

**TO ALL COMMISSION MEMBERS, COOPERATING NON-MEMBERS,  
PARTICIPATING TERRITORIES AND OBSERVERS**

**Circular No.: 2022/40**  
**Date: 13 June 2022**  
**No. pages: 03**

**WCPFC-SS4-2022 - OUTCOMES DOCUMENT**

Dear All,

Pursuant to rule 33(2) of the Rules of Procedure for the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), please find enclosed the Provisional Outcomes Document for the WCPFC Special Session 4 of the Commission (WCPFC-SS4-2022) to discuss the COVID-19 Decisions relating to the purse seine observer coverage and at-sea transshipment observers. The Outcomes Document sets out the decisions taken by the Commission at its special session recently held virtually on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

The Outcomes Document has also been posted on the WCPFC-SS4-2022 meeting site. Should there be comments on the Outcomes Document, please submit them together with comments on the Draft Summary Report for WCPFC-SS4-2022 which will be circulated and posted in due course once available.

I wish you all well and stay safe.

Yours sincerely,



Feleti Penitala Teo, **OBE**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



**SPECIAL SESSION OF THE COMMISSION  
to discuss the COVID-19 Decisions Relating to Purse Seine Observer Coverage and At-Sea  
Transshipment Observers**

Electronic Meeting  
9 June 2022 from 10.00am to 2.00pm Pohnpei time

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**PROVISIONAL OUTCOMES DOCUMENT**

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**WCPFC-SS4-2022-Outcomes  
13 June 2022**

1. The Commission agreed to suspend the requirements for observer coverage on purse seine vessels set out in paragraphs 32 and 33 of CMM 2021-01 and CMM 2018-05 until 31 December 2022 but on 1 January 2023, this suspension must be lifted, and the obligation comes into effect.
2. The Commission agreed to lift the suspension of the requirements in paragraph 13 of CMM 2009-06 from 15 June 2022. Notwithstanding this, from 15 June – 31 December 2022 is a transitional period during which time CCMs should make best efforts to embark observers following the enabling guidelines in Annex A.
3. During this transitional period, a carrier vessel operator should demonstrate that it has made best efforts to embark an observer or to tranship in port. This includes requesting for an observer from observer provider(s) at least 30 days in advance of the planned trip. In the event that the vessel operator and the observer provider conclude that the observer deployment is not feasible, according to the enabling guidelines in Annex A and in consultation with the Secretariat, the flag State CCM should report the conclusion to the Secretariat. The Secretariat will compile these data for review by TCC18.
4. TCC18 will review information related to observer deployment, including the data provided under paragraph 3, and make recommendations to the Commission on any ongoing guidelines that will enable CCMs to fully meet the implementation of observer coverage obligations.
5. The Commission may make decisions otherwise depending on changes in the situation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Guidelines to Enable the Placement of Observers on Fishing Vessels and Carrier Vessels

All CCMs have a strong commitment to resuming observer placements for data and compliance and observer livelihoods, while recognising issues relating to the health and safety of observers and crew and the ongoing difficulties and logistical challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. CCMs agreed that the following guidelines are necessary for the full implementation of observer placement obligations:

1. Requirements for entry and exit, including visa requirements, testing timeframes, quarantine time/costs for foreign travelers, and flight frequency and availability should be taken into account in the placement of observers on board vessels.
2. Observers and crew on fishing vessels and carrier vessels on which observers are placed should be fully vaccinated, subject to the granting of exemptions on medical grounds. Proof of vaccination or exemption may be required.
3. Requirements for COVID-19 testing of observers and replacement crew prior to boarding a vessel should be adhered to in line with the regulations applicable to those vessels.
4. All interactions with other vessels and persons should be conducted in a manner that seeks to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus.
5. All appropriate protocols and procedures should be followed on board the vessel to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
6. Any sick observer or sick crew member should be cared for in accordance with appropriate protocols and procedures.
7. Where repatriation of observers becomes necessary, all appropriate protocols and procedures should be followed.

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