

***Proposed Letter of Understanding between the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission and the Secretariat of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia***

The Secretariat for the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU Secretariat) has had a long-standing informal cooperation with the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC).

Several Signatory States of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU) are also Members of the IOTC.

At the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Signatories (MOS8) to the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU, held in October 2019 in Viet Nam, Signatory States renewed their commitment to close cooperation with the IOTC by adopting the following measures in the Work Programme 2020-2024:

[...]

*1.4 Reduce to the greatest extent practicable the incidental capture and mortality of marine turtles in the course of fishing activities*

[...]

*25. Ensure that concerns related to sources of turtle mortality are presented at IOTC Meetings/ especially WPEB (e.g. including FADs and gill nets, based on new information that comes to light): a) initiate dialogue on current issues of concern among Signatories and IOTC members in advance of each IOTC meeting (including subsidiary bodies)*

*b) continue to contribute to the IOTC Executive Summary on marine turtles*

*c) AC Members and National Focal Points to communicate important issues to members of national delegations attending IOTC in advance of each IOTC meeting*

*d) Signatories (especially if FPs are the same) to promote the cause of turtles in IOTC meetings, and to communicate issues with Secretariat and others for information. [...]*

*5.3 Enhance mechanisms for cooperation and promote information exchange*

[...]

*65. Encourage the participation of RFMOs and other relevant bodies (e.g. IOTC, ASCLME, IOC, SWIOFP, SEAFDEC, CTI) in the Marine Turtle Task Forces (MTTF) or other subregional meetings. [...]*

*74. Revive efforts to conclude a cooperation agreement with IOTC on marine turtles.  
[...]*

Annex 1 contains a *Draft Letter of Understanding between the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission and the Secretariat of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia* for comments and transmission to the Scientific Committee.

**Annex 1**

**DRAFT LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING  
BETWEEN**

**THE INDIAN OCEAN TUNA COMMISSION**

and

**THE SECRETARIAT FOR THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
ON THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF MARINE TURTLES AND THEIR HABITATS  
OF THE INDIAN OCEAN AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA**

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (hereafter IOTC) and the Secretariat for the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (hereafter IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU Secretariat);

ACKNOWLEDGING that the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (hereafter IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU), developed under the auspices of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), is a memorandum of understanding which seeks to protect, conserve, replenish and recover marine turtles and their habitats, and includes a Conservation and Management Plan addressing reduction of threats, including fisheries bycatch, and seeking to enhance national, regional and international cooperation;

NOTING that the Signatory States of the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU established the Secretariat *inter alia* to assist communication, encourage reporting and facilitate activities between sub-regional institutions and organisations, including fisheries management organisations;

NOTING FURTHER that the Conservation and Management Plan seeks to improve understanding of marine turtle ecology and populations through research, monitoring and information exchange with a view to obtaining data on incidental capture, and encourages Signatory States to adopt marine turtle conservation measures within national jurisdictions and on the high seas;

NOTING that Article XV of the Agreement for the Establishment of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (hereafter IOTC Agreement) calls upon the IOTC to cooperate with other organisations active in fisheries, especially tuna fisheries;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the objective of the IOTC Agreement is to ensure, through effective management, the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the stocks of tuna and tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean;

CONSCIOUS that some Members of the IOTC are also Signatory States to the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU;

RECOGNISING that the achievement of the objectives of the IOTC and the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU will benefit from cooperation, with a view to strengthening the conservation measures adopted with respect to marine turtles;

DESIRING to put into place arrangements and procedures to promote cooperation in order to enhance the conservation of marine turtles;

NOW THEREFORE the IOTC and the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU Secretariat record the following understandings:

### **1. OBJECTIVE OF THIS LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING**

The objective of this Letter of Understanding (LoU) is to facilitate cooperation between the IOTC and the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU Secretariat (both sides) with a view to supporting efforts to minimise the incidental catch of marine turtles within the area of competence of the IOTC.

### **2. AREAS OF COOPERATION**

Both sides may establish and maintain consultation, cooperation and collaboration in respect of matters of common interest to both sides for the:

- a) development of systems for collecting and analysing data, and exchanging information concerning the incidental catch of marine turtles in the area of competence of the IOTC;
- b) exchange of information regarding management approaches relevant to the conservation of marine turtles;
- c) implementation of education and awareness programmes for fishers who operate in areas where marine turtles may be encountered;
- d) design, testing and implementation of marine turtle bycatch mitigation measures relevant to fishing operations in the area of competence of the IOTC;
- e) development of training programmes on conservation techniques and measures to understand and to mitigate threats affecting marine turtles;

- f) exchange of expertise, techniques and knowledge relevant to the conservation of marine turtles in the area of competence of the IOTC; and
- g) reciprocal participation with observer status at the relevant meetings of each organisation.

### **3. MODIFICATION**

This LoU may be modified at any time by the mutual written consent of both sides.

### **4. LEGAL STATUS**

Both sides acknowledge that this LoU is not legally binding between them.

### **5. COMING INTO EFFECT AND TERMINATION**

This LoU will continue to operate for 5 years from the date of signing. At that stage both sides will review the operation of the LoU and decide whether it will be renewed or modified.

- a) Either side may terminate this LoU by giving six months prior written notice to the other side.
- b) This LoU will come into effect on the day of signature.

### **SIGNATURE**

Chairperson, IOTC

CMS Executive Secretary, IOSEA Marine  
Turtle MOU Secretariat

Date

Date