



29 July 2025

## IOTC CIRCULAR 2025-24

Dear Madam / Sir

### REQUEST FOR OBSERVER STATUS FROM THE EARTH LEGACY FOUNDATION

Please find attached a request letter from the Earth Legacy Foundation 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 Earth Legacy Foundation 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

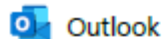
#### Attachments:

- Letter from the Earth Legacy Foundation

#### 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, Panama. **Intergovernmental Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations.** **Chairperson IOTC.** **Copy to:** FAO Headquarters, FAO Representatives to CPCs.

This message has been transmitted by email only



## Request for Observer Status – NGO Earth Legacy Foundation (NPO 2025/532019/08)

From esther@earthlegacyfoundation.org <esther@earthlegacyfoundation.org>

Date Mon 2025-07-21 13:49

To IOTC-Secretariat <IOTC-Secretariat@fao.org>

Cc lynette@earthlegacyfoundation.org <lynette@earthlegacyfoundation.org>

Dear IOTC Secretariat,

I am writing to formally request observer status for Earth Legacy Foundation, a registered South African non-profit (NPO 2025/532019/08), dedicated to marine conservation, community empowerment, and sustainable fisheries. As a small but committed organisation driving evidence-based campaigns, ranging from fisheries reform and shark protection to plastic pollution clean-ups and youth ocean education, we believe that participating directly in IOTC meetings will significantly amplify both our impact and the region's collective commitment to sustainable ocean governance.

### Why Earth Legacy Belongs at IOTC

#### 1. On-the-ground Experience with Local Fisheries

We actively engage with artisanal and recreational fishers to promote responsible practices and to influence national policy. Our petition to remove endangered shark and ray species from South Africa's Permitted Catch List reflects our commitment to science-based regulation, directly aligned with IOTC's goal of strengthening fisheries sustainability.

#### 2. Conservation Advocacy & Policy Reform

Through petitions, letters, and collaborative engagement with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), we advocate for alignment with international standards, including ICCAT and IOTC measures, for key at-risk species. Observer status would help us contribute more effectively to regional dialogue and stakeholder alignment.

#### 3. Educational Outreach & Capacity Building

Our flagship programmes Clean Ocean Divers, Captain Fanplastic, Turtle Rescue Network, consistently draw coastal youth and communities into conservation action. By participating at IOTC, we can help bridge the gap between regional policy frameworks and real-world community impact, promoting understanding and compliance.

#### 4. Holistic, Multi-Stakeholder Approach

Earth Legacy is already collaborating with government bodies, local authorities, NGOs, dive schools, and scientists to shape conservation outcomes. Observer status would enhance our ability to gather timely information, align campaigns with IOTC priorities, and participate in future cooperative efforts to monitor and protect tuna and associated species.

### Requests to the Secretariat

- We seek official observer status, in line with IOTC's NGO engagement policy.
- We ask for inclusion in electronic mailings concerning meeting agendas, draft decisions, data requests, and consultations.
- We commit to abiding by all observer obligations, including reporting, non-disclosure of confidential matters, and contributing positively to inclusive discussions.

We believe that the voice of coastal NGOs like Earth Legacy Foundation is crucial to ensuring decisions reflect the conservation needs of local ecosystems, communities, and the broader Indian Ocean heritage. We view observer status not merely as recognition, but as a vital opportunity to support transparent, equitable, and forward-thinking fisheries management across the IOTC area.

Thank you for considering our request. I would be very happy to provide additional information or discuss this further at your convenience.

Many thanks

# Esther Jacobs

PROJECT DIRECTOR

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