

INTERNATIONAL DOLPHIN CONSERVATION PROGRAM

INTERNATIONAL REVIEW PANEL

43RD MEETING

CANCUN, MEXICO

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STANDARDS FOR SELECTING OBSERVERS FOR THE AIDCP ON-BOARD OBSERVER PROGRAM

Annex II.3 of the AIDCP establishes the criteria for observers of the On-Board Observer Program, as follows:

3. All observers must:
 - a. have completed the technical training required by the guidelines that the Parties establish;
 - b. be a national of one of the Parties or a member of the scientific staff of the IATTC;
 - c. be capable of performing the duties set forth in paragraph 4 of this Annex; and
 - d. be included in a list of observers maintained by the IATTC or, if part of a national observer program, by the Party maintaining such program.

In June 2000, an *ad hoc* meeting of representatives of the national observer programs and the IATTC staff formulated some recommendations for harmonizing the observer programs. It was recommended that all programs should:

1. hold their observer training courses jointly;
2. consider using psychometric tests used to assess the psychological profile of prospective observers;
3. recruit only university graduates with a degree in biology or a related subject (zoology, ecology, *etc.*); avoid recruiting graduates in technical disciplines which are closely related to the fishing industry (fisheries technician, fisheries engineer, *etc.*);
4. exchange information regarding the release of observers, including information as to the general circumstances of their release; and
5. perform and exchange evaluations of active observers.

No formal technical training guidelines have been established by the Parties in accordance with Annex II.3, but in practice the IATTC and national observer programs conduct similar training sessions. Colombian, Ecuadorian and European Union observer training sessions have always been held with the participation of the IATTC staff or concurrently with an IATTC observer training session. The Mexican, Venezuelan, Panamanian and Nicaraguan training courses have had the participation of former IATTC staff or former IATTC observers.

Although, in general, the recommendations of the *ad hoc* meeting are being followed, the Secretariat believes that it is important that the Parties develop formal guidelines to be followed by all observer programs. If this is agreed, the Secretariat, in consultation with the national programs, could prepare a set of draft guidelines for consideration at the next meeting of the IRP.