
IOTC COLLABORATIVE ARRANGEMENTS – AN OVERVIEW

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PURPOSE

To draw to the attention of the Commission to the list of bodies with which it is currently collaborating.

BACKGROUND

Article XV of the IOTC Agreement which relates to *Cooperation with other organisations and institutions* states:

The Commission shall cooperate and make appropriate arrangements therefore with other intergovernmental organizations and institutions, especially those active in the fisheries sector, which might contribute to the work and further the objectives of the Commission in particular with any intergovernmental organization or institution dealing with tuna in the Area. The Commission may enter into agreements with such organizations and institutions. Such agreements shall seek to promote complementarity and, subject to paragraph 2, to avoid duplication in and conflict with the activities of the Commission and such organizations.

Current collaborations

Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels Secretariat (ACAP)

IOTC has a Letter of intent (2020) with ACAP to collaborate efforts to minimise the incidental bycatch of albatrosses and petrels in the area of competence of the IOTC.

Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT)

IOTC has a Letter of Understanding (2019) with CCSBT regarding monitoring transshipment at sea by large-scale tuna longline fishing vessels. Within the IOTC area of competence, CCSBT and IOTC CMMs have similar transshipment provisions. The aim of the LOU is to minimise duplication of work and to minimise the associated costs for vessels that are required to comply with both the CCSBT and IOTC Resolutions.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (ABNJ Tuna Project)

The GEF FAO ABNJ Common Oceans Project on Sustainable Management of Tuna Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (Phase 2 of the ABNJ-Tuna Project) second phase of the ABNJ-Tuna Project to be implemented under GEF-7 funding has now been approved by all parties and is expected to commence around the middle of 2022 [[click here](#)]. The project activities will include strengthening management of tuna fisheries; strengthening MCS to improve fisheries data, compliance with CMMs and to tackle IUU fishing; and reduction of environmental impacts of tuna fisheries. The full Project Document can be found [[here](#)].

In November 2021¹, the Commission agreed to collaborate with the project by pledging an in-kind contribution and allowing the Secretariat to act as a nominal executing agency for the project. The project will be executed by a Project Management Unit located in the FAO Fisheries Division offices at FAO Headquarters with support from the Divisional Support and Project Cycle Unit and other Headquarters staff.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FIRMS)

IOTC is a partner to the FAO Fishery and Resources Monitoring System ([FIRMS](#)) initiative, and regularly provides updated stock status reports on managed species (also in the context of the FIRMS Global Record of Stocks and Fisheries). Furthermore, IOTC actively collaborates to the FIRMS Global Tuna Atlas as data provider and as supporting t-RFMO.

¹ [IOTC circular 2021-74](#)

Indian Ocean – South-East Asian Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding (IOSEA)

The IOTC cooperates informally with IOSEA on sea turtle interactions. Many IOTC members are also IOSEA Signatory States. The interaction between IOSEA and IOTC is mainly with the Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch and the Scientific Committee.

Indian Ocean Commission SWIOFISH2 Project (SWIOFISH2)

The Commission's Compliance team is being augmented by a fulltime Monitoring, Control and Surveillance expert who is supporting the implementation of IOTC compliance activities. The expert is located in Seychelles on a 36 months contract with IOC (funded by the World Bank) to provide support to the IOTC CPCs who are beneficiaries of the SWIOFish 2 Project.

Institut de recherche pour le développement (IRD)

The IRD has developed the "Grand Observatoire de l'Océan Indien" project (G2OI) to enhance the value of research data in the south-west Indian Ocean region, in partnership with national institutions from Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Réunion and Seychelles. The overarching objective of the project is that the partners will create and feed a regional data infrastructure that will allow end-users (scientists, managers, and general public) to easily exploit the regional data heritage through web services made available on a data portal dedicated to the infrastructure. The IOTC Secretariat is providing some technical assistance and advice on project elements that are relevant to IOTC.

International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF)

The IOTC Secretariat is working with the ISSF to clean-up cannery data submissions, with the aim of eventually being able to compare species composition estimated from cannery data with that from IOTC data submissions and making these data available to the IOTC science community. Data from ISSF-affiliated canneries will continue to be received by the Secretariat, with the Data Section staff of the Secretariat regularly engaged in the update of the cleaned-up dataset. The IOTC Secretariat is also collaborating with ISSF on a study for the definition of minimum EMS standards for Indian Ocean fisheries.

Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control for the Indian Ocean Region (IOMOU).

IOMOU works with 20 Indian Ocean State authorities on Port State Controls (including 19 IOTC Members). The LOI between IOTC and IOMOU (2021) aims to raise the awareness of national inspectors under the different regimes of IOTC and IOMOU to improve the coordination and efficiency of the implementation of port State measures and port State controls.

Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)

The IOTC has a MOU (2007) with WCPFC to maintain consultation, cooperation and collaboration with respect to matters of common interests.

Proposed collaborations***International Whaling Commission (IWC)***

A draft Letter of intent between IOTC and IWC (IOTC-2022-S26-09) is being proposed to strengthen the expertise within the Scientific Committee on cetacean bycatch issues as well improve the data available on cetaceans at the IOTC Secretariat.

Overseas Fishery Cooperation Foundation of Japan (OFCF)

IOTC has been collaborating with the Overseas Fishery Cooperation Foundation of Japan ("OFCF Japan") for 20 years to improve systems of collecting and processing data on resources related to tuna fisheries in the Indian Ocean.

A draft MOU between IOTC and OFCF (IOTC-2022-S26-10) is being proposed to continue the collaboration to improve the accuracy of tuna and tuna-like fishery statistics and information provided by IOTC coastal States; and develop capacity in the collection, management and reporting of tuna fishery statistics by IOTC coastal States.

Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)

A draft MOU between IOTC and SIOFA (IOTC-2022-S26-11) is being proposed to establish and maintain consultation, co-operation and collaboration in respect of matters of common interest to both the IOTC and the MOP to SIOFA.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Commission:

1. **NOTE** paper IOTC-2022-S26-08 regarding IOTC's current collaborative arrangements.