

The joint IOTC-OFCF project

1. The Memorandum of Understanding between the IOTC and the Overseas Fishery Cooperation Foundation of Japan (OFCF) for the First Phase of the IOTC-OFCF Project to assist developing countries of the region to improve their fisheries data collection and statistics (2002 to 2007) was terminated in March 2007.
2. A new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the IOTC and 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 June 2007. The Phase II Project 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 regarding tuna-fishing statistics in the region will be given to those fisheries concerned of sufficient size to affect stock assessment or future management measures, and those that catch fish of a size that is not well represented from other fisheries. The follow-up activities for the Phase I work is also envisaged.
5. The Phase II project is envisaged to continue for up to three years, until March 2010.

Progress during 2008

6. The current report covers for the activities in January 2008 to November 2008 of Phase II.
7. During 2008, the MOU on technical assistance on effort data collection for fresh tuna longline unloading in Indonesia was prepared. Approval from Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Indonesia, has not been received, so the implementation of the program is pending. The main goal of this programme is to improve vessel identification, so all longliners putting in to Indonesian ports can be identified individually and their activities be monitored over time. The vessel numbers and activities are some of the components used in the estimation of catches of Indonesian longliners, the other being the catches sampled by enumerators in the main landing locations. Improving the identification of individual vessels will attempted using stickers, containing a unique identifier, which will be placed in several places on each vessel. In preparation for the program, stickers have been printed (in March 2008), and preparations are underway for the purchase of equipment for data entry.
8. Following the implementation of a logbook system the Directorate General of Capture Fisheries (DGCF) of Indonesia, indicated the need for a training course to increase the capacity of the DGCF to handle this information and to raise stakeholder awareness on the need for a logbook system. Two experts from the IOTC-OFCF Project visited Indonesia in October 2008 and met with several government staff at the DGCF and the Research Centre for Capture Fisheries. The main objective of the mission was to identify the areas that will require strengthening for Indonesia to be able to produce catch and effort statistics according to the requirements of the IOTC or other RFMO and make full use of these data. Tentatively, the training course will be held in Jakarta in April 2009.
9. The IOTC-OFCF Project mission visited Mauritius to collect information on foreign tuna longline activities at Port Louis, in particular data from fresh-tuna longline and carrier vessels, whose numbers are believed to be on the increase. The information collected in Mauritius was used in the estimation of catches of fresh-tuna longliners that are not monitored by the flag countries (Malaysia, Indonesia).
10. IOTC-OFCF Project mission went to Yemen in March 2008 and July 2008 to discuss feasibility of obtaining yellowfin tuna size data and other relevant historical data, and to devise a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to enable the aforementioned activities. Due to the difficulties in finalizing the MOU, a new proposal was made for a phased-in programme. The first phase would involve the collection of historical data, and a second phase would involve the implementation of field activities in selected locations along the Yemen coast.
11. Yellowfin tuna size data collection in Arabian Sea is one of recommended activity by SC. The IOTC-OFCF Project mission discussed technical agreement on size data collection of yellowfin including Narrow-barred Spanish mackerel and longtail tuna with Ministry of Fisheries Wealth, Sultanate of Oman in September 2008. A

technical agreement was signed in November 2008 and the program will be implemented from December 2008 until March 2009. Callipers have been provided for size data collection.

12. Historical sport fishing data in Kenya was collected during the first phase of the IOTC-OFCF Project and was expected to be used in the estimation of relative abundance for billfish, notably sailfish. Data validation was carried out during July and August, 2008. Completed data was transferred into an Access database. Sport fishing data continues to be collected by Kenyan authorities independently of the project.

13. IOTC Scientific Committee recommended improving data collection and processing system for industrial purse seiners of Thailand in November 2007. The IOTC-OFCF Project sent a mission to investigate the situation in Thailand. Based on the recommendations on the mission report, the IOTC-OFCF Project provided funds to employ an IT technician in Thailand to create the database and a Thai Manual for purse seine in March 2007. This work will be completed soon. In addition to this assistance, the IOTC-OFCF Project also provided PCs and printers for data entry offices in Bangkok and Phuket in March 2007.

14. The comprehensive report on IOTC-OFCF Project for the first phase was published in March 2008 and distributed to the organizations associated with the project.

15. In October 2008, a participant from Mozambique including trainees from Angola, and Brazil 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 National Research Institute of Far Seas Fisheries in Japan. This course is funded separately from the IOTC-OFCF Project.

Preliminary plan of work for April 2009 – March 2010

16. Provisional funding for the third year from April 2009 to March 2010 has not yet been determined.

17. The IOTC-OFCF Project second phase will be terminated at the end of March 2010.

18. Initiating the sampling program on effort data collection in Indonesia. Implementation will commence from April to December 2009.

19. Conducting the training course on logbooks in Indonesia is expected to be implemented in April 2009.

20. Supporting Oman to collect size data until December 2009.

21. Collection of historical data in Yemen.

22. In March 2010, OFCF expert of the IOTC-OFCF Project will return to Japan on completion of the Project.

23. The comprehensive report for Phase II will be prepared toward the termination of the Project.