

25 March 2024

**IOTC CIRCULAR
2024-17**

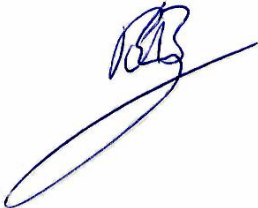
Dear Madam / Sir

**REQUEST FOR OBSERVER STATUS FROM THE DEUTSCHE STIFTUNG MEERESSCHUTZ/DSM
(GERMAN FOUNDATION FOR MARINE CONSERVATION)**

Please find attached a request letter from the Deutsche Stiftung Meeresschutz to participate as an Observer to the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission processes.

In accordance with Rule XIV of the IOTC Rules of Procedure, Contracting Parties of the Commission may wish to allow Deutsche Stiftung Meeresschutz to participate as an Observer given their interest in the IOTC as stipulated in the attached letter. Thus, unless any objections are received within 30 days of the date of this Circular, the IOTC Secretariat will consider that approval has been granted for the Executive Secretary to issue an invitation to the potential Observer to attend IOTC meetings accordingly.

Yours sincerely



Paul de Bruyn
Executive Secretary

Attachments:

- Letter from the Deutsche Stiftung Meeresschutz

Distribution

IOTC Contracting Parties: Australia, Bangladesh, China, Comoros, European Union, France (Territories), India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Rep of), Japan, Kenya, Rep. of Korea, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, United Rep. of Tanzania, Thailand, United Kingdom, Yemen. **Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties:** Liberia. **Intergovernmental Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations.** Chairperson IOTC. **Copy to:** FAO Headquarters, FAO Representatives to CPCs.

This message has been transmitted by email only

Deutsche Stiftung Meeresschutz – Der Vorstand
U. Kirsch & U. Karlowski · Badstraße 4 · 81379 München



To Ms Jung-re Riley Kim
Chairperson of the Commission
Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
Blend Seychelles Building (2nd floor)
Providence
PO Box 1011
Victoria Mahé – Seychelles

Munich, 20 March 2024

Application for Observer Status to IOTC Meetings

Dear Ms Jung-re Riley Kim,

We hope this letter finds you well. We, the Deutsche Stiftung Meeresschutz/DSM (German Foundation for Marine Conservation), are writing to you today to apply for observer status at IOTC Meetings.

The Deutsche Stiftung Meeresschutz is an internationally active environmental charitable trust foundation and registered charity (NGO) based in Germany. Our mission focusses on marine conservation projects with a special emphasis on climate change as well as the fight against poverty. We also promote sustainable fishing practices. We firmly believe that sustainable fishing is the only way to solve the current fishing and food crises as well as the current marine biodiversity crisis.

In cooperation with our partners we pursue UN SDGs 1 / 4 / 12 / 13 / 14 and 15 and we are a partner organisation of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030) (Ocean Decade) in Germany.

We have a specific focus on the conservation of sharks and rays, both being top predators and meso-predators that are absolutely vital for healthy marine ecosystems.

Fish provides an important source of protein for billions of people on our planet, especially in countries of the global south. Therefore, sustainable use of marine resources and effective conservation measures for the biodiversity of marine ecosystems are challenging tasks mankind must tackle.

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Today more than 35 % of all commercially fished stocks are overfished, according to FAO. Scientific research shows that the oceans are at risk of losing more than 70 % of all known species of sharks and rays, more than a third of all marine mammals, and most of the tropical reef building corals in the near future. One of the main causes are the negative impacts of commercial fishing in the last 50 years as well as ocean pollution and the global climate crisis.

Therefore, Deutsche Stiftung Meeresschutz supports sustainable fishing practices for example on the island of Malapascua in the Philippines in cooperation with People and the sea, a local NGO. We also support scientific research on shark and ray species, for example research on bull sharks and guitarfish in Fiji waters. And we have just started a new research project on data-deficient and threatened rays and on endemic rays in Fiji waters.

Too many rays and pelagic sharks are classified as threatened by the IUCN's Red List and a growing number of species has been classified as critically endangered or endangered while the majority of cartilaginous fish species is actually classified as "data deficient". And while a growing number of shark and ray species is included in the CSM and CITES Annexes for better protection it has led to only a few improvements for a few of these species and only in a few regions so far. Unfortunately, it has not been effective enough to increase overall shark and ray abundance in most areas, including the Indian Ocean.

As part of our commitment, we have also been involved in highlighting the impacts of FAD associated tuna fishing of the purse seine and long-line fleets on sharks, rays, marine mammals, sea turtles and yellowfin tuna and we are a major source of information on this issue for the media and the public in Germany.

Therefore, we are very much interested in any efforts and developments in the fisheries in general and in the Indian Ocean fisheries in particular, especially with regard to fishing regulations and practices, bycatch mitigation and fighting IUU.

We would therefore appreciate attending upcoming IOTC meetings as an observer and hereby kindly ask for an observer status at the IOTC meetings at the earliest time possible.

Thank you very much for your attention and for considering our application for observer status.

Sincerely,



Deutsche Stiftung Meeresschutz (DSM)
Der Vorstand - U. Kirsch & U. Karlowski
Badstraße 4 · 81379 München

Ulrich Karlowski
Board of Directors/Biologist
Deutsche Stiftung Meeresschutz (DSM)/German Foundation for Marine Conservation