

Report on progress of IOTC-OFCF Project for JFY2022 activities and planned activities for JFY2023

November 10, 2022

FAO/IOTC and OFCF Japan signed a Cooperation Agreement (CA) on September 20, 2022. The CA stipulates the continuation of the IOTC-OFCF Project in Japanese Fiscal Year (JFY) 2022 and beyond, which has been implemented since JFY2002¹. The CA is valid for five years until 2027.

The IOTC-OFCF Project has two objectives: (1) to improve the accuracy of tuna and tuna-like fishery statistics and information provided by IOTC coastal States (2) to develop capacity in the collection, management and reporting of tuna fishery statistics by IOTC coastal States. The Project is conducted by the IOTC Secretariat and OFCF Japan, which develop activities to improve statistics based on recommendations or requirements of the Working Parties and the Scientific Committee. The Project aims to contribute to the fulfilment of the above-mentioned objectives with a focus on IOTC developing country members.

Summary of IOTC-OFCF Project activities in 2022

The IOTC-OFCF Project had been implemented since JFY2002 through annual agreements between OFCF Japan and the IOTC Secretariat. In JFY2021,² after obtaining consent of the IOTC Secretariat, IOTC-OFCF Project translated the IOTC Species Identification (ID) Cards (for tunas and billfish) into Thai and Swahili, and forwarded the printed ID cards, which had been stocked by the IOTC Secretariat, to eight countries.

From JFY2022 onward, the Project's agreement will be made between OFCF Japan and FAO/IOTC. The agreement was initially arranged to be signed in the framework of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). However, the agreement modality was changed to a CA in August 2022 for smooth continuation and implementation of the Project. As a result, the said CA was concluded on September 20, 2022, paving the way for JFY2022 activities to begin.

In JFY2022, the following activities are being undertaken in line with the agreement with the IOTC Secretariat in 2021 (the activities are listed in order of priority).

- (I) Translations of the IOTC Species ID cards;
- (II) Scoping study on a smartphone application to collect fishery-related information; and
- (III) Other activities deemed urgent by the IOTC.

As of October 2022, with regard to activity (I), preparations are underway to translate ID cards of billfish and shark and rays into Tamil and Sinhalese in order to accommodate the official languages of Sri Lanka. With regard to activity (II), existing applications are being studied while confirming the intentions of the IOTC Secretariat in order to reach a common understanding on the objectives and intended use of the applications' development. No specific activities are recommended at the present time in activity (III).

Planned IOTC-OFCF Project activities for 2023

¹ The IOTC-OFCF Project is implemented according to the Japan's fiscal year (JFY) of April 1 to March 31.

² JFY2021 runs from April 2021 through March 2022, which includes January to March 2022 of the IOTC's fiscal year.

The general idea on the Project activities for JFY2023 is basically the same as the activities in JFY2022 (in the three activities below; no order of priority has been established at this time).

Regarding activity (I), translation work of ID cards will continue as necessary in consultation with the IOTC Secretariat. As shown on the next page, translation work of ID cards is left incomplete for several languages (as of October 2022). IOTC-OFCE Project considers it is important to complete the translation to improve the data quality of IOTC developmental States.

Regarding activity (II), based on the results of this JFY's scoping study, further studies and other related work necessary for applications development will be carried out in consultation with the IOTC Secretariat.

Regarding activity (III), where OFCE Japan can collaborate and effectively implement as to the collection of fishery-related statistics by IOTC, it will do so to the extent that its budget allows. The below are activities envisioned at this time:

- Assist the IOTC Secretariat in evaluating catch estimates in Indonesia and evaluating handline catch estimates for yellowfin tuna in Oman.

For JFY2023 activities, the IOTC Secretariat and OFCE Japan will develop and implement a specific activity plan after the general outline of activities has been approved by the 18th Working Party on Data Collection and Statistics (2022), the 25th Scientific Committee (2022), and the 26th annual Commission (2023).

Status of IOTC Species ID Cards (based on IOTC website information)

(As of October 2022)

No.	Language	Tuna	Billfish	Sharks	Seabird	Marine Turtle	Cetacean
1	English	○	○	○	○	○	○*
2	Urdu	○	○	○		○	○*
3	Indonesian	○	○	○*	○*	○*	○*
4	Arabian	○					○*
5	Hindu	○*					○*
6	Persian	○	○	○		○	○*
7	Sinhala	○					○*
8	Spanish					○	○*
9	Tamil	○					○*
10	Thai	○	○				
11	Portuguese	○	○	○	○	○	○
12	Swahili	○	○				○*
13	French	○	○	○			○*
14	Malaysian	○*					
15	Chinese (simplified)						
16	Chinese						

Legend

	OFCE activities in JFY2020 (printed)
	OFCE activities in JFY2021 (translation only)
	OFCE activities in JFY2022 (translation only, in progress)
○*	No digital files uploaded on the IOTC website