

The joint IOTC-OFCF project

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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 in the IOTC region to improve their fisheries data collection and processing systems (2002 to 2007) was terminated in March 2007.
2. In June 2007, during a visit of the President of the OFCF to the Seychelles, the IOTC and the OFCF signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the implementation of a second phase (Phase II) of the IOTC-OFCF Project to initiate new activities as along the lines of those implemented through Phase I of the Project. The Phase II is also funded by the OFCF and involves the participation of staff from the Secretariat, working in conjunction with one Japanese 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. Phase II will also follow-up upon the activities implemented through Phase I of the Project.
5. The Phase II of the IOTC-OFCF Project will come to an end in March 2010.
6. The current report covers for the activities of the second year (December 2008-March 2009) and the third year (April 2009 – November 2009) of Phase II.

Progress during the second and third year

7. In 2008, the IOTC-OFCF Project prepared an MOU to assist the Directorate General for Capture Fisheries of Indonesia in the collection of effort data from the fresh tuna longline fisheries of Indonesia. The main goal of this programme was to improve vessel identification - through the marking of individual longline vessels based in Indonesia -, with a view to improving the collection of vessel activity information in Indonesia. This information is important because it is used, along with the catches sampled in port, for the estimation of catches of fresh-tuna longliners based in Indonesia: Unfortunately, the IOTC-OFCF Project was unable to finalize the MOU due to some legal constraints raised by the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of Indonesia and the Project was finally cancelled in January 2009. However, Indonesia informed the IOTC-OFCF Project that it will be implementing these activities on its own in the near future, requesting assistance in the purchase of the hardware and software to be used for the computerization of vessel data and activity information. Following this request, in February 2009 the IOTC-OFCF Project provided the DGCF with the equipment requested.
8. During 2008, the DGCF informed the IOTC about its plans to implement a logbook system for the Indonesian fisheries, and requested help from IOTC in the design of the logbook form and its implementation. The IOTC, in consultation with the DGCF, WCPFC and CCSBT agreed to organize a workshop during 2009 on the Implementation of a Logbook Programme for Indonesian Fisheries, as a component of the IOTC-OFCF Project Phase II activities.. The “Workshop on the Implementation of a Logbook Programme for the fisheries of Indonesia: Review of issues and considerations” was held in Jakarta from 18 to 20 May 2009. The main objective of the new logbook programme is to improve the quality of the catch-and-effort data collected from the tuna fisheries of Indonesia with a view to improve the management of fish resources both nationally and internationally. Implementation of the new logbook programme will start in January 2010, to cover all Indonesian longliners, including those not based in Indonesia. The Workshop concentrated its efforts in the design of logbook forms for the tuna fisheries in Indonesia, also devoting time to assessing the scope of the logbook programme and other implementation issues. The Workshop agreed that the implementation of three different logbook forms for the

fisheries of Indonesia, if successful, will allow Indonesia to derive the catch-and-effort data from its fisheries, therefore ensuring Indonesia complies with the requirements currently in place at the RFMOs. In addition, the Workshop agreed that the implementation of logbooks is appropriate for vessels having a registered tonnage greater than 30GT. The report (in both English and Bahasa Indonesia) of the workshop is in progress and will be published in January 2010. The Report in English is already available at IOTC Secretariat or from the IOTC-OFCF Project.

9. For a number of years the IOTC Scientific Committee has expressed concern about the paucity of the length frequency data available from gillnet and hand line fisheries operating in the Arabian Sea, in particular those catching significant amounts of yellowfin tuna, recommending that more length frequency data be collected in these region. In September 2008, following a request from the Ministry of Fish Wealth of Oman, the IOTC-OFCF Project sent a mission to the Sultanate of Oman to assess the implementation of a technical agreement for the collection of length frequency data through sampling of yellowfin tuna, narrow-barred Spanish mackerel and longtail tuna at the landing place.. A Technical Agreement was signed in December 2008 and the Program was initiated in January 2009, with sampling in Sur and Marbat. The Program will come to an end in December 2009. A total of 16,022 fish lengths (2,125 yellowfin, 11,130 longtail tuna, and 2,767 Narrow-barred Spanish mackerel) were measured between January and August 2009 in the two sampling sites.

10. During 2009, the IOTC-OFCF Project devoted additional efforts to initiate cooperation with the Ministry of Fish Wealth of Yemen in the collection of historical data records from the government and private sectors in Yemen. Unfortunately, the Project had to cancel its plans for a new visit to Yemen further in 2009, due to the situation in this country.

11. In October 2009, participants from Oman and Comoros including trainees from Morocco and Equatorial Guinea attended a “Leadership Training Course on Fishery Resources Management (LTCFRM)” 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.

Plan of work until March 2010

12. The IOTC-OFCF Joint Committee Meeting will be held in Seychelles on December 7, 2009.

13. The IOTC-OFCF Project initiated also talks with staff from the Ministry of Fisheries in Comoros, which resulted in plans from the IOTC-OFCF Project to send a mission to Comoros in December 2009. The main objective of this mission will be to assess the current situation in Comoros concerning data collection and processing systems for tuna fisheries and initiate arrangements for the preparation of a Country Report on the fisheries of Comoros.

14. Due to the termination of the Program in Oman, the final monitoring and payment of the Oman Program on size data collection will be made in January, 2010.

15. The comprehensive report for Phase II will be prepared during March 2010.

16. In March 2010, an OFCF expert will return to Japan on completion of the 2nd phase of the IOTC-OFCF Project.