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## IOTC-OFCF PROJECT ACTIVITIES IN 2013: PROGRESS REPORT

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### Purpose

To provide the IOTC Working Party on Data Collection and Statistics with an overview of the activities that the IOTC-OFCF Project initiated during the last year to enhance the capacity of IOTC developing coastal states to collect, process and report statistics to the IOTC, and main results of those activities.

### Background

Since April 2002, the Overseas Fisheries Cooperation Foundation of Japan has been assisting developing coastal states in the IOTC Area of Competence with their statistical data collection, processing, and reporting systems, with a view to enhancing the capacity of institutions in those countries and improve their compliance with IOTC requirements for statistics and other scientific data used on the assessments of IOTC species.

This document presents the activities undertaken by the IOTC-OFCF Project during the last year, and those activities that have been planned for 2014.

### Recommendation

The WPDCS is invited to review the Progress of activities undertaken by the IOTC-OFCF Project and recommend that the IOTC Scientific Committee considers to endorse the future work plan by the Project.

In addition, the WPDCS is invited to consider, where necessary, recommending the implementation of other activities that to its view will lead to improved statistics for IOTC and associated species, bearing in mind the funds that are allocated to the IOTC-OFCF Project.

The report covers the following areas:

- Introduction;
- Progress achieved;
- Work plan for the next year

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## Introduction

The Memorandum of Understanding between the IOTC and the Overseas Fishery Cooperation Foundation of Japan (OFCF) was initiated in April 2002, with the purpose of enhancing the capacity of developing coastal states in the Indian Ocean region to improve their fisheries statistical systems. Phases I (April 2002 - March 2007), II (June 2007 - March 2010) and III (June 2010 – March 2013) of the Project ran for eleven consecutive years. At the end of Phase III of the Project, the IOTC and the OFCF considered the implementation of a new Phase with the objective of addressing the concerns of the Commission regarding the quality of the data available for some of the important artisanal fisheries in the IOTC Region. Following consideration of the proposal, the OFCF agreed to initiate Phase IV of the Project, which involved the allocation of similar levels of funds to those allocated to Phase III of the Project. Phase IV of the IOTC-OFCF Project will focus on the implementation of activities in support of IOTC coastal countries, with a view to strengthening their capacity to comply with provisions in IOTC Resolution 11/04 (Regional Observer Scheme), and a focus on artisanal fisheries. In particular, the Project assist countries to facilitate compliance with the minimum sampling levels recommended by the Commission for artisanal fisheries:

*4. The number of the artisanal fishing vessels landings shall also be monitored at the landing place by field samplers. The indicative level of the coverage of the artisanal fishing vessels should progressively increase towards 5% of the total levels of vessel activity (i.e. total number of vessel trips or total number of vessels active).*

In addition to the activities undertaken by the IOTC-OFCF Project, the IOTC Secretariat provided additional assistance to countries in the region, as requested by the Commission in paragraph 7 of IOTC Resolution 11/04:

*7. The sampling scheme referred in paragraph 4 will be covered by the Commission's accumulated funds and voluntary contribution on a provisional basis. The Commission will consider an alternative for the financing of this scheme.*

A new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the IOTC and the OFCF was signed in June 2013, along the lines of those previously existing, including the provision of funds and detachment of an OFCF Expert to the IOTC Secretariat, to coordinate the activities of the Project, along with the IOTC Data Coordinator and other staff from the Secretariat, as required. Phase IV of the Project will run for three years, coming to an end in March 2016. Activities under Phase IV will be reviewed annually, and funds for a new year committed on the basis of results from the Project and mutual agreement by the parties on the continuation of activities, through exchange of letters between the IOTC and the OFCF.

The Project keeps the following three main principles since 2002:

- The activities undertaken under the Project follow the recommendations of the Commission and its relevant subsidiary bodies: the Working Parties and the Scientific Committee.
- There will be no direct financial implications for IOTC Member countries.
- The activities of the Project should be directed towards reinforcing the statistical systems of developing countries from the region.

The current report covers activities on the end of Phase III of the Project (January - March 2013)<sup>2</sup> and the first year of Phase IV (June 2013 – March 2014). A summary of all the activities undertaken by the Project since its inception in 2002 is also presented in Table 1 and in Annex 1.

<sup>2</sup> Note that this refers to the Japanese fiscal year, which runs from April to March of the Julian calendar.

## Progress achieved

The IOTC-OFCF Project provided financial and technical assistance for the implementation of the following activities in 2012-13:

**Indonesia:** Indonesia has one of the largest **artisanal fisheries** in the world with catches over 250,000 t (Indian and Pacific oceans), and catches of the medium-scale vessel component estimated to be over 250,000 tons. In the Indian Ocean, excluding the longline component, catches of tuna were over 170,000t in 2009. However, these figures are thought to be conservative estimates at best. Several reports have pointed to flaws in the sampling system, and in particular the underestimation of catches (e.g., WWF’s “Off the Hook Report”), as well as catches not fully reported by gear and species, especially in the case of small tunas. In order to address these issues, the Directorate General of Capture Fisheries of Indonesia (DGCF) and the IOTC-OFCF Project agreed to conduct a Catch Estimation Workshop for the Fisheries of Indonesia, with focus on small and medium-scale fisheries. The workshop was held in March 13-15, 2012 with participation from DGCF, RCCF (Research Centre for Capture Fisheries), RIMF (Research Institution for Marine Fisheries), the IOTC and OFCF. CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research organization of Australia), NRIFSF (National Research Institute of Far Seas Fisheries in Japan) and WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) have also participated in the meeting. The objective of the Workshop was to review the current data collection and estimation procedures in Indonesia and revision of current and past catch figures, as required.

The Workshop identified several issues concerning the status of data collection, processing, and dissemination for the fisheries catching IOTC species in Indonesia including, inappropriate sampling design, inconsistency in the data collection procedures, inadequate training and supervision of enumerators, issues with the data management and validation due to the lack of a centralized database system, and conflicting estimates of catches by gear and species.

Following recommendations from the Catch Estimation Workshop, the IOTC-OFCF Project made it Indonesia’s coastal fisheries the focus of activities by the Project during Phase IV. During 1-5 October 2013 the IOTC-OFCF Project Manager and the IOTC Data Coordinator visited Indonesia in order to discuss support from the Project to the implementation of capacity building activities to enhance the quality of data collection and reports of catch, effort and size data for gillnet, purse seine, lift net, troll line, and other small-scale fisheries in Indonesia. The species that are the focus of these activities are juvenile specimens of tropical tunas (especially yellowfin tuna and bigeye tuna), and several species of neritic tunas, including longtail tuna, frigate and bullet tunas, and kawakawa, species that are often recorded in Indonesia under the aggregate *Tongkol*, not recorded by species.

Following this mission, the IOTC-OFCF Project agreed to provide technical and financial support to facilitate the organization of Data Collection Workshops in cooperation with the Directorate General of Capture Fisheries, Provincial Authorities, and the Research Centre for Capture Fisheries of Indonesia. The Workshops will focus on improving species identification and standardization of data collection protocols in all landing places, with a Workshop organized on each Province (and duration between 3-4 days). Following the Workshop, the IOTC-OFCF Project will provide support for the supervision of sampling activities in the Province that was the focus of the Workshop, by a team composed of a local fisheries expert and skilled enumerator. Organization of the first Workshop has been planned for February-March 2014.

Indonesia has also very important **longline** fisheries and the catches reported in recent years represent a high share of the total catches of longline fisheries in the Indian Ocean. Indonesia’s monitoring of its longline fleets based in ports in Indonesia improved substantially during 2002-2007, thanks to the implementation of a Multilateral Catch Monitoring Programme, which involved the participation of several local and foreign institutions, in particular the IOTC-OFCF Project. Following the end of support, the Directorate General of Capture Fisheries of Indonesia maintained the sampling scheme implemented in 2002. However, since 2009 Indonesia does not report size frequency data and the IOTC Scientific Committee has identified a number of problems with reports of catches of some species from longline fisheries, in particular albacore; and the fact that, to date, Indonesia has not reported catch-and-effort data for its longline fisheries.

For this reason, the IOTC-OFCF Project agreed to support the DGCF of Indonesia in the evaluation of data collection and management activities, including logbook systems, and where required, revision of sampling design and support to strengthening of sampling activities, in particular sampling of the component of the catches unloaded frozen. The evaluation will be implemented as from 21<sup>st</sup> November 2013 and will include visits to the headquarters of DGCF in Jakarta, and the main landing ports of longliners (Jakarta, Pelabuhan-ratu, Cilacap, Bungus, and Bali).

**Thailand and Malaysia:** Thailand and Malaysia have important purse seine fisheries for neritic tunas, which operate in the coastal waters of each country. Following recommendations from the IOTC Working Party on Neritic Tunas to improve the quality of catch-and-effort statistics for neritic tunas, and attempt the standardization of the CPUE series available, where appropriate, the IOTC-OFCF Project agreed to provide support for an evaluation of the catch-and-

effort data collected in Thailand and Malaysia. The IOTC-OFCF Project has initiated arrangements to conduct this activity in February 2014 and results will be reported to the next meeting of the WPNT.

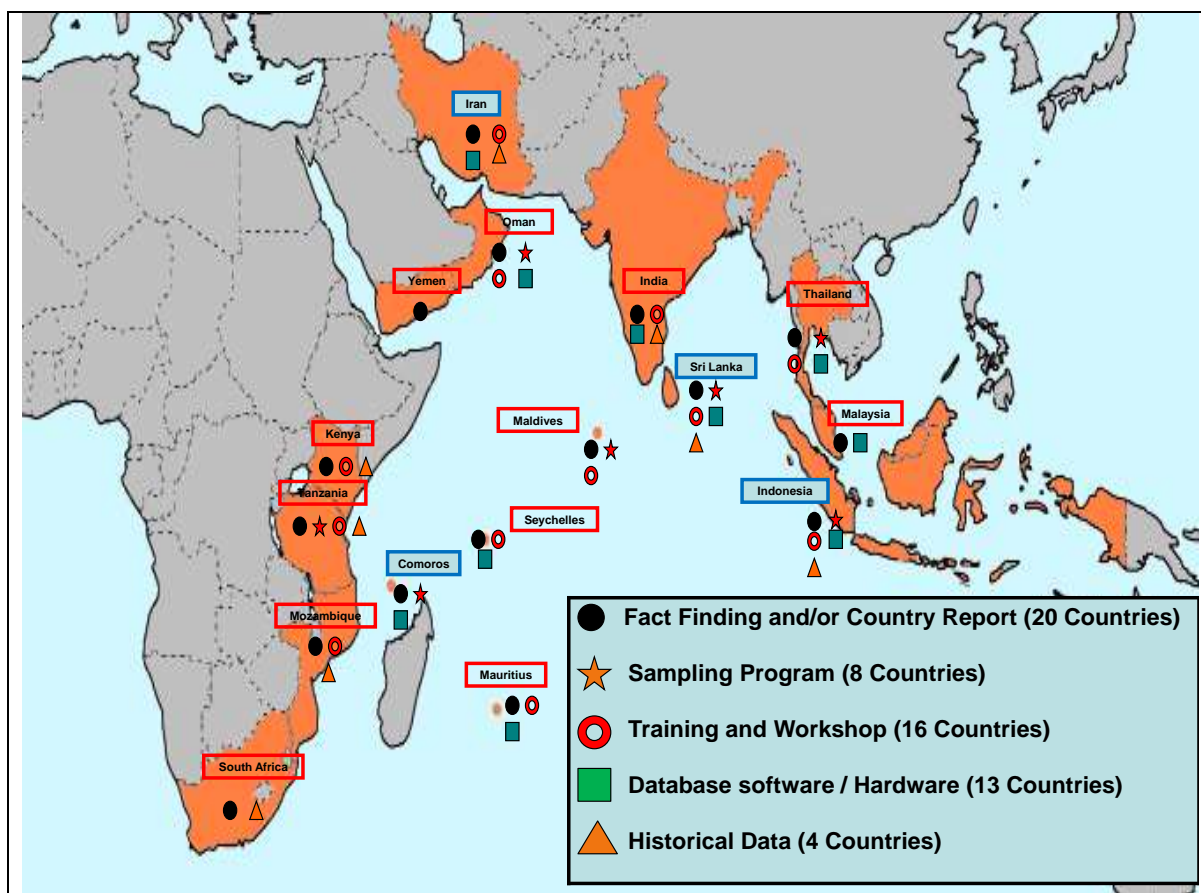
**Sri Lanka:** In 2012-13, following a request for assistance by the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources of Sri Lanka, the IOTC-OFCF Project agreed to provide support to strengthen data collection and processing systems for the coastal and offshore fisheries of Sri Lanka. Activities included: an evaluation of the sampling design; development of a new sampling design; training of enumerators; development of a new database; training of database administrators and data input staff (activity funded by the BOBLME Project); and support to sampling activities (funded by the IOTC-OFCF Project and, subsequently, BOBLME). At present, all activities in Sri Lanka are funded by the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystems Project; BOBLME IT Manager and the IOTC Secretariat are also cooperating in further development of the database system.

**Comoros:** In 2012 the IOTC-OFCF Project conducted a training course on catch estimation, inviting two officers from the “Centre National de Ressources Halieutiques” (CNRH) of the Union of Comoros to the IOTC Secretariat, Seychelles. During the training the IOTC-OFCF Project and the CNRH put together preliminary estimates of catch and effort for the year 2011, using the data collected through the census (for which the OFCF provided support) and sampling activities (funds from the IOTC) in the Comoros. The IOTC Secretariat updated the estimates in 2013, following further review and validation of the data by the CNRH of Comoros. The catches estimates were input in the IOTC databases and a historical review was also conducted using this data. Activities in Comoros resumed in October 2013, thanks to support from the COI-Smartfish Project and the IOTC, which are also funding capacity building activities in Madagascar.

### **Work plan for year 2 of Phase IV of the Project**

The IOTC and the OFCF are planning to hold the next IOTC-OFCF Joint Committee Meeting in Seychelles, at around March 2014, with final dates for the meeting to be agreed at a later time. During the meeting the Project will focus on reviewing all activities undertaken during the first year of Phase IV of the Project, and consider activities to be implemented during year 2 of Phase IV of the Project, from April 2014, where agreed by both parties.

## Annex 1.



Activities of the IOTC-OFCE Project from Phase I to III.

Blue rectangles are used for activities implemented during Phase III of the Project, currently ongoing.

**Table 1.** Summary of the activities implemented during Phases I, II, and III of the IOTC-OFCE Project

Country-Fleet	Activities implemented			Fact-finding	Country report	Sampling activities	Training/ Workshop	Hardware/ Software/ Database	Historical data	Recommendations addressed
	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III							
India	Yes			Yes	Yes		Yes			No
Indonesia-FLL	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Indonesia-ART	Yes		Yes	Yes/ Planned	Yes		Yes/ Planned			Yes
Iran	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes		No
Kenya	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Malaysia	Yes			Yes			Yes	Yes	Planned	No
Maldives	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes
Mauritius	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes
Mozambique	Yes			Yes	Yes		Yes			No
Oman	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			No
Seychelles	Yes			Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes
South Africa	Yes				Yes					Yes
Sri Lanka-G/L	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Sri Lanka-ART	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Tanzania	Yes			Yes.	Yes			Yes		No
Thailand-FLL	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Thailand-PSS	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Planned	Yes
Thailand-PS		Yes		Yes				Yes		Yes
Yemen		Yes		Yes,					Yes	No
Comoros		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes

Note: FLL: Fresh tuna longline; ART: Artisanal fishing vessel; G/L: Gillnet with longline; PSS: Small purse seine; PS: Industrial purse seine.

Red font is used for activities planned for Phase IV of the Project, ongoing or to be implemented soon.