
IOTC CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF DEVELOPING COASTAL STATES

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Purpose

To provide participants to the 19th Working Party on Data Collection and Statistics (WPDCS19) with an overview of the activities that, independently or along with other partners, the IOTC Secretariat initiated during the last year in support of developing coastal states, and the main results of those activities.

Background

Since its inception, the Commission has allocated funds from its regular budget to assist developing coastal CPCs in the Indian Ocean in the implementation of the IOTC data requirements. In addition to the funds allocated by the Commission, the IOTC Secretariat has secured funds from third parties ([Appendix I](#)) that have exceeded those allocated by the Commission in recent years.

Data compliance and support missions constitute the main capacity building activities delivered by the IOTC Secretariat. These missions are conducted by staff from the IOTC Secretariat, with the assistance of staff from the government institutions concerned in each country, and are focused on the following objectives: (i) assess CPC compliance with IOTC Requirements for scientific data, including IOTC species and other bycatch, and provisions for the collection of logbook data, implementation of the IOTC Regional Observer Scheme, and data requirements with regards to FAD management plans, (ii) recommend the type of actions that will need to be undertaken to address any issues identified in (iii) agree on a Plan of Action to address any issues identified impending compliance with IOTC data related resolutions, including a time frame for the implementation of those actions and the type of indicators to be used in each case to assess progress.

The IOTC capacity building activities can be categorized into the following work streams:

- a) Data Compliance missions: to foster improvements and facilitate the validation and reporting of core statistical datasets to the IOTC Secretariat (i.e., retained catches, catch and effort, and size data), assess current shortcomings concerning the collection and management of fisheries data, and agree on a plan of action with the CPC required to deliver improvements on their levels of reporting.
- b) Technical Assistance missions: these include capacity building on data collection, support for the development of national fisheries databases and statistical systems, and support to resolve other issues related to fisheries data management at national level.
- c) Support for implementation of the Regional Observer Scheme and implementation of the ROS Pilot Project: ROS-related capacity building activities cover several components, including the further development and improvements of the IOTC ROS electronic tools, as well as studies on the implementation of Electronic Monitoring Systems (EMS) on small-scale fisheries.

Recommendation

The WPDCS is invited to review the Progress of activities undertaken by the IOTC and its partners and recommend that the IOTC Scientific Committee considers endorsing the future work plan by the IOTC Secretariat. In addition, the WPDCS is invited to consider, where necessary, recommending the implementation of other activities that to its view will lead to improved statistics for IOTC and associated species, including identification of agencies that may be prepared to fund such activities.

Activities conducted in 2023

Table 1 presents an overview of the data capacity building activities that the IOTC and its partners implemented in 2023 to assist developing coastal CPCs in the Indian Ocean, by country and type of activity. Further details on the two in-field activities can be found below.

Table 1 List of capacity building activities delivered in 2023

Country & Dates	Funding agency	Executing agencies / staff	Description of activities
Indonesia (in person, Jakarta) 27 Feb-3 Mar. 2023 (remote) 11-13 Oct. 2023 9 and 14 Nov. 2023	IOTC	IOTC data coordinator IOTC fisheries statistician Representatives from: 1. Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of Indonesia 2. National research institutions 3. FAO (Fisheries Statistics Division) 4. International Pole and Line Foundation	Continuation of the previous remote meetings held in 2021 and 2022, to discuss the current state-of-the-art in terms of re-estimation procedures for Indonesia's annual catches. The main activities of the missions were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the progress made since WPDCS 17 (see document IOTC-2022-WPDCS18-27) Provide technical advice on the current methodology proposed by Indonesia
Tanzania (in person, Zanzibar) 10-14 July 2023	European Commission	IOTC fishery Officer (data) IOTC data assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an updated overview of Tanzania's current compliance level with respect to IOTC data reporting requirements Review and obtain a better understanding of the current data collection and processing methodology in place in Tanzania Further clarify any outstanding aspects of the IOTC data reporting process and propose potential improvements to increase the efficiency of data reporting Better understanding of the factors explaining the discrepancies in data reported to the IOTC Secretariat for all concerned fisheries
Comoros, Indonesia, I.R. Iran, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Kenya, Thailand, Seychelles, Tanzania (virtual) 20 Oct. 2023	IOTC (in-kind)	IOTC fishery officer (data) IOTC data assistant	Workshop on the characterization of IOTC fisheries using the FAO matrix approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reminder on IOTC current categorisation of fishing vessels as artisanal or industrial Introduction and test of the matrix-based approach developed by FAO to characterize fisheries
All IOTC members (virtual)	IOTC (in-kind)	IOTC data coordinator	Conduct a scoping study on Electronic Data Collection Tools (see IOTC-2023-WPDCS19-27)

The following data capacity building activities were implemented by the IOTC and its partners in 2023, to support priorities identified by the IOTC Working Parties and Scientific Committee.

Indonesia (data compliance and technical assistance, March and October-November 2023)

Staff from the Data Section of the Secretariat meet in Jakarta with representatives from the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of Indonesia, national research institutions, and the International Pole and Line Foundation (IPNLF) to work on the revision of Indonesian annual catches for the period 2010-2021. Discussions focused on the information available on the magnitude and species composition of the catch, on the assumptions required for the estimation, and on the assessment and validation of the methodology and results.

Additional remote meetings were conducted, for the same purposes, in October and November 2023.

Tanzania (data technical assistance, July 2023)

Staff from the Data Section of the Secretariat met with officers from the Deep-Sea Fishing Authority (DSFA), Tanzania Fisheries Research Institute (TAFIRI), and Zanzibar Fisheries Research Institute (ZAFIRI) involved in the data collection, management, and reporting to the IOTC. The workshop aimed to (i) recall the IOTC data requirements and reporting process, (ii) describe the reporting issues encountered in Tanzanian data, (iii) train the fishery officers to data entry and management to comply with IOTC standards, and (iv) identify the main issues in data collection and management to make recommendations for improving future data submissions.

Activities planned for 2024

The IOTC Secretariat continues to remain committed to deliver Data Compliance and Technical Assistance missions in 2024 to improve the overall levels of data compliance of CPCs, and follow-up to the ongoing and persistent issues with non-reporting (or incomplete reporting) of several mandatory IOTC datasets. According to the WPDCS programme of work for 2023-2027, priorities are given to the following CPCs: Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Oman, Sri Lanka, and Somalia.

Furthermore, the WPDCS identified additional CPCs with fisheries insufficiently sampled that would require assistance with data collection and sampling activities: Bangladesh and Kenya. Discussions with each of these CPCs will be conducted during the WPDCS19 and SC26 to confirm their interest and support and organise some missions throughout the year 2024.

Two technical workshops focusing on the revised data reporting process are planned for 2024, one targeting CPCs located in the western Indian Ocean and one targeting those located in the eastern Indian Ocean, with dates and locations yet to be defined (see document IOTC-2023-WPDCS19-29).

Appendix I: Funding agencies

The following section includes a description of the main agencies that contributed funds and other support to IOTC data capacity building during 2023 and previous years.

Government of Japan¹

A *Memorandum of Understanding* (MoU) between the IOTC and Overseas Fishery Cooperation Foundation (OFCF) of Japan was initiated in April 2002 with the purpose of enhancing the capacity of developing coastal states in the Indian Ocean region and improve their fisheries statistical systems. Phases I (April 2002 - March 2007), II (June 2007 - March 2010), III (June 2010 - March 2013), IV (June 2014 - March 2017), V (June 2017 - March 2020), and VI (June 2020 – March 2023) of the Project ran for twenty consecutive years as of today. A *Cooperation Agreement* (CA) was signed between FAO and OFCF Japan in September 2022 and is valid for period 2022-2026.

While Phase VI of the project commenced in 2020, the Project was not yet able to conduct on-site activities of the coastal member countries due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. For this reason and following the approval of the new CA, the IOTC Secretariat and OFCF Japan formulated an activity plan to support IOTC coastal member countries for the years 2022 and 2023, that include further development of species identification guides and a desk study on the possibility of implementing standardized electronic data collection tools.

European Commission

The mission of the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG-MARE) of the European Commission is *"to develop the potential of the European maritime economy and to secure sustainable fisheries, a stable supply of seafood, healthy seas and prosperous coastal communities – for today's Europeans and for future generations"*.

Since 2015, DG-MARE has provided the IOTC Secretariat with capacity building grants to fund projects that foster compliance of Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs), in addition to funding activities that enable assistance for developing coastal states in the IOTC area to improve the implementation of the at-sea observer scheme, compliance with IOTC mandatory data collection and reporting standards, technical assistance support missions to CPCs, as well as support for national fisheries scientists to attend IOTC science meetings.

DG-Mare funding was utilized to support part of the activities conducted in 2022, notably the implementation of the Regional Observer Scheme Pilot Project (i.e., piloting of electronic monitoring systems (EMS), which aims at facilitating improvements in the data collection, reporting and timeliness of observer data to the IOTC Secretariat).

DG-Mare support to IOTC Secretariat is still ongoing, with a new project proposal covering the biennium 2023-2024 and funding available to support the IOTC Science and Compliance committees' programs of work for 24 months.

Funds from the EU project (2023-2024) are available to specifically support the following:

1. Improved data collection and reporting of artisanal fisheries data
2. Improved time series of catches and other scientific data for science and management purposes
3. Reconstruction of historical catch series for CPCs with persistent data quality issues: Pakistan, Tanzania, Comoros, Mozambique
4. Improved data collection, reporting and management of Regional Observer Scheme data at national and regional levels.

Indian Ocean Commission

The Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) through the EU-funded project EcoFish², provides support to CPCs to improve their level of compliance with IOTC requirements. Funds are available under this project to support activities common to the Data and Compliance sections of the Secretariat.

¹ <http://www.iotc.org/data/iotc-ofcf>

² <https://ecofish-programme.org/>