

TENTH SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Progress Report on the IOTC-OFCF Project to improve statistical systems in Indian Ocean coastal countries

The joint IOTC-OFCF project

1. The IOTC and the Overseas Fishery Cooperation Foundation of Japan (OFCF) Project to assist developing countries of the region to improve their fisheries data collection and statistics (Phase I) was terminated in March 2007 after 5 years.
2. A new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the IOTC-OFCF for a second phase (Phase II) project following the same objectives as Phase I was signed during a visit of the President of the OFCF at IOTC Secretariat in June 2007. Phase II is also funded by OFCF and involves the participation of staff from the Secretariat, working in conjunction with one expert detached to the Secretariat by OFCF.
3. The project embodies three main principles:
 - The activities undertaken under the project will follow the recommendations of the Commission and its relevant subsidiary bodies: the Working Parties and the Scientific Committee;
 - There will be no direct financial implications for IOTC Member countries.
 - The activities of the project should be directed towards reinforcing the statistical systems of developing countries from the region.
4. Priority will be given to countries whose tuna fisheries are of a sufficient size to affect stock assessments or future management measures, or those who catch fish at sizes not well represented from other fisheries. Some follow-up activity on some of the Phase I projects is also involved.
5. Phase II is envisaged to continue for up to three years.
6. The current report covers for the activities of the fifth year of Phase I (January 2007-March 2007) and the first year of Phase II (June 2007 – March 2008).

Progress during 2007

7. In February and March 2007, equipment including PCs and motorbikes for upgrading data collection and data processing for Tanzania including Zanzibar were provided through Letter of Consignment (LOC).
8. In March 2007, two OFCF experts of the IOTC-OFCF Project, Mr. Koichi Sakonju and Mr. Shunji Fujiwara, returned to Japan due to the termination of Phase I of the Project.
9. In March 2007, budgets for the activities for Phase II of the IOTC-OFCF Project were finalized by the Japanese Government on an annual contract basis.
10. Mr. Shunji Fujiwara, Project Coordinator resumed at IOTC Secretariat on 25 June 2007, as the OFCF expert (coinciding with the funds becoming available). The funds for the activities expenditure during the first year until March 2008, after deducting administrative costs were approximately US\$ 63,000 .
11. IOTC and OFCF held discussions on the details of the Implementation plan during the period of June 2007 – March 2008. Activities are to include: monitoring activities for the sampling programs during Phase I, implementation of Yemen sampling program for catch data and yellowfin size data, and improvement of Indonesian and Iranian tuna statistics.
12. During the project of Phase I, technical assistance was provided to (1) the Indonesian multilateral sampling programmes through collaboration between the IOTC-OFCF Project, National Indonesian institutions (DGCF¹, RCCF² and RIMF³) and the ACIAR⁴-CSIRO⁵ project, (2) the fresh tuna longline sampling programme in Phuket

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through collaboration with AFRDEC of DOF⁶, Thailand, (3) the sampling programme in Sri Lanka through collaboration of NARA⁷ and (4) artisanal tuna catch sampling program in Maldives with MRC⁸ were implemented. Since June 2007, the IOTC-OFCF Project has followed-up on the current status of each of these initiatives.

13. A trip to Indonesia was made in September 2007 to monitor the continuation of the fresh tuna longline sampling program. The sampling program has been continued to be implemented well. Some technical assistance will be necessary to assess the amount of fishing effort exerted by the fresh tuna longline fleets.

14. A trip to Sri Lanka will be made in March 2008 to determine the status of the sampling Program implemented in Phase I. The sampling programs implemented in Thailand and Maldives are being continued as part of the internal data collection schemes.

15. The Project is now contacting relevant agencies in Yemen in order to initiate the proposed sampling program for catch data and yellowfin size data. Similarly, the Project is also contacting relevant agencies in Iran to initiate work to assist improve Iranian tuna statistics.

16. The IOTC-OFCF Project funded for a sampling programme in Thailand for the collection of data from its coastal purse seine fisheries during 2006. Analysis of this data is currently being undertaken.

17. The IOTC-OFCF Project funded and provided technical assistance for a sampling programme in Mombasa, Kenya during 2006 to collect and computerize historical data (including CPUE data) on sport fishing vessels operating in Malindi and Watamu. To-date considerable data has been entered into a database and error checking continues.

18. The publication of the User's Manual of FINSS was completed in March 2005 and distribution of the manual to relevant institutions continues.

19. To date the manuscript of IOTC Field Manual has been drafted. Printing is planned in 2008 subject to the final compilation of the manual.

20. The final compilation of the comprehensive report on IOTC-OFCF Project for the first phase is re-scheduled November 2007 and will be printed and distributed by March 2008.

21. *Other matters of interest:* In October 2007, a participant from each of Malaysia (IOTC) Cote d'Ivoire (ICCAT) and Guinea (ICCAT) attended a "Fishery Resources Management Leadership Course (FRMLC)" sponsored and organised by OFCF Headquarters. Attendees learnt about fishery resource management, the fisheries statistical system used in Japan, and sampling methods. They also visited fishery related institutions and laboratories under the supervision of NRIFSF⁹. This course is not funded by the IOTC-OFCF Project.

Preliminary plan of work for April 2008 – March 2009

22. Anticipating that the Project will be extended over the next fiscal year, the sampling programme in Yemen is expected to be implemented.

23. It is also expected that technical support will be given to Indonesia to improve effort data collection for fresh tuna longline.

24. IOTC Field Manual will be printed and distributed in 2008.

25. Distribution of the comprehensive report for Phase I of the Project will be continued.

Action by the Scientific Committee

26. The Tenth meeting of the IOTC Scientific Committee is invited to comment on the progress of the IOTC-OFCF Project.

³ Research Institute for Marine Fisheries

⁴ Australian Council for Industrial and Agricultural Research

⁵ Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (Australia)

⁶ Andaman Sea Fisheries Development and Research Center of Department of Fisheries

⁷ National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency

⁸ Marine Research Center

⁹ National Research Institute of Far Seas Fisheries in Japan