

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## 2016 - 2021



### + Vision

Independent professional observers are globally valued, respected and securely employed to support the conservation and management of marine living resources.

### + Mission

The Association for Professional Observers (APO) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization whose mission is to strengthen observer programs through advocacy, education and the encouragement of best practices among stakeholders.

Our goal is to encourage the recruitment and retention of professional observers and foster the best quality observer data for the purposes of conservation and the responsible management of marine living resources.

The APO strongly supports robust, transparent and scientifically based fisheries monitoring programs that adhere to the principles of scientific integrity, welfare of human rights, and unbiased independent observer data and information.

The APO:

- Engages with national and international fora to advance the safety and welfare of observers and their worker rights;
- Advocates for transparency and effectiveness of observer program management; and
- Acts as a liaison between observers and their respective observer programs and observer employer when issues arise.

### + Core Values

#### **Independence**

The APO provides advice that is objective and based on the best information available. It is not unduly influenced by stakeholders, ideological groups, political pressure or by economic or financial interests

#### **Integrity**

The APO applies the highest ethical standards to all its operations and dealings with people.

#### **Relationships**

The APO will develop, internally and externally, constructive and collaborative relationships built on trust.

#### **Cooperation**

The APO values and encourages the participation of all its members, acting through collaboration and cooperation to cultivate a diverse set of expertise and to promote best practice.

#### **Commitment**

The APO is committed to provide the best advice for observers and observer programs to support effective science-based fishery management.

#### **Transparency**

The APO encourages the participation of observers in its operations and will ensure non-confidential information, analyses and APO organizational documents are easily accessible to all interested parties

### Strategic Goals

#### **Strategic Goal 1**

The APO is a resilient, financially secure and functioning organization.

#### **Strategic Goal 2**

Observers are supported and respected in their working environment and activities.

#### **Strategic Goal 3**

The APO positively influences and informs fisheries management organizations and other international fora to embed standard requirements of all stakeholders into official policies.

#### **Strategic Goal 4**

APO membership and participation is vibrant and active.

## Goals and Objectives

### Goal 1

#### Maintain and improve APO operations

#### Objective 1.1

By 2020 the APO will have improved as a professional association and network for exchanging information and expertise, and fostering contacts within the various observer programs, fisheries management personnel, the general public and organizations throughout the world.

#### Objective 1.2

The APO will be compliant with standard non-profit management practices by 2018.

### Activities

Create organizational documents, policies and practices that reflect standard non-profit organizational management.

Develop a new Internet server and build a new website and information portal for the public about fisheries, fisheries management and fishery monitoring programs.

Increase our board to 6 people by 2016; include individuals with diverse skills, not necessarily with observer experience but dedicated to the vision, mission and goals of the APO.

Update APO bylaws and add/update other organizational documents.

Create an international news listserv (where members can choose regions or topics).

Create a paid executive director position.

Secure funding for key positions.

Create APO affiliated regional chapters and establish a central international office.

Create a template for an annual report, minutes and records (board meeting minutes).

Create an annual report of activities, finances and management.

Decide on required organizational documentation and develop processes for their preparation, online storage and access.

Diversify content and delivery to optimize use of digital media and increase interactivity.

Optimize online presence to allow observers to acquire and share best-practice knowledge.

Enhance the Grassroots Network to ensure active representation of all regions' professional observers. Develop a strong volunteer base.

## Goals and Objectives

### **Goal 2**                      **Support fisheries observer improvements in working environment and activities**

**Objective 2.1**              Observers are supported to be independent and professional (including their rights, health, safety and stakeholder-support structures) and advocacy is provided by the APO to observers when needed.

**Objective 2.2**              International collaboration and cooperation is fostered to better leverage observer program initiatives, resources and knowledge..

**Objective 2.3**              Members and non-members are educated concerning the uses and value of observer data

### **Activities**

Create a format for interviewing observer programs to monitor their adherence or applicability to the International Observer Bill of Rights (IOBR) and Code of Conduct for Responsible Observer Programmes – Health and Safety (CCROP-HS) and Stakeholder Responsibilities (CCROP-SR) criteria.

Gain recognition of the IOBR and CCROP documents through the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Monitor and report on trends of observer assault, harassment, interference and bribery.

Provide a safe, anonymous platform where observers can report of abuse and violations. Research setting up a crisis line for observers.

Conduct regular on-line surveys of conditions observers are facing.

Scope near-term and mid-term potential changes to industry and observer program operations, and observer responsibilities to identify what advances in technologies may offer monitoring programs.

Create an inventory of observer programs according to their current status of implementing electronic monitoring (EM) in place of observer placement and continue ongoing monitoring of challenges and opportunities associated with the adoption of electronic technologies in fishery monitoring programs.

Finalize and distribute the APO Electronic Monitoring Position Statement, determine most suitable avenues and methods to implement policy.

Complete an annual review of EM advancements.

Survey the APO Facebook membership to improve knowledge of membership program representation and their values; review observer laws and regulations internationally; and to organize observer Facebook group members according to their region.

Disseminate information concerning observer, marine conservation, biological and inter-and intra-agency issues via newsletters (as well as a website and listerv for up-to-date information between newsletters).

Develop guidelines that explain laws and procedures pertaining to better access to observer and observer program data and information.

Advocate for periodic published observer program and observer employer reviews that gauge their efficacy and management practices.

Advocate transparency in contracts between observer program/agency and observer employer; observer program/agency and observers; observer program/agency and fishing industries; observer employers and fishing industries; observer employer and observers and observer unions and observers.

Encourage and promote observers to attain positions of leadership within APO and other organizations.

Help secure funding to support observers to participate in observer program workshops, conferences, and meetings of fishery management agencies and councils, for the purpose of improving the monitoring systems of fisheries.

Compare and assess observer programs and work with stakeholders to help establish best practice, share information, and demonstrate the efficacy of observer programs. Start with well-established programs and work toward helping improve developing programs or those that are considered to be functioning less well. Possibly develop a 'score card' for programs.

Partner with an NGO specialized in facilitating government transparency and accountability to facilitate whistle-blowing and grievance procedures for observers while ensuring their rights are protected.

Encourage closer engagement with relevant stakeholders (government, observers, observer employers, industry, NGOs and the public) to better inform APO priorities and activities. Increase public awareness of the observer profession and its vital role in sustainable fisheries.

Undertake analysis of how much resources are required to support and respond to an individual fisheries observers needs/requests in

order to determine prioritization of APO focus areas and resources that are needed to support these activities.

## Goals and Objectives

**Goal 3**      **APO influences and informs fisheries management organizations and other international fora to embed standard requirements of all stakeholders into official observer program, observer employer and agency policies**

**Objective 3.1**      Best practices for observer programs are to be acknowledged, accepted, promoted and implemented by all fisheries management organizations by 2025.

**Objective 3.2**      Professional fisheries observers are to be recognised as an essential component of all Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMO) and national fisheries management agencies.

**Objective 3.3**      The APO is recognised as a credible and international association providing valued and trusted input into fisheries policy and management development at international fora.

## Activities

Provide linkage between effective fishery monitoring programs, sustainable resource management, and public acceptability of fisheries.

Scope out venues to provide input into policies and papers being developed in relevant international conventions and treaties to ensure APO has a voice in their development and can progress issues that impact observer programs and observers.

Scope out suitable venues to obtain formal recognition of the IOBR and CCROP documents in order to move agencies toward their implementation.

Improve access to observer data to support greater use of data for different purposes (e.g. develop a Freedom of Information Policy that can be adopted by RFMOs).

Scope out suitable avenues and methods to support capacity building in observer programs, including that of enforcement.

## Goals and Objectives

<b>Goal 4</b>	<b>Increase total membership and participation of observers</b>
Objective 4.1	The regional, national and international growth of the APO membership continues and healthy membership is achieved by 2020.
<b>Objective 4.2</b>	Inspire fisheries observers to be connected with APO, as the organization that represents them and to realize their important role in sustainable fisheries.
<b>Objective 4.3</b>	The APO becomes financially secure through financial membership fees and specific grants by 2020.

### Activities

Target those involved in the collection and analysis of fishery-dependent data to foster the support and awareness of the APO and the services it provides. Reach out to a wider cross section of observers and developing programs in order to encourage membership.

Promote a linkage between effective fishery monitoring programs, sustainable resource management, and public acceptability of fisheries.

Scope suitable funding sources and grants for specific projects and opportunities.

Prepare project proposals for specific grants.

Continue to build relationships with similar associations and activities – e.g. fisheries monitoring conferences, electronic monitoring groups and observer advisory committees.

Improve fishery monitoring programs worldwide through sharing of practices and development in new methods of data collection and analysis.