



PRACTICAL EXERCISE

Scenario-Based Exercise on the Fisheries Observer Deployment Cycle

PRE-DEPLOYMENT

DEPLOYMENT

POST-DEPLOYMENT



PRACTICAL EXERCISE

A capstone exercise connecting the prospectus objectives to operational decisions

OBSERVER ROLE IN MCS

Use observer information to support surveillance, compliance monitoring and action against suspected IUU fishing.

PRACTICAL FIELD SKILLS

Apply species/gear identification, data verification and accurate reporting in a realistic deployment.

SAFETY & WELFARE

Recognize escalating risk, use reporting channels and protect observer independence.

HYBRID OVERSIGHT

Use human observation together with electronic monitoring (EM) and vessel-system information.

DEFENSIBLE EVIDENCE

Preserve contemporaneous records, corroborate observations and maintain a clear evidence trail.

REGIONAL LEARNING

Compare national approaches and identify standards that could be strengthened or harmonized.

EXERCISE DESIGN

150 minutes • table-top simulation • country teams or mixed ASEAN teams



Team roles

- Observer • Observer Program Manager • Vessel/Company Representative
- MCS/Enforcement Officer • Data/EM Analyst • Rapporteur



Rule of the exercise

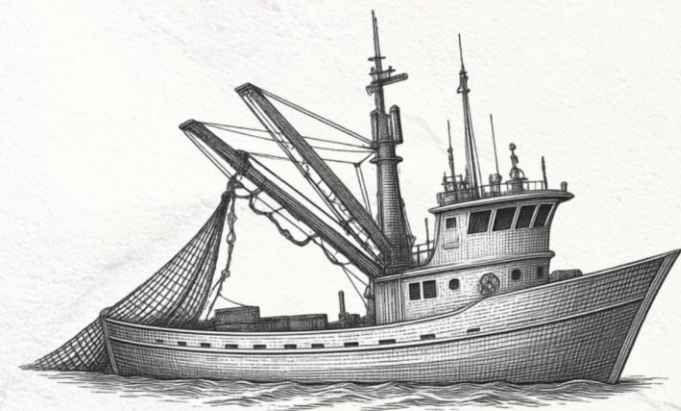
Work only with information released at each stage. Record decisions, rationale, evidence needed, safety actions, and who must be notified.

SCENARIO: OPERATION BLUE HORIZON

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Scenario for training; participants apply their own national procedures and applicable RFMO requirements

FV SEA HORIZON



A commercial purse seine fishing vessel is conducting a 90-day fishing trip in the High-Seas, targeting tropical tuna, with possible encounters with protected species. The vessel carries an accredited fisheries observer and is equipped with VMS/AIS and electronic monitoring systems.



MISSION:

Verify fishing activity and catch, monitor compliance, document protected-species interactions, and produce reliable data that can withstand management or enforcement scrutiny.



COMPLICATION:

The vessel has a history of intermittent VMS transmission and a previous discrepancy between logbook catch and landing declaration.



STAGE 1 | PRE-DEPLOYMENT READINESS

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Team task: decide whether the observer and the program are ready to deploy

Before deployment, conduct briefing, verify the observer's credentials, medical fitness, insurance, emergency contacts, and assignment details. Confirm vessel and operator information, test safety and communication equipment, check the observer kit and PPE, review target and protected species, and ensure EM/VMS access, time synchronization, data responsibilities, and observer independence are in place.



DECISION POINT:

You discover that the observer's independent communication device cannot transmit. The captain says the vessel satellite phone is available. What should you do? Deploy, delay, or deploy with conditions? Explain your decision.



TEAM OUTPUT:

Choose GO, CONDITIONAL GO, or NO-GO and identify the minimum corrective actions and required notifications before sailing.



STAGE 2 | FIRST DAYS AT SEA

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Establish a defensible baseline before problems occur

OBSERVE

Position, fishing activity, set details, catch composition, bycatch, discards and protected-species interactions.

VERIFY

Compare personal observations with logbook entries, vessel position/time, EM timestamps and other available records.

DOCUMENT

Make contemporaneous notes; identify who/what/when/where/how; preserve original records and corrections.

COMMUNICATE

Send routine reports through the approved channel and flag material discrepancies without compromising safety.



BASELINE FINDING:

For the first four sets, your observations, logbook entries and EM footage broadly align. This establishes a useful reference point for later discrepancies.

INJECT 1 | POSITION DISCREPANCY

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A routine compliance issue becomes a test of verification



The vessel begins a purse seine set. Your GPS position differs from the position shown on the bridge display. Later, the VMS track available to the program shows a 3-hour transmission gap.

DISCUSS:

- 1) What facts do you record immediately?
- 2) What independent sources can corroborate position and time?
- 3) Do you confront the captain now?
- 4) What threshold triggers a priority report?

EVIDENCE TO SEEK:

Observer notes
authorized GPS/time source
set start/end times
logbook
EM metadata/footage
VMS/AIS records where accessible
communications record





INJECT 2 | PROTECTED-SPECIES INTERACTION

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Species identification, mitigation observation and accurate reporting

A protected marine animal, a rough-toothed dolphin, becomes entangled during hauling. Crew members attempt to release. The captain later asks the observer to record the event only as “released alive” and not include photographs because it may cause “problems for the company.”



IDENTIFY:

Record the best-supported species identification and basis; do not overstate certainty.

INJECT 3 | OBSERVER SAFETY AND INTERFERENCE

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Safety decisions take priority over evidence collection

A protected marine animal becomes entangled during hauling. Crew members attempt release. The captain later asks the observer to record the event only as “released alive” and not include photographs because it may cause “problems for the company.”



IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES:

- Move to a safe location
- avoid escalation
- account for essential records/equipment
- use emergency/priority reporting procedure
- document interference when safe
- request protective action or extraction if warranted



PROGRAM-MANAGER DECISION:

- What information is enough to escalate?
- Who is notified?
- What communication schedule is imposed?
- Under what conditions should the deployment be terminated?

INJECT 4 | HUMAN OBSERVER + EM

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Use technology to corroborate, not automatically replace, human observation

EM review shows footage around the protected-species event, but Camera 2 was obscured for 46 minutes. Sensor data indicate a fishing event during the earlier VMS gap. The vessel logbook contains no explanation for either anomaly.

HUMAN OBSERVER ADDS

- Context
- species/condition assessment
- crew statements/behavior
- sequence of events
- safety/interference observations

EM ADDS

Time-stamped visual record
event detection
cross-check of activity
reviewable record independent of memory

TOGETHER

Triangulate discrepancies
identify missing information
strengthen confidence
reveal possible tampering or system failure

STAGE 3 | BUILD THE EVIDENCE PACKAGE

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Separate observation, corroboration, inference and allegation

Chronology

A time-ordered sequence of material events, including communications and safety incidents.

Primary observer record

Original notes/forms and clear identification of later corrections or additions.

Corroboration matrix

For each issue: observer record ↔ logbook ↔ EM ↔ VMS/AIS/position data ↔ photos/other records.

Integrity controls

How files/records were secured, transferred, backed up and access was limited/documented.

Issue statement

Neutral wording describing the discrepancy and evidence; avoid deciding guilt beyond the observer's role.

STAGE 4 | DEBRIEFING AND FINAL REPORTING

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The observer returns safely. The program now has to turn information into action.

OBSERVER DEBRIEF

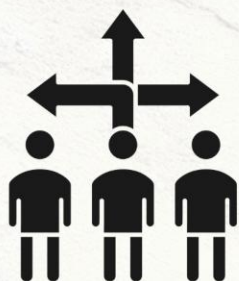
Private, structured and timely. Clarify facts without coaching the observer. Capture welfare/safety concerns and follow-up needs.

DATA & EM REVIEW

Resolve timestamps, missing data, discrepancies, data-quality flags and required corrections while preserving originals.

COMPLIANCE REFERRAL

Identify which matters meet the program's referral threshold and send the evidence package to the authorized MCS/enforcement process.



TEAM DECISION:

- Which issues are routine data-quality matters, which are potential compliance violations, and which are observer-safety/interference incidents?
- What further information is needed before referral?
- What should be communicated to the vessel/company, and by whom?
- What program-level corrective action should follow?

TEAM REPORT-BACK TEMPLATE

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Each team presents in 3 minutes

	1	DEPLOYMENT DECISION	GO / CONDITIONAL GO / NO-GO and the critical controls.
	2	TOP THREE RISKS	Operational, compliance/data, and observer safety risks.
	3	EVIDENCE STRATEGY	The strongest corroboration chain for one suspected non-compliance event.
	4	SAFETY RESPONSE	How the observer and program responded to interference.
	5	PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT	One practical improvement to observer deployment or hybrid EM integration.



Implemented by



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