

REVISED ELECTRONIC TEMPLATES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF IOTC ROS DATA

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PURPOSE

To inform participants at the 17th Working Party on Data Collection and Statistics (WPDCS17) about the development of new standard electronic templates for the reporting of ROS scientific observer data to the IOTC Secretariat.

BACKGROUND

Regional Observer Scheme

Resolution 11/04 on a Regional Observer Scheme (ROS) makes provisions for the development and implementation of national observer schemes among the IOTC CPCs starting from July 2010 with the overarching objective of collecting “verified catch data and other scientific data related to the fisheries for tuna and tuna-like species in the IOTC area of competence”. The ROS aims to cover “at least 5% of the number of operations/sets for each gear type by the fleet of each CPC while fishing in the IOTC Area of competence of 24 meters overall length and over, and under 24 meters if they fish outside their EEZs shall be covered by this observer scheme”. Observer data collected as part of the ROS include: (i) fishing activities and vessel positions, (ii) catch estimates with a view to identifying catch composition and monitoring discards, bycatch and size frequency, (iii) gear type, mesh size and attachments employed by the master, and (iv) information to enable the cross-checking of entries made to the logbooks (i.e., species composition and quantities, live and processed weight and location).

The minimum set of information fields for scientific data reporting purposes is described by documents **IOTC-2021-WPDCS17-INF10** and **IOTC-2021-WPDCS17-INF11**, with the latter providing a more detailed overview of the structure, data type and constraint of each data field.

Observer data must be sent to the IOTC Secretariat no later than 150 days following the disembarkation of the observer from the vessel that was monitored, and shall be provided in an electronic format suitable for data processing, such as (in decreasing order of preference):

- ROS e-collection output files
- Standardized ROS Excel form (discussed within this document)
- Proprietary electronic formats (e.g., ST09) when readily available, although not recommended

In the past, observer data has been submitted to the Secretariat in a range of templates in Excel and other formats, many of which were not suitable for data processing with the IOTC Secretariat databases. Many CPCs also encountered difficulties with entering data for multiple sets in these forms which required worksheets to be cloned for each new fishing event. These templates were based on the old data specifications and therefore, these new data collection forms are improving the structure of the data submissions, ensuring they can be easily integrated into the Secretariat’s databases, as well as ensuring compliance with the updated minimum data reporting requirements of the ROS.

DISCUSSION

The proposed new observer reporting templates were designed to facilitate the collation of ROS data from the original CPC’s data bases, with the aim of improving ROS data reporting from CPCs to the Secretariat and guarantee that data could be incorporated in the IOTC ROS Regional Database to the maximum extent possible.

Compared to the previously available IOTC ROS data reporting forms, the main modifications included in this new version are focused on improving the overall structure and allowing the recording of information on a row-

by-row basis in each Excel sheet, allowing the user to include more records per form, which is particularly useful when several operations have occurred in the same observed trip.

Some revisions to labels and section names were also introduced, and drop-down lists were removed, while maintaining the previous structure of distinct worksheets to report:

- General information for vessel, trip and gear
- Fishing operation information
- Catch information
- Morphometric information

In the case of forms for the reporting of data from pole-and-line vessels, the fishing operations were split in two categories (with corresponding worksheets) based on whether the target of the operations is bait or tuna.

The list of tables containing the agreed reference codes for ROS purposes is provided in the “IOTC CODE TABLES” appendix of document **IOTC-2021-WPDCS17-INF10**.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the WPDCS:

NOTE paper IOTC–2021–WPDCS17–12 which outlines the modifications made to the observer reporting templates and **RECOMMEND** their adoption as the official reporting format for the submission of ROS data to the Secretariat by those CPCs that do not manage this information through the ROS e-tools (e-collection and National Database).