APPLICATION FOR COOPERATING NON-CONTRACTING PARTY STATUS
SOUTH AFRICA

The following document provides details on the compliance with IOTC Resolution 03/02 (attached) by South Africa who applied for renewal of Cooperating Non-Contracting Party status to the IOTC. The Compliance Committee is responsible for reviewing such requests and for recommending to the Commission whether or not an applicant should receive co-operating status.

Request Letter

Paragraph 2 of the resolution

Any non-Contracting Party requesting the status of a co-operating non-Contracting Party shall apply to the Secretary. Requests must be received by the Executive Secretary no later than ninety (90) days in advance of an Annual Session of the Commission, to be considered at that meeting.

The IOTC Secretariat received a letter of application dated 6 March 2008 from the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Branch: Marine and Coastal Management, hereafter referred to as the Department, of South Africa to review its status as Cooperating Non-Contracting Party to the IOTC (CoC04).

Information provided to support the application

Paragraph 3 of the resolution

Non-Contracting Parties requesting the status of Co-operating non-Contracting Party shall provide the following information in order to have this status considered by the Commission:

a) where available, data on its historical fisheries in the IOTC Area, including nominal catches, number/type of vessels, name of fishing vessels, fishing effort and fishing areas;

b) all the data that Contracting Parties have to submit to IOTC based on the resolutions adopted by IOTC;

c) details on current fishing presence in the IOTC Area, number of vessels and vessel characteristics and;

d) information on any research programmes it may have conducted in the IOTC Area and the information and the results of this research.

(a) Data on historical fisheries in the IOTC Area

The responsibility of reporting of catches, effort, size frequency and vessel record data lies with Marine and Coastal Management (in the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism).

Catch and effort data for South African fishing sectors in the Indian Ocean have on average caught ~ 500 t per year in total between 1997 - 2001. Catches have increased to average ~2000 t between 2002 – 2006, mainly due to the development of the tuna/swordfish longline sector (Table 1).

Nominal Catches for all three sectors have been reported for the period 1997 until present.

Discards have been reported for 2005 for the tuna/swordfish longline sector using observer reports.

Catches and effort per statistical area and month have been reported for tuna/swordfish longline vessels for the period 1997 until present.

Size frequency data have been reported for the tuna/swordfish longline fishery since 2001.

Names and characteristics of fishing vessels greater than 24m in length, which have been active in the IOTC area have been reported for the period 1997 until present.

Table 1. **Nominal catch (t) of tuna and tuna-like species and fishing effort (no of vessels) by South African commercial fishing sectors.**

Year	Tuna/swordfish Longline		Shark Longline		Handline		Total
	Catch (t)	Vessel No	Catch (t)	Vessel No	Catch (t)	Vessel No	Catch (t)
1997	43	1	7	1	286		336
1998	307	11	49	2	326		682
1999	185	13	19	1	242		446
2000	279	11	19	1	212		510
2001	370	21	0	0	178		548
2002	1103	21	0	0	124		1227
2003	1566	23	162	5	272		2000
2004	1621	20	17	1	210		1848
2005	2897	16	706	5	117	20	3720
2006	550	9	482	5	161	21	1193

(b) Data reported pertaining to IOTC resolutions and recommendations

The following table summarizes the information reported by South Africa that relates to IOTC Resolutions and Recommendations.

Table 2. **Information reported by South Africa relating to IOTC Resolutions and Recommendations**

IOTC Resolution	Summary of reported information
98/01 & 01/05	Nominal catch data for tuna/swordfish longline, shark longline and handline have been reported for the period 1997 until present. Effort data has also been provided for the same period. Size frequency data have been provided for tuna/swordfish longline vessels since 2002. No programme exists to collect data from recreational fisheries as it is considered to be a small sector.
00/02	South Africa has actively collected data on predation of longline caught fish since 2005. Data in this regard was forwarded to IOTC in 2007.
01/01	South Africa has implemented an observer programme for its tuna/swordfish longline vessels since 1998. Observer coverage is aimed at 20% of all fishing trips for domestic vessels and 100% coverage for foreign vessels fishing under charter agreement with South African right holders.
01/02	South Africa has in recent years provided an annual list of vessels authorized to fish in the Indian Ocean.
01/06	South Africa has established a statistical document programme since 2003 for the export of swordfish, bigeye and southern bluefin tuna.
05/01 & 07/05	South Africa submitted a fleet development plan at the 11th Session of the IOTC, which indicated that the large pelagic longline fishery would be developed to a maximum of 50 vessels (20 swordfish-directed and 30 tuna-directed).
05/03	The Department has created a specialized High Seas Fisheries unit in Nov 2006 and since then, South Africa has been active in notifying flag states and IOTC of vessels which have fished in contravention of the IOTC management and conservation measures. South Africa has also provided data on foreign vessels utilizing South African ports for 2005 and 2006.
05/08	South Africa has provided data on turtle by-catch to the IOTC and it has also strongly encouraged its fleet (through permit conditions) to use circle hooks.
05/09 & 06/04	Seabird mortality data have been collected, analyzed and reported to IOTC. Mandatory mitigation measures have been implemented since 2002 e.g. tori lines, appropriate line sink rates, reduced deck lighting, limit time of setting etc. A seabird by-catch limit per vessel has also been implemented in 2008.
07/04	South Africa has provided IOTC with an active vessel list for vessels > 24m for the period 1997 until present.

(c) Evidence of current fishing presence in the IOTC Area

Part of the South African EEZ lies within the IOTC Area. Tuna and tuna-like species are currently targeted by various fishing sectors, including tuna/swordfish longline, pelagic shark longline, handline and the recreational sector. In 2007, 26 vessels (> 24 m) reported catches of tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean. The bulk of the vessels fish in the tuna/swordfish longline sector, with only three vessels fishing for pelagic shark (Table 3). Twelve foreign vessels (from Japan, Korea and Phillipines) operated under formal charter agreements with South African right holders in accordance with ICCAT recommendation [02-21]. In addition, more than 20 ski-boats (<10 m) operate in the linefish sector and target tuna opportunistically along the east coast of South Africa using handlines/rod and reel.

Table 3. **Active vessel list for South Africa in 2007(vessels > 24m)**

Flag Country	Sector	Vessel No	GRT (t)
South Africa	Shark Longline	3	620
South Africa	Tuna/swordfish Longline	11	2600
Japan	Tuna/swordfish Longline	7	2700
Korea	Tuna/swordfish Longline	3	1100
Phillipines	Tuna/swordfish Longline	2	1200
	Total	26	8220

(d) Research programs conducted in the IOTC area and results of the research

South Africa has an established on board scientific observer programme to obtain length frequencies, biological samples, and fisheries information on target and by-catch species. The observer coverage is aimed at 20% for domestic vessels and 100% coverage for foreign flag vessels operating under charter arrangements.

The main focus of large pelagic research in South Africa has been the life history and stock structure of swordfish in southern African waters. The observer programme has been used extensively since 1998 to collect swordfish length frequencies and biological material for age and growth studies, sexing, maturity staging and dietary studies. Sampling is completed with over 2 500 biological samples processed and the data electronically captured. A further 1 500 tissue samples were collected for genetic studies to better understand the mixing dynamics of swordfish in the boundary region between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. A pilot tagging programme for swordfish, bigeye and yellowfin, using commercial longliners as a tagging platform, was conducted between 2004 and 2006, with approximately 300 large pelagic fish tagged. One swordfish was recaptured a few months later from the same vicinity where it was originally tagged. The analyses of the data of the swordfish programme have been placed on hold due to the vacating of the large pelagic research post.

A new programme was established in 2007 to investigate the biology and movement patterns of yellowfin tuna in the boundary region between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. One of the key components of this study is to determine the stock delineation of yellowfin tuna caught in the vicinity of Cape Town (18 ^{o}E), which is currently reported to ICCAT but is most likely to be of Indian Ocean origin.

The Department is also collaborating with WWF and Birdlife SA by using the observer data collected since 1998 to assess the impact of longline fisheries on seabirds, turtles and sharks and to investigate various mitigation and management measures. The impact of predators on longline catch has also been investigated under this programme.

Confirmation of commitment in respect the Commission's conservation and management measures

Paragraph 4 of the resolution

An applicant for Co-operating non-Contracting Party shall also:

a) confirm its commitment to respect the Commission's conservation and management measures and;

b) inform IOTC of the measures it takes to ensure compliance by its vessels of IOTC conservation and management measures

(a) Statement of commitment

South Africa, as stated in its letter of application CoC04, is committed to the objectives of the IOTC and as such will continue to implement all of IOTC's management and conservation measures for its own fleet and would ensure that these measures also apply to foreign flag vessels utilizing its ports.

(b) Measures taken to ensure compliance by its vessels

All longline vessels were required to have a functional VMS on board since 1998. This requirement was subsequently made mandatory for all South African commercial fishing sectors. Scientific observers have been placed on board longline vessels since 1998. In more recent years, observer coverage was aimed at 20% for domestic longline vessels and 100% coverage for foreign vessels operating under charter agreement with South African right holders. Skippers are required to provide prior notification prior to returning to port. All discharges of longline vessels are monitored. Daily completion of logbooks are mandatory. Size limits and by-catch limits are strictly enforced. South Africa has acquired four patrol vessels in 2006 to monitor vessels on fishing grounds in the EEZ and on the high seas. Transshipments are only allowed in port and only on the authority of a permit. Longline vessels are limited to certain ports where they are allowed to discharge and tranship. Vessels are not allowed to discharge in foreign ports unless the discharge is monitored by a South African fishery control officer.