
**PROPOSED MOU BETWEEN THE INDIAN OCEAN TUNA COMMISSION (IOTC) AND
THE SOUTHERN INDIAN OCEAN FISHERIES AGREEMENT (SIOFA)**

PREPARED BY: IOTC Secretariat

PURPOSE

To provide the Commission with an opportunity to consider a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA).

BACKGROUND

Rationale for an agreement

Given the management area of the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (which covers fishery resources including fish, molluscs, crustaceans and other sedentary species, but excludes highly migratory species), overlaps considerably with the IOTC Area of Competence, in 2020, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to work with the Secretariat of SIOFA and present a draft Letter of Intent for a future collaborative arrangement between IOTC and SIOFA on areas of common understanding and interest.

A draft agreement text was agreed by the Commission in 2021

In 2021, the Commission agreed to a draft Letter of Intent (LOI) between IOTC and SIOFA and requested the Executive Secretary to send the letter to the SIOFA for its consideration. The Commission also agreed that the Chairperson of the Commission may sign the Letter on behalf of the Commission once it is approved by the SIOFA Meeting of the Parties.

The draft LOI was sent to the SIOFA Secretariat, and some non-substantive revisions were received back following a SIOFA Meeting of the Parties.

FAO's is required to have a role in the development of agreements

FAO has procedures for the preparation, clearance, and signature of agreements entered into by FAO at Headquarters, Regional, Sub-regional and Country Offices. Agreements include memoranda of understanding, exchanges of letters and other formal arrangements, irrespective of their actual denomination, entered into by FAO and establishing relations with partners such as governments, other organizations of the United Nations System, inter-governmental organizations, private sector entities, civil society organizations, cooperatives, foundations, research institutions and academia.

As a body under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution, does not entrust IOTC with legal personality therefore, it is required to act through FAO on any agreements it intends to enter. This includes the use of FAO templates for agreements; however, authority to sign the agreement can be expected to be delegated (by FAO) to the Executive Secretary¹.

The original LOI has been changed to a MOU

FAO has templates for a LOI's and MOU's. In the case of the IOTC-SIOFA Agreement, a MOU is deemed most appropriate as a LOI is simply a record an intention to collaborate in the future and does not identify concrete activities nor create any legal, financial or other commitments for the Parties.

¹ The Report of the 127th FAO Council, held in November 2004, stated at paragraph 91: "The secretaries of the bodies could be authorized to sign the contracts and agreements, which should make appropriate reference to the status of the bodies under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution. The Council noted that, in reviewing any proposed contracts and agreements, FAO would take account of the functional requirements of the bodies concerned and would not interfere with their substance, except in the event that they should have policy, programme or financial implications for FAO."

THE PROPOSAL

A draft MOU, based on the text of the original LOI that has been already approved by IOTC and SIOFA, is provided in Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Commission:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2022–S26-11 which provides the Commission with an opportunity to consider a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA).
- 2) **AGREE** on the content of the MOU as detailed in Appendix 1, and request that the MOU be communicated to the SIOFA Meeting of the Parties for its consideration.
- 3) **AGREE** that, if required, the Executive Secretary and the Chairperson can liaise between the FAO and SIOFA Secretariat on any further un-substantive amendments to the MOU, and if they are not substantive, the Executive Secretary may sign the MOU on behalf of the Commission once it is approved by the SIOFA Meeting of the Parties and FAO.

Appendix 1**DRAFT****MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING****BETWEEN****THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (FAO)²****AND****[Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)]**

WHEREAS the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (hereinafter "FAO") is a Specialized Agency of the United Nations system established in 1945 to raise levels of nutrition and standards of living for all people in FAO Member Nations, to secure improvements in the efficiency of production and distribution of food and agricultural products, and to contribute toward expanding world economy and ensuring humanity's freedom from hunger;

WHEREAS FAO's actions are geared towards supporting Members in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially with regards to ending hunger and malnutrition in all its forms;

WHEREAS FAO's Strategic Framework is guided by FAO's vision and the three Global Goals of Members and is firmly anchored in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the organising principle of the *four betters - better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, leaving no one behind* demonstrates how FAO intends to support the achievement of the SDGs and reflect the interconnected economic, social and environmental dimensions of agri-food systems while encouraging a strategic and systems-oriented approach;

WHEREAS FAO has the mandate to **[make available technical information, guidelines and standards and provides technical advice and assistance to FAO Members in enhancing fisheries and aquaculture development at the national, regional and global levels; and the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission IOTC (an Article XIV body of the FAO constitution) seeks to promote cooperation with a view to ensuring, through appropriate management, the conservation and optimum utilization of tuna and tuna-like species and to and encourage the sustainable development fisheries based on such stocks]**;

WHEREAS **[SIOFA,] [an intergovernmental organization] has [the objective to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fishery resources in the Area through cooperation among its Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-contracting Parties and Participating fishing entities (CCPs), and to promote the sustainable development of fisheries in the Area, taking into account the needs of developing States bordering the Area that are Contracting Parties to the Agreement, and in particular the least developed among them and small-island developing States]**;

WHEREAS FAO and **[SIOFA]** (collectively referred to as "Parties" and individually "Party") share common objectives with regard to **[the sustainable conservation and optimum utilization of marine living resources and encouraging sustainable development of fisheries, through appropriate management, in the Indian Ocean]**;

WHEREAS the Parties intend to conclude this Memorandum of Understanding ("MoU") with the aim of consolidating, developing and detailing their cooperation and effectiveness to achieve their common objectives in the field of **[enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of species which are within their respective competence]**;

WHEREAS the Parties intend their cooperation to cover a broad range of activities, which may include but not be limited to, capacity building, knowledge and information exchange, provision of resources and development of financing initiatives for the advancement of their common goals and objectives³;

FAO AND [the Meeting of Parties (MoP) to SIOFA] HAVE AGREED TO COOPERATE AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1: Interpretation and Purpose

1. The purpose of this MoU is to provide a framework for collaboration between the Parties to further their shared goals and objectives with regard to the **[to establish and maintain consultation, co-operation and collaboration in respect of matters of common interest to both the IOTC and the SIOFA MoP]**, as further elaborated under Article 2 below.

2. Any Annex to this MoU shall be considered an integral part of this MoU. References to this MoU shall be construed as including any Annexes, as varied or amended in accordance with the terms of this MoU.

² As a body under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution, FAO does not entrust IOTC with legal personality therefore, IOTC is required to act through FAO on any agreements it intends to enter.

³ LEG instruction: Where appropriate, reference could be added here to the Hand in Hand Initiative.

3. The present MoU implies no financial commitment by either Party except as specified in this MoU. Activities to be implemented under this MoU are subject to the availability of personnel and financial resources. Implementation of any projects and programmes pursuant to this MoU, including those involving the transfer of funds between the Parties, shall require the execution of appropriate separate legal agreements between the Parties in accordance with their respective rules and regulations. The terms of such agreements shall be subject to the provisions of this MoU.

4. Separate legal agreements between the Parties as expressed in Article 1(3) above shall set out detailed and specific technical, financial and other appropriate conditions for collaboration, as well as conditions relating to each Party's role, responsibilities and liability. Such arrangements will be jointly formulated and concluded on a case-by-case basis between the Parties.

Article 2: Areas of Cooperation and activities

1. The Parties have agreed to the following areas of cooperation for this MoU, which are areas of common interest to FAO and [SIOFA]. The Parties consider that progress in these areas could be strengthened through cooperation:

- a. **exchange of data and information consistent with their information-sharing policies; and**
- b. **collaboration on research efforts relating to stocks and species of mutual interest, including stock assessments; and**
- c. **conservation and management measures for stocks and species of mutual interest**

2. The Parties will develop a work plan outlining specific activities of collaboration. The work plan will be attached to this MoU as an Annex and will constitute an integral part thereof. The work plan will be jointly reviewed on a regular basis between the Parties. Amendments to the work plan will be made, upon mutual agreement, through exchange of letters between the Parties.

3. The list of activities outlined in this MoU and in the work plan should not be taken to exclude or replace other forms of cooperation between the Parties, as may be agreed by the Parties pursuant to Article 3 to allow the Parties to respond to newly emerging issues of common interest.

Article 3: Mechanisms for coordination and review

1. The Parties shall hold regular bilateral meetings on matters of common interest, in accordance with an agenda agreed to in advance by the Parties, for the purpose of developing and monitoring collaborative activities, projects and programmes. Such meetings shall take place at least once every [year] to⁴:

- a. discuss technical and operational issues related to furthering the objectives of this MoU;
- b. provide overall strategic guidance for the implementation of this MoU;
- c. monitor the progress in the implementation of the MoU and exchange views on the lessons learned;
- d. review progress of work undertaken by [SIOFA] pursuant to a separate legal instrument in the areas of cooperation mentioned in Article 2 above.

2. In identifying joint activities, projects and programmes to be executed under this MoU, due regard shall be given to [SIOFA]'s geographic coverage, capacity for implementation and experience in the related field.

3. Within the context defined above, further bilateral meetings at desk-to-desk and at expert level shall be encouraged and set up on an ad hoc basis as deemed necessary by the relevant FAO divisions and [SIOFA] for the implementation of joint activities, projects and programmes in specific areas, countries and regions.

4. The objectives of this MoU could also be achieved through the following activities.

- a. **reciprocal participation as observers in relevant meetings of each organization the IOTC and the MOP to SIOFA, including those of relevant subsidiary bodies;**
- b. **information sharing about stocks and species of mutual interest;**
- c. **clear definition of the species of interest of each organization for management purposes (e.g., pelagic sharks);**
- d. **development of processes to promote harmonization and compatibility, while avoiding duplication and conflict, of conservation and management measures where relevant; and**

⁴ LEG instruction: This standard text is simply one means of ensuring regular monitoring and implementation of the MoU. The responsibility of determining the specifics of the coordination mechanism rests with the relevant unit leading the development of the MoU.

- e. **exchange of relevant meeting reports, information, technologies, research data and results, project plans, documents, and publications regarding matters of mutual interest.**

[5. To implement activities, projects and programmes in the agreed areas, the Parties shall execute separate legal instruments appropriate for the implementation of each initiative in accordance with Article 1(3) above.

Article 4: Status of the Parties and their Personnel

1. The Parties acknowledge and agree that [SIOFA] is an entity separate and distinct from FAO. The employees, personnel, representatives, agents, contractors or affiliates of [SIOFA], including the personnel engaged by [SIOFA] to carry out any of the activities, projects or programmes conducted pursuant to this MoU, shall not be considered in any respect or for any purposes whatsoever as being employees, personnel, representatives, agents, contractors or affiliates of FAO, nor shall any employees, personnel, representatives, agents, contractors or affiliates of FAO be considered, in any respect or for any purposes whatsoever, as being employees, personnel, representatives, agents, contractors or affiliates of [SIOFA].

2. The Parties shall undertake the activities under this MoU in accordance with the rules and regulations to which they are subject. Where compliance with rules may lead to a difficulty in performing under the MoU, or adhering to its provisions, the Party concerned undertakes to draw this to the attention of the other Party with a view to resolving the matter appropriately and amicably.

3. Neither Party shall be entitled to act or make legally binding declarations on behalf of the other Party. Nothing in this MoU shall be deemed to constitute a joint venture, agency, interest grouping or any other kind of formal grouping or entity between the Parties.

Article 5: Acknowledgment and publicity

1. [SIOFA] may refer to its collaboration with FAO in its internal documents and will seek and receive FAO's written clearance in advance of any other documents, in particular, materials intended to be made public relating to the collaboration with FAO-IOTC.

2. At or near a time to be mutually agreed upon by the Parties, [SIOFA] and FAO may each issue a press release and make public statements regarding their collaboration, the content of which will be subject to the written agreement of the other Party, which will not unreasonably be withheld or delayed. Neither Party will issue any press release or promotional material, hold any press conference or make any public announcement concerning this MoU and/or the relationship of the Parties hereunder, without obtaining the approval of the other Party.

3. In all cases of acknowledgment and publicity on the collaboration under this MoU, the Parties will use neutral language that accurately reflects the actual contribution of each Party.

4. This MoU or information about this MoU may be published on FAO's website after it has entered into force consistent with its policies of transparency, as updated from time to time. [SIOFA] may also publish the MoU or information on its website after it has entered into force.

Article 6: Use of Name and Logo

The Parties agree not to use the other Party's name or logo in any press release, memo, report, or other published disclosure related to this MoU without the prior written consent of the Party concerned.

Article 7: Confidentiality

1. It is acknowledged that each Party may possess confidential information, which is proprietary to it or to third parties collaborating with it. Any information provided by one Party (as the "Disclosing Party") to the other Party (as the "Receiving Party") in the context of this MoU shall be treated by the Receiving Party as confidential.

2. The Receiving Party shall take all reasonable measures to keep information pursuant to paragraph 1 above confidential and shall only use the information for the purpose for which it was provided. The Receiving Party shall ensure that any persons having access to the said information shall be made aware of and be bound by the obligations of the Receiving Party hereunder.

3. Notwithstanding the foregoing, there shall be no obligation of confidentiality or restriction on use where (i) the information is publicly available, or becomes publicly available otherwise than by action of the Receiving Party; or (ii) the information was already known to the Receiving Party (as evidenced by its written records) prior to its receipt; or

(iii) the information was received from a third party not in breach of an obligation of confidentiality owed to the Disclosing Party; or (iv) the Disclosing Party has given its written consent to disclosure to the Receiving Party.

Article 8: Intellectual Property Rights

1. Intellectual property rights, in particular copyright, in material such as information, software and designs, made available by [SIOFA] and FAO to be used to carry out activities under this MoU shall remain with the originating Party. Appropriate authorizations for use of such materials by the other Party will be addressed in the agreements concluded in accordance with Article 1(3) above.

~~2. **Option 1:** Intellectual Property Rights in materials developed under this MoU, such as information, software and designs, shall be vested in FAO. The [] will enjoy a royalty free, non-exclusive and non-transferable license to use, publish, translate and distribute, privately or publicly, any item or part thereof for non-commercial purposes, provided that FAO is acknowledged as the source and copyright owner.~~

Option 2: Intellectual Property Rights in materials developed under this MoU and appropriate authorizations for use of such materials by either of the Parties will be addressed in the agreements concluded in accordance with Article 1(3) above.

~~3. **Option 3:** Intellectual Property Rights in materials developed under this MoU, such as information, software and designs, shall be jointly owned by FAO and [], including, without any limitations, the right to use, publish, translate, sell or distribute, privately or publicly, any item or part thereof for non-commercial purposes.~~

Article 9: Responsibility

Each Party will be responsible for dealing with any claims or demands arising out of its actions or omissions, and those of its personnel, in relation to this MoU.

Article 10: Commitment to respect FAO's principles and values

1. [SIOFA] agrees to respect FAO's constitutional principles and values, and warrants that nothing in its governance or operational activities, or those of its affiliates, is incompatible with FAO's constitutional mandate, principles and policies, or with internationally recognized principles concerning human rights, the environment and anti-corruption as reflected in the United Nations Global Compact Principles⁵.

2. [SIOFA] warrants that it has zero tolerance for all forms of sexual wrong-doing, and acknowledges that sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment violate human rights and are incompatible with the core values of the United Nations System. [SIOFA] confirms that it has in place appropriate and effective mechanisms to prevent and address conduct incompatible with those core values. It undertakes to promptly inform FAO of allegations against its employees and any other persons involved in the implementation of activities in relation to this MoU and which have been found to be credible under [SIOFA]'s mechanisms.

3. [SIOFA] supports the internationally recognized principles endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), such as the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security, the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT), the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems, and the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition, while recognising the voluntary nature of these principles.

Article 11: Privileges and Immunities and Applicable Law

1. Nothing in or relating to this MoU or in any document or arrangement relating thereto shall be construed i) as a waiver, express or implied, of any of the privileges and immunities of FAO, nor as extending any privileges or immunities of FAO to the other Party, or to its personnel, ii) as the acceptance by FAO of the applicability of the laws of any country to FAO, or iii) as the acceptance by FAO of the jurisdiction of the courts of any country.

2. The present MoU and any document or arrangement relating thereto shall be governed by general principles of law, to the exclusion of any single national system of law. Such general principles of law shall include UNIDROIT General Principles of International Commercial Contracts 2016.

⁵ <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission/principles>.

Article 12: Settlement of disputes

Any dispute between the Parties concerning the interpretation and execution of this MoU, or any document or arrangement relating thereto, shall be settled by negotiation between the Parties. Any differences that may not be so settled shall be brought to the attention of the Executive Heads of the two institutions for final resolution.

Article 13: Contacts for correspondence⁶

All correspondence regarding the implementation of this MoU, including notifications made pursuant to this MoU, shall be addressed to:

For FAO:	Executive Secretary, Indian Ocean Tuna Commission Abis Centre, Providence, Seychelles (iotc-secretariat@fao.org)
For [SIOFA]	Executive Secretary, Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement C/O DAAF, Bâtiment B Parc de la Providence 97489 Saint-Denis Cedex La Réunion (Secretariat@siofa.org)

Article 14: Notification and Amendments

- Each Party shall promptly notify the other in writing of any anticipated or actual material changes that shall affect the execution of this MoU.
- This MoU may be amended by mutual consent in writing at any time at the request of either Party. Such amendments shall enter into force one (1) month following notifications of consent by both Parties to the requested amendments or on a date otherwise agreed in writing for the amendment to enter into force. If the written mutual consent occurs on two different dates, amendments will take effect on the date of the second notification. Each Party shall give sympathetic consideration to any amendment proposed by the other.

Article 15: Entry Into Force, Duration and Termination

- This MoU shall be signed by the duly authorized representatives of the Parties and shall enter into force upon the date of last signature. It shall remain in force for a period of **five (5)** years, unless terminated in accordance with the terms of this Article.
- Subject to satisfactory past implementation, this MoU may be renewed for similar periods thereafter by written agreement between the Parties through Exchange of Letters.
- This MoU may be terminated by either Party upon the provision of three (3) months' written notice to the other Party.
- Upon termination of this MoU, the rights and obligations of the Parties defined under any other legal instrument executed pursuant to this MoU shall cease to be effective.
- Notwithstanding the foregoing, any termination of this MoU shall be without prejudice to (i) the orderly completion of any ongoing collaborative activity and (ii) any other rights and obligations of the Parties accrued prior to the date of termination under this MoU or any legal instrument executed pursuant to this MoU.

⁶ LEG instruction: In line with the Personal Data Protection Principles (AC2021/01), instead of naming a particular individual, LEG recommends limiting the focal contact point details to the identification of a functional title and generic official email address e.g. Legal Counsel, LEG-Director@fao.org. This avoids issues pertaining to who has authority to sign extensions, give notice of amendments etc., which may arise in the future where a named individual has subsequently changed roles or left the Organization.

6. The provisions of Articles 7, 8, 11 and 12⁷ shall survive the expiry or termination of this MoU.

~~*[To be used for multi-language MoUs:*~~

Option 1 - if an official language is being used: [This MoU is done in the English and **[French]** languages, both texts being equally authentic].

~~*Option 2 – if a non-official language is being used:* [This MoU is done in the English and *[other language]* languages. In case of discrepancy, the English version shall prevail]⁸.~~

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the duly authorized representatives of the Parties affix their signatures below.

[To be used for signature of the MoU:

Option 1 – if the Parties decide to sign the MoU electronically: [The Parties agree that electronic signature of this MoU using the Adobe-Acrobat tool shall be treated as valid and legally binding. This MoU shall be treated as an original for all purposes.]

Option 2 – if the Parties decide to conclude the MoU through an exchange of emails attaching the scanned versions of the MoU signed in hard copy: [The Parties agree that this MoU will be concluded electronically via email exchange of scanned signed copies and that the signed copies exchanged in this manner shall be treated as originals.]

For FAO

For **[SIOFA]**

.....

.....

[Insert name]

[Insert name]

[Insert title]

[Insert title]

Date:.....

Date:

⁷ LEG instruction: These Articles should refer to: Confidentiality, Intellectual Property Rights, Privileges and Immunities and Applicable Law and Dispute Settlement.

⁸ LEG instruction: LEG notes that non-official languages in MoUs should be used in exceptional circumstances, e.g. where requested and the MoU is to be signed by a Head of State or other very high-level government official, as i) it is not standard FAO practice to sign agreements in non-official languages; ii) FAO does not have the capacity to verify the authenticity of texts.