

IOTC ROS REPORTING WORKSHOP FOR LONGLINE FISHERIES

IOTC Secretariat
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Summary

The IOTC ROS Longline Data Reporting Workshop, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26–29 May 2026, brought together 12 participants from 8 CPCs and invited experts to strengthen the reporting of fishery statistics. The workshop enhanced participants' understanding of ROS data reporting through Secretariat presentations on the use of reporting forms and reference materials.

CPC presentations on national observer programmes, data reporting workflows, current reporting status, and reporting challenges provided valuable insight into existing processes and enhanced the Secretariat's understanding of programmes and areas where additional support could be provided. The Secretariat presented the ROS, including a review of its evolution, the materials underpinning data reporting requirements, historical data submissions and reporting gaps, and the available IOTC ROS reporting tools.

The Secretariat shared individual feedback with the participants regarding ROS reporting providing an opportunity for review historical data and work towards the reconstruction of this data with the IOTC forms. In addition, the Secretariat presented resources currently being developed to support data reporting and improve data clarity, outlining the intended purpose of each tool. Participants provided feedback and recommendations to enhance the usefulness and usability of these resources.

The use of electronic monitoring systems (EMS) identified gaps and variability in reporting protocols and the implications for data reporting forms and supporting resources was also discussed. The Secretariat further demonstrated the use of the e-MARIS platform for ROS data reporting. CPCs acknowledged the preliminary data validation system for recent data submitted and expressed support for the Secretariat's ongoing efforts to expand data validation procedures and checks.

Introduction

The Longline ROS Data Reporting Workshop was held at the Marriott Protea Hotel in Johannesburg, South Africa from 26 to 29 May 2026. The workshop aimed to support the implementation of the IOTC ROS and facilitate the successful submission of mandatory data to the IOTC Secretariat in line with ROS reporting requirements. A total of 12 participants from 8 CPCs and invited experts attended the workshop.

The Secretariat presented the ROS background and framework along with the core ROS IOTC Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) and other CMMs that include provisions for data collected by observers ([IOTC–2026–ROSLLRW–01](#), [IOTC–2026–ROSLLRW–02](#)).

Presentations on National Programmes

The Secretariat shared a presentation template with CPCs prior to the meeting, enabling them to compile information and updates on their national observer and/or EMS programmes. CPCs presented general information on their national observer and EMS programmes, including the managing institution, primary objectives, and any additional reporting responsibilities undertaken by the programme. They also outlined their procedures for data collection, processing, and reporting, and concluded by presenting key programme outputs, including observer coverage, reporting deliverables, and the main obstacles and challenges faced by their programmes.

The information provided on programme workflows, data processes, and available resources offered valuable insight into national observer programmes and their operational contexts. This improved understanding enhances the Secretariat's ability to work collaboratively with CPCs to address challenges, provide targeted support, and improve reporting compliance. The presentations also stimulated extensive discussion among CPCs, who sought to better understand similarities and differences between programmes, identify shared challenges, and explore opportunities to learn from and support one another.

CPCs exchanged experiences on approaches for verifying EM data, including the use of observer cross-checks, port sampling, and logbook information. Discussions also covered dry observer training protocols and catch measurement systems. These exchanges provided an opportunity for CPCs operating EM systems at different stages of development to share experiences, lessons learned, and best practices, while also offering support and advice to one another.

ROS data reported to the Secretariat

Alternative formats and Data Gaps (LL and PL)

The Secretariat presented the evolution of the ROS reporting forms from 2010 to 2025, with the aim of familiarising participants with the development of the reporting system over time and highlighting the common components maintained across successive versions. The Secretariat also presented an exploration of data completeness on the submission through 2021 with different reporting tools. This analysis focused on identifying general reporting data gaps ([IOTC-2026-ROSLRW-04](#)).

The Secretariat noted that the IOTC Reporting Form is now mandatory for CPC reporting. This requirement is expected to improve the consistency, standardisation, and usability of reported data across CPCs. The Secretariat also encouraged CPCs to submit historical retained catch data to address existing data gaps. During discussions, CPCs noted that all information currently contained within IOTC Trip Reports is also reported through the IOTC Reporting Form, suggesting that the use of both may be redundant. The Secretariat acknowledged these concerns and supported the CPCs' intention to raise the matter with the Scientific Committee (SC) for further consideration.

IOTC Reporting Forms, Data Elements, and Data Catalogue

The Secretariat presented the structure and data fields of the current [ROS Reporting Forms](#) (v4, 2025), ([IOTC-2026-ROSLRW-05](#)) along with the supporting resources developed to facilitate data reporting: the [ROS Form Descriptions](#) and [Reference Data Catalogue](#) ([IOTC-2026-ROSLRW-06](#)).

The participants reviewed the Reporting Form, Form Descriptions, and Data Catalogue and identified several technical issues affecting access to certain components of the reporting tools. The Secretariat documented these issues and confirmed the necessary amendments would be made promptly. Any updates that could be implemented during the workshop were addressed immediately.

Participants also provided suggestions for improvements and sought clarification on various reporting requirements. Discussions focused on the integration of EMS data collection methods into existing code lists and reporting procedures within the IOTC Reporting Form. Participants acknowledged that EMS data reporting is still evolving and agreed that reporting procedures, standards, and code lists should continue to be reviewed and expanded to accommodate emerging requirements. This year the WGEMS agreed that the IOTC specific technical workshop on EM data and implementation to support CPC's EM implementation will be conducted in 2027 ([IOTC-2026-WGEMS06-R\[E\]](#))

The list of accredited observers published in e-Maris is the current reporting channel to keep the records up to date. The participants were requested to review these records and send updates when needed to the Secretariat to register new observers or deregister those who are no longer active. The Secretariat will provide an IOTC ID for each observer in the list including EMS processors as "*dry observers*".

Review of data submitted

The Secretariat provided participants with a summary report of all the data submitted including, reporting tools and formats and identifying data gaps. The yearly estimation of coverage was also provided and highlighting that when the data comes from trips reports, in absence of data at operational level, the total effort was assigned to the beginning of the trip, which can give different figures with the coverage estimate by each flag. The Secretariat also recalled that in 2022 the SC25 recommended that the Commission endorsed the mandatory reporting of geo-referenced effort data as number of sets/operations for longline and surface fisheries to complement the current requirements of Res. 15/02, in order for the Secretariat to accurately and independently calculate the ROS coverage.

Additionally, for those submitted data in recent years with the previous version of the form (2022, v3) the Secretariat prepared summary outputs of a ROS data validator test highlighting the most common errors and recommendations for amend these errors in next submissions.

The Secretariat discussed individually with each participant their historical data submissions, provide support for resubmitting historical ROS data, and assist with upcoming reporting obligations. Participants also shared aspects of their reporting workflows that created challenges for data submission. Where discussions revealed issues of broader relevance—such as the interpretation of reporting fields, proposed structural changes, or the use of supplementary reporting tools—the Secretariat shared the information with all participants to ensure a common understanding.

To ensure the complete reporting the reporting requirements were discussed against the ROS form. Several code list and potential improvements were discussed, as well the data flow to distinguish between data that are reported in the E-SET-CATCH, E-SET-CATCH-SPECIMEN, and E-SET-CATCH-SPECIMEN-SSI sections of the ROS Reporting Form. The Secretariat acknowledged that with the updating of Resolutions, the list of ETP and SSI species can be revised and updated in line with IOTC CMMs.

Additional ROS Resources

The Secretariat presented several additional ROS resources in development to support the ROS reporting, including an ROS Reporting Guidelines, Glossary, and Observer Manual. These sessions were interactive, with the Secretariat sharing the proposed structure and content of each resource and inviting feedback from participants on gaps and potential improvements.

Participants discussed how these resources could be integrated into their national observer programmes and assessed their potential usefulness. These discussions highlighted differences in the needs, protocols, and systems of national observer programmes. Participants also provided recommendations to improve the content and usability of the proposed resources and expressed support for the Secretariat's continued development of a more comprehensive data validation system.

ROS submission in e-MARIS Platform

The Secretariat presented the E-MARIS platform, which is required to use for annual ROS data submissions. The process for accessing the platform was reviewed, along with the three main components of ROS reporting through E-MARIS:

1. Assessment of whether the CPC met the minimum 5% observer coverage requirement;
2. Submission of observer data, including Reporting Forms and Trip Reports; and
3. Registration of observers.

The Secretariat provided an overview of each component. During discussions, participants raised questions regarding the structure and navigation of the platform. The Secretariat acknowledged that certain aspects of the system could be confusing and committed to updating the site with clarification where needed.

ROS datasets

The Secretariat presented the compilation of most of the longline data available (80%) to illustrate the real extent and spatial coverage of the ROS data.

The Secretariat also shared the proposed dataset structure for ROS data including retained catch, discards, and interactions aggregated by month and 5x5 grid. This sparked conversations about the data included in each of these sections. This preliminary proposal will be further presented for discussion at the WPEB and WPDCS.

Activities carried out during the workshop and follow-up actions

IOTC Regional Observer scheme

- The Secretariat presented the background and historical process of the ROS, including changes in the CMMs since the inception, the ROS components of at sea observations, and all the relevant reporting requirements

Presentations by Participants of National Observer Programmes

- Participants presented the status of their respective programmes and highlighted obstacles, challenges, and areas for support.
- Secretariat to follow up to support Human observer and EMS programmes implementation as needed.

Alternative formats and Data Gaps (LL and PL)

- The Secretariat provided a review of the previously submitted data in terms of data completeness and reporting formats.

IOTC Reporting Forms, Data Elements, and Data Catalogue

- The Secretariat presented the structure and fields in the current Reporting Form (v4), Form Descriptions, and Data Catalogue.
- Participants reviewed the forms and reference tools, noted technical difficulties, asked clarification questions, and suggested updates.
- The Secretariat will make final revisions and ensure the LL form was fully operative by 15 June for reporting 2025 data.
- The Secretariat will review the compiled list of suggestions made by participants for updates to code lists and definitions.

Historical Data submission and data Checks

- The Secretariat provided summaries of historical data reported which were revised with the participants.
- Participants will work to reconstruct and resubmit (as far as possible) historical data to the Secretariat with the current (v4 2025) reporting form.

Additional ROS Resources

- The Secretariat presented the proposed contents and structure of the ROS Reporting Guidelines, ROS glossary, and Observer Manual.
- Participants were invited to provide additional feedback on how to improve resources.
- The Secretariat will implement the feedback discussed for these materials and share the tools online.
- The Secretariat will continue to work on data validation checks and systems for the ROS.

ROS reporting on e-MARIS Platform

- The Secretariat demonstrated how to login, navigate the platform, and submit ROS data.
- The Secretariat will discuss updating/revising information on the platform with the Compliance Team at IOTC to ensure the system is up to date.
- The accredited observers are published in e-MarIs; participants will review the current list and provide updates to include new observers or remove the ones no longer in activity. The Secretariat will keep the records up to date and provide a new IOTC OBSERVER ID at the request of CPCs, when needed.

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