

## Scheme to operationalise the FAO Voluntary Guideline for Fishing Gear and Fish Aggregating Devices in the IOTC Area

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### PURPOSE

To provide participants at the Working Party on the Implementation of Conservation and Management Measures (WPICMM) the opportunity to provide comments on the operationalization of the Voluntary Guidelines for Fishing Gear and Fish Aggregating Devices, as requested by the CoC20, and endorsed by the Commission (S27).

### BACKGROUND

The IOTC Secretariat, in conjunction with the Fishing Operations and Technology Branch (FIAO) of the FAO, set about to develop a scheme to operationalise the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear (VGMFG) and FADs, in the IOTC Area, at the request of the Commission ([IOTC–2019–S23–R\\_rev1](#), para. 53).

The first draft of the scheme was presented to WPICMM05 (IOTC-2022-WPICMM05-13) and CPCs were requested to provide their comments on the draft document in time to be considered at the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the Compliance Committee (CoC19). Unfortunately, no comment on the draft was received and the Compliance Committee recommended that CPCs provide their feedback during the intersessional period for consideration at the following year's meeting. During the 2022/2023 intersessional period only one CPC provided feedback, thus the 20<sup>th</sup> Session of the Compliance Committee requested that CPCs provide their comments on the draft during the 2023/2024 intersessional period, for consideration by WPICMM07. Once again, no additional comment was received, and the draft document was not presented to WPICMM07.

### DISCUSSION

Document IOTC-2025-WPICMM08–12\_Add1 is being made available for consideration by participants in WPICMM08 for discussions and, as appropriate, to amend it based on the feedback from the CPC.

It should also be noted that mandatory reporting of lost fishing gear and the mandatory marking of fishing gear are being developed under MARPOL Annex V through the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC), through the subcommittee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR) as activities to address marine plastic pollution from ALDFG.<sup>2</sup> MARPOL Annex V applies to all ships, including fishing vessels.

With the exception of Seychelles, Somalia, Thailand and Yemen, all other IOTC CPCs have ratified the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) - Annex V.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

That the WPICMM08:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2025–WPICMM08–12 on the Scheme to operationalise the FAO Voluntary Guideline for Fishing Gear and Fish Aggregating Devices in the IOTC Area.
- 2) **NOTE** that only one CPC has provided feedback on the draft document of the Scheme to operationalise the FAO Voluntary Guideline for Fishing Gear and Fish Aggregating Devices in the IOTC Area

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<sup>2</sup> <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/9ad1e4c7-a83e-44c3-a647-4385a76eb4fa/content>

- 3) **NOTE** the work being undertaken by the subcommittee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR), of the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC).
- 4) **CONSIDER** what amendments should be made to document IOTC-2025-WPICMM08-12\_Add1, in view of the comments by one CPC.