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**PROGRESS REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SCHEME TO OPERATIONALISE THE FAO  
VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES ON THE MARKING OF FISHING GEAR & FADS****PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 15 APRIL 2022**

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**PURPOSE**

To provide the Compliance Committee with an opportunity to consider the progress made in relation to the task that the Commission had set to the IOTC Secretariat, to initiate a process to develop draft guidelines on how IOTC might operationalize the FAO voluntary guidelines on the marking of fishing gear.

**BACKGROUND AND PROGRESS**

On marking of fishing gear and prevention of marine pollution, in 2019 the Commission reached no consensus on proposal, IOTC–2019–S23–PropL, which sought to introduce a management measure for marking of fishing gears. In view of the lack of support for such a measure at the time, the proponent agreed to defer the proposal for further discussion and possible presentation at the next Commission meeting (para 50, [IOTC-2019-S23-RE Rev1 FINAL](#)), and requested the IOTC Secretariat, through the Commission, to initiate a process to develop draft guidelines on how IOTC might operationalize the FAO voluntary guidelines on the marking of fishing gear. The process should utilize the expertise of IOTC technical bodies and review the guidelines by electronic means, before being made available to the Commission.

Subsequently, the IOTC Secretariat, in conjunction with the Fishing Operations and Technology Branch (FIAO) of the FAO, set about to develop an initial draft of the terms of reference for a consultant to develop the scheme to operationalise the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear (VGMFG) and FADs, in the IOTC Area. The terms of reference was endorsed by the Compliance Committee (CoC17) and subsequently by the Commission (S24), in 2020.

The consultant, Dr Pingguo He, has been contracted as of 01 April 2021 to undertake this work, under the joint supervision of the FIAO and the IOTC. The results of the consultant's work were presented to the fifth meeting of the Working Party on the Implementation of Conservation and Management Measures (WPICMM05). The outcomes of the discussions at WPICMM05 are reproduced below for the consideration of the Compliance Committee, the Standing Committee on Administration and Finance and the Commission:

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| <p>102. The WPICMM05 <b>NOTED</b> paper <a href="#">IOTC-2022-WPICMM05-13</a> on the status of development of an IOTC scheme to operationalise the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear and <b>FURTHER NOTED</b> paper <a href="#">IOTC-2022-WPICMM05-13 Add1</a> on the operationalisation of FAO Voluntary Guidelines for the Marking of Fishing Gear in the IOTC area of competence.</p> <p>103. The WPICMM05 <b>NOTED</b> the progress made by the IOTC Secretariat in securing the service of a consultant to develop a scheme to operationalise the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear in the IOTC Area.</p> <p>104. The WPICMM05 <b>NOTED</b> the presentation of the Consultant in paper <a href="#">IOTC-2022-WPICMM05-13 Add2</a> that includes a summary of the priority gears, risk assessment, marking, and the fact</p> |
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that the study includes a draft resolution, for both normal conditions and those including abandonment, loss and discards.

105. The WPICMM05 **NOTED** that five important fishing gears with respect to gear marking are purse seine, drifting gill nets, longline, trolling line and pole and line.
106. The WPICMM05 **NOTED** that FAO is developing manuals on marking that are expected to be available in late 2022 or early 2023.
107. The WPICMM05 **NOTED** that stakeholder involvement is important for reducing risk, and for determining priorities and perhaps exemptions.
108. The WPICMM05 **NOTED** that costs should be considered and **FURTHER NOTED** they would be possible to assess only after a risk analysis with stakeholders determining the types and frequency of markings.
109. The WPICMM05 **NOTED** that CPCs have not yet had time to comment on the report of the consultant [IOTC-2022-WPICMM05-13 Add1](#) and **REQUESTED** CPCs provide comments by 10 March 2022 on the following:
  - Major fishing gears of interest to IOTC;
  - Gear marking technologies and practices;
  - Risk assessment for the marking of fishing gear.

The results of the consultant's work is presented in the paper [IOTC-2022-CoC19-06 Add1](#).

#### RECOMMENDATION/s

- That the CoC19 **NOTE** paper [IOTC-2022-CoC19-06](#) presenting the progress on the development of a scheme to operationalise the FAO voluntary guidelines on the marking of fishing gear & FADs and paper [IOTC-2022-CoC19-06 Add1](#) presenting the results of the consultant's work.
- That the CoC19 **NOTE** the progress made by the IOTC Secretariat to initiate a process to develop draft guidelines on how IOTC might operationalize the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear in the IOTC Area.
- That the CoC19 **NOTE** that although Fish aggregating devices (FADs) are not strictly fishing gears, but due to the importance and the quantity of FADs used in tuna purse seine and other fisheries, the description and marking of FADs are also included, as if they were a type of fishing gear, and **AGREE** to include them in a gear marking scheme.
- That the CoC19 **RECOMMEND** that the document *Operationalisation of FAO Voluntary Guidelines for the Marking of Fishing Gear in the IOTC Area of Competence* be adopted by the Commission as a reference document for an IOTC gear and FADs marking scheme.