer Trip Monitoring Summary); and options for monitoring non-catch transfers during at-sea transshipment.

Agenda Item 2: CCFS Process Flow from Observer Provider to WCPFC

6. The working group reviewed proposed amendments to the pre-notification process. An updated CCFS process flow was presented for discussion. This outlined a proposed process for ROP observer reports from the ROP providers to be provided to WCPFC for inclusion in the CCFS, where the observer had made a notation on a Trip Summary Report. Participants supported debriefing and an evaluation to confirm that sufficient information was available to support investigations for all trips before any case initiation. The objective is to reduce

false positives and confirm whether a potential infringement occurred before entry into CCFS. To assist CCM understanding of debriefing processes, an example debriefing questionnaire was provided.

7. The working group stressed the importance of timely provision of relevant information to support investigations that were to be requested by a CCM under Article 25. Documents should be typewritten where possible. Submissions should clearly link observer information to the alleged incident, including date, location, vessel identifiers, and a short factual description.
8. The working group clarified the Secretariat's role should focus on record keeping and tracking. Case initiation occurs following a formal request by a CCM under Article 25, accompanied by relevant information to the extent possible. There was interest in reordering steps in the draft flow diagram to reflect this principle and to align ROP processes with, for example, HSBI processes.
9. Points raised during the discussion that could improve the process included:
 - establishing a single clearance point for submissions;
 - providing training for consistent data reviews;
 - referencing, within the data flow, the need for relevant information and the CCM request to the flag CCM to investigate; and
 - considering the potential for changes to system access protocols to include the ROP provider CCM/coastal CCM that performed the debriefing, and allowing cases to be entered directly by the CCM requesting the investigation (similar to the new Inspections/HSBI system).
10. Some CCMs also suggested that the observer report could be included in the flow of data to support case creation and the CCM request. It was suggested that a functional definition of an "Observer Report" - covering all observer-derived ROP data and supporting material relevant to an alleged infringement (e.g., journal extracts, photos, identifiers to trace to source data) - may be useful to ensure the quality and timeliness of submissions.
11. The IWG is to continue intersessional work to refine the CCFS process flow. Members are invited to submit specific feedback on the steps of the process and on wording relating to the relevant information to be provided with any request to investigate.
12. The Chair will compile inputs and circulate a revised process flow for review following TCC21.

13. In summary, the group proposed establishing a CCM debriefing and compliance review process as the basis for case initiation, with the potential to clarify the specific data to be provided and changes to systems to support this. The Chair noted that ROP-IWG participants were invited to provide written feedback on the proposed observer CCFS process flow, with the objective of providing a standardised CCFS notification process for recommendation to WCPFC22.

Agenda Item 3. Consider scope of refinements to improve the WCPFC Minimum Standard Data Fields (MSDFs), including Observer Trip Monitoring Summary, to support identification of potential alleged infringements of CMM obligations

14. The working group considered updates to the ROP Minimum Standard Data Fields (MSDFs) and the Observer Trip Monitoring Summary that aimed to improve clarity for both scientific and compliance purposes. The intended outcome is to better support the identification of

potential alleged infringements and to ensure more recent changes to CMMs are reflected in the MSDF, forming a sound basis for case creation where needed.

15. Points raised in discussion included:

- Support for practical data field design to reduce ambiguities on what is to be collected but noted that data fields relating to obligations that were non-binding or “encouraging” CMM action were not suitable for minimum standards and should be removed. Feedback was provided to identify those obligations/data fields, including those relating to marine pollution, FAD and data buoys, and sharks and rays.
- There was interest in the use of case type identifiers for observer-initiated cases as a potential bridge to compliance screening. The group noted that this topic could be considered in later sessions subject to time and priorities, and that the proposed new case identifiers were included in a revised version of the paper.

16. The IWG will continue its intersessional work on the inclusion of new data fields based on agreed obligations ROP Minimum Standard Data Fields, and on ways to maintain a streamlined Observer Trip Monitoring Summary.

17. Members were asked to submit their responses and any additional comments relating to the revised paper, including consideration of case type identifiers. Other next steps are to consider in more detail the data field design, instructions, training needs and system impacts.

18. In summary, the Chair noted that participants supported the addition of MSDFs related to binding obligations and encouraged CCMs to provide written feedback during the intersessional period to support the development of proposed amendments to the MSDFs.

Agenda Item 4: Consider whether new ROP minimum data fields related to non-fish transfers could support monitoring of at-sea transshipment activities

19. Participants discussed the possible ROP data fields that could support monitoring of non-fish (or non-catch) transfers, should this reporting be established by the Commission.

20. Points raised during the discussion included:

- The clarification that the purpose and potential data needs are to ensure greater understanding of interactions between vessels occurring on the high seas and detected by other CCMs.
- The aim was to [propose a minimum number of data fields to manage the reporting workload for observers. The data would be sufficient to confirm an event occurred and to provide a short description. It was noted this approach would be comparable to practices in other RFMOs. Some participants queried about additional workload and Secretariat processing, while others highlighted the purpose and value of these data for understanding unreported transshipment indicators and for improving awareness of human and labour-rights issues (e.g., crew movements).
- During TCC21, some CCMs discussed a proposal for potential data fields reflecting a two-part design: (i) vessel identity (e.g., carrier vessel name, IMO, flag) and (ii) transfer details (timing in UTC, position, nature of transfer, a set of yes/no prompts, and a “remarks” field). A “no-activity” option could also be included. The inclusion of a start/end time remains under review, as a single reference time may also meet

the monitoring need. Integration into existing observer forms (e.g., fish carrier) was supported. The term “non-catch transfer” was endorsed.

21. The outcome of these discussions and further intersessional feedback will support the preparation of information before the Commission meeting.

22. In summary, the Chair noted the work of CCMs to propose and discuss options for observer monitoring of non-catch transfers and CCMs were encouraged to provide written feedback during the intersessional period to support the development of a paper for the Commission.

Agenda Item 5: Next Steps including Update of ROP-IWG workplan

23. The Chair summarised the progress made across the current priority workstreams for 2025. CCMs supported continued intersessional work, requested the recirculation of papers and highlighted the need to factor in time for feedback on proposals, with the aim of bringing consolidated proposals forward to WCPFC22. All papers will be available on the WCPFC ROP-IWG webpage.

24. Following the meeting, the Chair noted that the steps would be to:

- Release of the Chair’s summary meeting report and the revised versions of the papers presented to TCC21, including a working version of the ROP-IWG workplan.
- **10 October 2025**: Feedback on the updated proposals to support the report to WCPFC22 (now revised to **18 October 2025**).
- **31 October 2025**: Targeted timeframe for finalising the ROP-IWG update and recommendations for WCPFC22 in accordance with paper deadline for WCPFC22.

25. Other papers discussed included an example of a Debriefing Questionnaire and a working draft of the ROP-IWG workplan (noting progress in 2025).

26. Following the meeting, the Chair confirmed that **10 October 2025 (now 18 October 2025)** would be the deadline for ROP-IWG participants to provide written feedback to support the development of revised papers for WCPFC22, namely:

- a) *Revised CCFS process flow discussion Paper 1* ([WCPFC-TCC21-2025-17B_rev1](#))
- b) *Revised scope of Potential Infringements for WCPFC CCFS Cases* ([WCPFC-TCC21-2025-17C_rev1](#))
- c) List of data fields recommended for non-catch transfer ([WCPFC-TCC21-2025-17D](#) and the draft of [Proposed Transshipment ROP Data Fields for Non-Catch Transfer](#))

Agenda Item 6: Closing

27. The Chair confirmed that the Chair’s Summary of the ROP-IWG7 meeting will be circulated and thanked participants for their active engagement and valuable contributions throughout the two ROP-IWG sessions associated with TCC21.

28. The Chair further noted that the Chair's Summary Report will include the proposed deadline for written feedback from participants. Members were encouraged to review the document and respond promptly to support the timely finalisation of working papers for submission to the Commission at WCPFC22.
29. The Chair formally closed the meeting and expressed his appreciation for members' valuable time, constructive input, and continued commitment to progressing the work of the ROP-IWG.



Meeting 7 of ROP-IWG
23 September 2025

Agenda

1. **Opening**
2. **CCFS Process Flow from Observer Provider to WCPFC**
3. **Consider scope of refinements to improve the WCPFC Minimum Standard Data Fields (MSDFs), including Observer Trip Monitoring Summary, to support identification of potential alleged infringements of CMM obligations**
4. **Consider whether new ROP minimum data fields related to non-fish transfers could support monitoring of at-sea transshipment activities**
5. **Next steps**
6. **Closing**