
**ON ESTABLISHMENT OF A SCIENTIFIC MEETING PARTICIPATION FUND FOR
DEVELOPING STATE MEMBERS
SUBMITTED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Background:

As it was highlighted during several IOTC Scientific Committee meetings, the lack of participation of scientists from the region and in particular from developing coastal States heavily affects the IOTC scientific works. Consequently, the IOTC Scientific Committee expressed serious concerns about this situation which is also related to the meetings of the Scientific Committee subsidiary bodies.

These concerns have been acknowledged by the Commission since its Seventh Session, and by the IOTC Performance Review Panel in 2009, who reiterated these worries and recommended that a special fund be established to support the participation of scientists from developing States.

To address this situation and to follow-up on the conclusions of the IOTC Performance Review, the European Union is proposing that a special Scientific Meetings Participations Fund is established for the purposes of supporting scientists from Contracting and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties who are developing States to attend and/or contribute to the work of the IOTC Scientific Committee and its working parties.

The initial funding can be based on financial resources coming from the IOTC accumulated funds, with an open possibility for voluntary contributions from Members or/and such other sources as the Commission may identify.

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),

RECOGNISING that Article 25 paragraph 3 of the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea of December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UNFSA) describes, *inter alia*, forms of cooperation with developing states and the need for assistance relating to collection, reporting, verification, exchange and analysis of fisheries data and related information; and stock assessment and scientific research;

RECALLING that the IOTC Scientific Committee has noted with concern the lack of participants from developing States at its meetings and those of its subsidiary bodies since 2004;

RECALLING ALSO that these concerns have been acknowledged by the Commission since its Seventh Session, and by the IOTC Performance Review Panel in 2009, who reiterated these concerns and recommended that a special fund be established to support the participation of scientists from developing States;

ADOPTS, in accordance with paragraph 1 of Article IX of the IOTC Agreement, that:

1. A special Scientific Meetings Participations Fund (SMPF) be established for the purposes of supporting scientists from Contracting and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties (CPCs) who are developing States to attend and/or contribute to the work of the IOTC Scientific Committee and its working parties.

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2. The SMPF shall be financed from an initial allocation of USD200,000 from IOTC's accumulated funds, and subsequently by voluntary contributions from Members and such other sources as the Commission may identify.
 3. The Fund will be administered by the Secretary, in accordance with the same financial controls as regular budget appropriations.
 4. The Secretary shall establish a process for notifying CPCs annually of the level of available funds in the SMPF, and provide a timeline and describe the format for the submission of applications for assistance.
 5. The Secretary shall submit an annual report to the Commission on the status of the Fund, including a financial statement of contributions to and disbursements from the Fund;
 6. Those eligible scientists may submit an application for assistance from the Fund. Applicants will be selected by a panel including the Chair of the scientific body concerned, the Secretariat and the Chair of the Scientific Committee, in accordance with the process established in 4 above. Priority will be given to those applicants that will contribute a scientific document on a subject of interest to the meeting they wish to attend. The decision by the Panel shall also take into account the size of the fund and the need for cost-effectiveness. Consideration of applications shall also include an assessment of whether any alternative sources of assistance are available.
 7. Applicants should note that alternative avenues of funding are available to developing State Members who wish to send scientists to IOTC scientific meetings. For example, a fund has been established under Part VII of UNFSA to assist developing States that are signatories of the UNFSA to implement its provisions, including participation in the work of Regional Fisheries Management Organisations. For those eligible Members of IOTC, this could provide for an alternative source of funding to participate in meetings of the Commission and subsidiary bodies or to fund attendance at IOTC meetings as training and capacity building required to fulfil the obligations under the UNFSA.