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IOTC-OFCF Project activities in 2011: Progress Report

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INTRODUCTION

The Memorandum of Understanding between the IOTC and the Overseas Fishery Cooperation Foundation of Japan (OFCF) for the execution of a Project to assist developing countries of the region to improve their fisheries data collection and statistics was initiated in April 2002. Phases I (April 2002 - March 2007) and II (June 2007 -March 2010) of the Project run for eight consecutive years, the latter coming to an end in March 2010 . At the end of Phase II of the Project, the IOTC and the OFCF considered the implementation of a new Phase with the particular objective of addressing the concerns of the Commission regarding the quality of the data available for some of the important small-scale fisheries in the Region. Following consideration of the proposal the OFCF agreed to initiate Phase III of the Project and allocated funds, at a similar level of that of Phase II of the Project. The Terms of Reference of Phase III focused on support of IOTC coastal countries in the strengthening of activities related to the Regional Observer Scheme, specially focusing on artisanal fisheries in IOTC Resolution 11/04,

4. The number of the artisanal fishing vessels landings shall also be monitored at the landing place by field samplers. The indicative level of the coverage of the artisanal fishing vessels should progressively increase towards 5% of the total levels of vessel activity (i.e. total number of vessel trips or total number of vessels active).

In addition to the activities undertaken by the IOTC-OFCF Project, the IOTC Secretariat provided additional assistance to countries in the region, as requested by the Commission in paragraph 7 of IOTC Resolution 11/04:

7. The sampling scheme referred in paragraph 4 will be covered by the Commission's accumulated funds and voluntary contribution on a provisional basis. The Commission will consider an alternative for the financing of this scheme

A new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the IOTC and the OFCF was signed in June 2010, along the lines of those previously existing, including provision of funds and detachment of an OFCF Expert to the IOTC Secretariat to coordinate the activities of the Project along with the IOTC Data Coordinator and other staff from the Secretariat, as required. The intended duration of Phase III of the Project is three years, until March 2013, with funds committed for each year and extension of the Project agreed through exchange of letters between the IOTC and the OFCF.

It is important to note that, in addition to the budget allocated for activities in 2011, the Project devoted additional funds, amounting to more than 50,000 US\$, to cover for additional activities in coastal countries of the Indian Ocean.

The project keeps the following three main principles since 2002:

- 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.

The current report covers activities on the first year (January -March 2011) and the second year (April 2011 – March 2012)¹. A summary of all the activities undertaken by the Project since its inception in 2002 is presented also in Appendix.

Progress during 2011

Comoros: During January-March 2011, the project implemented a frame survey and fishery census in three Comorian Islands (Anjouan, Grande Comore, and Moheli) to identify landing locations of fishing vessels and record the number of fishing units operated in the country. The activities were implemented through support to the ‘Direction Generale des Ressources Halieutiques (DGRH)’ in parallel with a sampling program initiated with the assistance of accumulated funds from the Commission, channelled through the IOTC Secretariat. These activities were initiated in January 2011, with the census concluded and the sampling still on-going. The census recorded a total of 5,323 Comorian artisanal fishing vessels, in contrast with the 3,946 units recorded in the latest census, conducted in 1994. Higher numbers of motorized vessels were registered in the 2011 census, which tends to indicate a large process of mechanization of the Comoros fleet since 1994. The results of the frame survey and census were presented during the IOTC WPTT, in October 2011 (IOTC-2011-WPTT13-13). The data collected through the census and sampling activities will be used to estimate catches for the Comoros fisheries, representing the first reliable estimates since 1995, the year in which the sampling activities were discontinued. The Project will conduct a training course on catch estimation as soon as the datasets are complete, involving invitation of several researchers from DGRH to the IOTC Secretariat.

Sri Lanka: Following a request for assistance in the areas of data collection and management, made by the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development of Sri Lanka (MFARD), the IOTC-OFCF Project sent a mission to Sri Lanka in September 2010. During the mission the IOTC-OFCF Project focused on assessing the status of data collection and management in Sri Lanka and proposed a series of actions to improve the current status, including: 1) strengthening of the existing sampling scheme for coastal and offshore fisheries; 2) development of a Centralized database system; and 3) assistance in the implementation of a logbook system for the fisheries in Sri Lanka. Following consideration of the three proposals the IOTC-OFCF Project and the MFARD agreed that the Development of a Centralized database system is a priority, further agreeing on the components that the new system shall contain, as follows: (1) Vessel, catch, effort, and size frequency data as collected by the National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency of Sri Lanka (NARA), stored so far in an access database (PELAGOS); (2) Vessel record data, including details of individual fishing boats, fishers, licencing, and other, as recorded by the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DFAR), in the database it maintains; (3) Landing Permits, granted to foreign vessels that unload fish in ports in Sri Lanka, as stored by the DFAR; (4) Logbook data, as collected by DFAR, (5) catches unloaded by foreign fishing vessels to processing plants in Sri Lankan harbours, as collected by the Ceylon Fisheries Harbour Cooperation (CFHC) and the Ceylon Fisheries Cooperation (CFC), (6) catch and effort information from the coastal fisheries, which the Statistical Unit of the MFARD is planning to collect in the near future; and (7) export and import information, as collected by the Sri Lankan Customs. The Project exchanged a Memorandum of Understanding with MFARD in September 30, 2011, including provisions for the MFARD to hire an IT Company to work in the development of the Centralized Database System for a period of six months, the new system to be fully in place in March 2012. This work is currently in progress.

¹ Note that this refers to the Japanese fiscal year, which runs from April to March of the Julian calendar.

Iran: In order to address a recommendation from the IOTC Scientific Committee, concerning the status of fisheries statistics in Iran, the Fisheries Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran (SHILAT) requested assistance from the IOTC-OFCF Project to strengthen data collection and management in Iran. Fisheries data in Iran are collected and computerized at the landing place, with electronic files transferred to the Provincial Offices on a regular basis. Data from the Provincial Offices are then transferred to the Head of the Department of Statistics in Tehran, at the end of each quarter. Port sampling and management in Iran are among the best in the region. However, the existing database needs to be upgraded to accommodate new information collected from the fisheries, in particular operational data collected through a new logbook system, recently implemented in Iran, and size frequency data, currently stored in a separate database. In addition the upgrade work will involve the generation of routines to extract the data in the format required by national and international organizations, such as the IOTC, utilities not available in the current database. Following the discussions in Iran, SHILAT requested assistance and technical advice from the IOTC-OFCF Project in the expanding of the database, to be carried out by IT officers working at SHILAT and an external IT consultant hired to assist SHILAT in this work. To this purpose, the IOTC-OFCF Project and SHILAT signed a technical agreement in November 2011, with activities planned until March 2012. The Project will assist SHILAT financially to facilitate purchasing of additional hardware and software, as required for this work. In addition the IOTC-OFCF Project will provide technical advice in the strengthening of the database, where required.

Indonesia: The small-scale fisheries of Indonesia are probably the most important of the world, with catches over 200,000 t (Indian and Pacific oceans), and catches of the medium-scale vessel component estimated to be over 250,000 tons. In the Indian Ocean, excluding the longline component, catches of tuna were over 170,000t in 2009. However, these figures are thought to be uncertain, probably underrepresenting the current catch. Several reports have pointed to flaws in the sampling system, in particular underestimation of catches (WWF's Off the Hook Report), and catches not fully reported by gear and species, especially in the case of small tunas. In order to address these issues, the Directorate General of Capture Fisheries of Indonesia (DGCF) and the IOTC-OFCF Project agreed to conduct a Catch Estimation Workshop for the Fisheries of Indonesia, with focus on small and medium-scale fisheries. The main objective of the Workshop will be revising the current data collection and estimation procedures in Indonesia and revise current and past catch figures, where required. The IOTC-OFCF Project has disseminated a first draft Agenda for the Workshop that will be finalized following comments from the DGCF. The workshop will be held in Jakarta in March 13-15, 2012, with participation from DGCF, RCCF (Research Center For Capture Fisheries), RIMF (Research Institution for Marine Fisheries), the IOTC and OFCF. SPC (Secretariat of the Pacific Community, representing the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission), CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research organization of Australia), and WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) have also been invited to participate in the meeting.

Other matters of interest: Between October 17 and November 21, 2011, participants from Thailand, Iran, the IOTC Secretariat (Data Assistant), and Uruguay, one per country, attended the "Leadership Training Course on Fishery Resources Management (LTCFRM)", sponsored and organised by the OFCF. The course focused on different areas, including: (1) fishery resource management; (2) fisheries statistical systems, focusing on that used in Japan and (3) sampling and data analysis methods. The main part of the Course was coordinated by Dr Tom Nishida, scientist at the National Research Institute of Far Seas Fisheries in Japan (NRIFSF).

Preliminary plan of work for April 2012 – March 2013

The IOTC-OFCF Joint Committee Meeting will be held in Seychelles on March, 2012. During the meeting the Project will focus on reviewing the activities undertaken during the fiscal year 2011,

proposing and preparing a work plan with budget allocation including the activities to be executed during the following fiscal year (April -March 2012).

Annex

Table 1. Summary of the activities implemented during Phases I, II and III of the IOTC-OFCF Project

Country-Fleet	Activities implemented			Fact-finding	Country report	Sampling activities	Training/ Workshop	Hardware/ Software/ Database	Historical data	Recommendations addressed
	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III							
India	Yes			Yes	Yes		Yes			No
Indonesia-FLL	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Indonesia-ART	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes			Yes
Iran	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes		No
Kenya	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Malaysia	Yes			Yes			Yes	Yes		No
Maldives	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes
Mauritius	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes
Mozambique	Yes			Yes	Yes		Yes			No
Oman	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			No
Seychelles	Yes			Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes
South Africa	Yes				Yes					Yes
Sri Lanka-G/L	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No
Sri Lanka-ART	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes		No
Tanzania	Yes			Yes.	Yes			Yes		No
Thailand-FLL	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Thailand-PSS	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Thailand-PS		Yes		Yes				Yes		Yes
Yemen		Yes		Yes,					Yes	No
Comoros		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes		No

Note: FLL: Fresh tuna longline; ART: Artisanal fishing vessel; G/L: Gillnet with longline; PSS: Small purse seine:

PS: Industrial purse seine.

Red font is used for activities implemented during Phase III of the Project, currently ongoing.

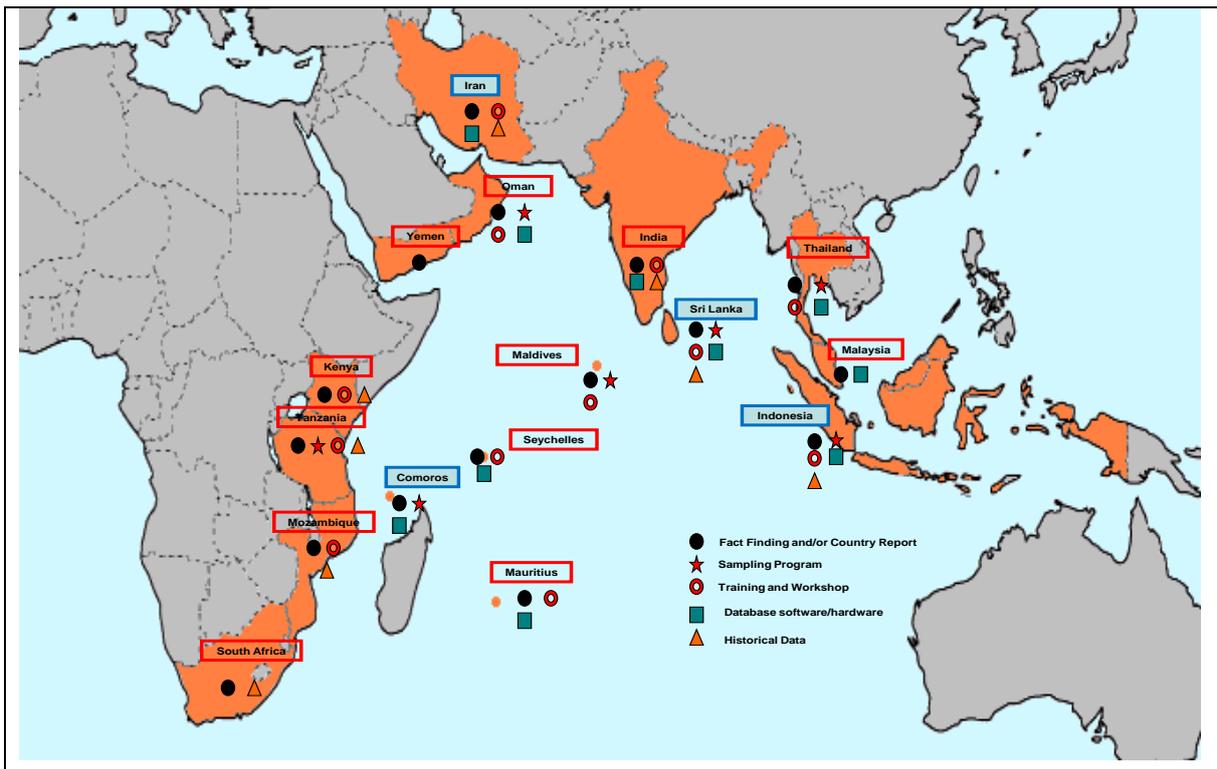


Figure 1. Activities of the IOTC-OFCF Project:Phase I-III.

Blue rectangles are used for activities implemented during Phase III of the Project, currently ongoing.