

OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION

Panama, October 14, 2024

To the Shipowners, Owners, and Legal Representatives of vessels conducting transshipment activities,

The Aquatic Resources Authority of Panama (ARAP) informs that as of October 15, 2024, a new measure will be gradually implemented, requiring the presence of observers aboard vessels that conduct transshipment activities. This measure will be mandatory as of January 15, 2025, in accordance with Resolution ADM/ARAP No. 052 of August 22, 2024.

It is important to note that according to paragraph 4 of the aforementioned resolution, vessels operating in areas where they already have an observer aboard as part of a regional fisheries management program recognized by a Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) will be exempt from this measure. Additionally, vessels conducting transshipments with fishing vessels that already have a fishing observer on board will be exempt, provided that this observer oversees the activity and signs the corresponding transshipment declaration.

To ensure effective control over observer programs and the activities conducted onboard, ARAP will be responsible for appointing the fisheries observers. Once appointed, the corresponding observer program will be informed, which will handle the necessary logistics with the shipowner to ensure the placement of the observer on the vessel.

The observer programs recognized by this Authority have confirmed a flat rate of \$300.00 per day, which will include:

- Transportation or air transfer of the observer
- Per diem
- Necessary equipment to perform their duties
- Life and medical insurance
- Observer services to ensure compliance with current regulations

Requests for observer assignments should be sent to the following email: [**observerpan@arap.gob.pa**](mailto:observerpan@arap.gob.pa).

Although this measure will be mandatory starting on January 15, 2025, we encourage shipowners and owners to voluntarily implement the measure from October 15, 2024. This will allow them to familiarize themselves with the process, ensure their vessels' operations comply with

regulations, and avoid potential inconveniences or delays when the mandatory requirement takes effect.

It is also essential to highlight that both, fisheries observers, as well as the captain and crew, will have clearly defined rights and duties during transshipment activities to ensure a safe and cooperative working environment. Among these:

- The captain will be responsible for ensuring the observer's safety and must notify ARAP of any incidents occurring during operations.
- The crew must cooperate with the observer and not interfere with their work, respecting their role.
- Observers will maintain their independence and impartiality, must report any serious violations, and will have access to all necessary facilities and equipment to perform their duties efficiently.

These provisions have been adopted to ensure that ARAP maintains direct control over the observer programs and that international and national transshipment activities regulations are uniformly and efficiently complied with.

Likewise, this Authority reaffirms its strict compliance with the provisions of the current national and international regulations.

We appreciate your cooperation in implementing this measure. For any inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact us at soporte.observadorespan@arap.gob.pa.

Sincerely,

Aquatic Resources Authority of Panama (ARAP)