

**45th ANNUAL MEETING OF NAFO - SEPTEMBER 2023****Terms of Reference (ToR) for a
NAFO STACTIC Observer Program Review Working Group (WG-OPR)****Background**

Pursuant to its original mandate, the Working Group provided a proposal for improvements to the NAFO Observer Program at the 2023 NAFO Annual Meeting. STACTIC reviewed and adopted the proposed revisions to the NAFO Observer Program, however, it was noted that there could be continued improvements to the Observer Program. STACTIC requested the Working Group to focus its efforts on making recommendations to STACTIC to revise the provisions in Article 30 NAFO CEM. The Working Group mandate was extended to continue discussion on improvements to the implementation of the Observer Program and report to STACTIC on its progress at the 2024 STACTIC Intersessional Meeting.

This document proposes updates to the Terms of Reference for the **Observer Program Review Working Group (WG-OPR)** which reflect its extended mandate and additional taskings from STACTIC at its 2023 Annual meeting.

Membership

All Contracting Parties are welcome and encouraged to participate in the Working Group (WG). The WG should be comprised of representatives from Contracting Parties with a working knowledge of NAFO observer practices and procedures, Article 30 requirements and understanding of the changes made to the program.

Scientific Council has nominated an expert to participate as a liaison between the WG and the Council. This liaison shall attend all meetings of the WG.

The WG should elect its chair.

Objective

Pursuant to Article 30.19 NAFO CEM, a mandatory review was conducted of Article 30 NAFO CEM as adopted in 2019. The WG should continue to identify implementation challenges of the Observer Scheme and provide recommendations to STACTIC to address those issues, to enhance the quality and types of data captured and to improve the overall consistency and efficiency of the observer program.



Tasks

The Working Group should focus its efforts on making recommendations to STACTIC to revise the provisions in Article 30 NAFO CEM with a view to improve the program, including:

1. The minimum level of observer coverage required under derogation
2. Use of the observer electronic application and its implementation
3. Use of electronic observation program and to recommend minimum requirements for those systems to be used as an alternative to Observers.
4. Standardized reporting templates and reporting
 - a. Observer reporting requirements
 - i. The possible inclusion of the collection of vessel's garbage disposal practices
5. Potential improvements on Data Collection on Sharks
 - a. Review findings presented in STACTIC WP 21-49 Rev3 "Review of Greenland shark Data Collection and Methodologies"
 - i. Pursue development of standardized handling and release guidelines
 - ii. Pursue development of for a species identification guide/observer handbook for Sharks
6. Consider revisions of infringements relating to the Observer Program
7. To discuss mechanisms to promote quality control for Observer and electronic observation data

The WG should take into account documents compiled by the Secretariat and any additional information provided by Contracting Parties and NAFO bodies (i.e., STACTIC, Scientific Council) for identification of areas requiring improvement.

Meetings

The WG should meet as required to perform the duties prescribed and will communicate regularly through teleconferences and electronically.

A face-to-face meeting with hybrid capacity will be hosted by Canada, the dates to be determined in consultation with participating Contracting Parties.

Reporting

The WG should prepare a report of the proceedings of each of its meetings to be presented to STACTIC.

The WG reported to STACTIC at the 2023 NAFO Annual Meeting with its findings. The WG requested and was granted an extension into 2024 for its review.

The WG will report to STACTIC at the 2024 STACTIC Intersessional Meeting with an update, and present its findings and recommendations to the 2024 NAFO Annual Meeting.