

06 February 2019

IOTC CIRCULAR 2019-08

Dear Sir/Madam

CALL FOR COMMENTS ON A PROPOSED SET OF STANDARDS FOR THE IOTC REGIONAL OBSERVER SCHEME

In 2011 the IOTC agreed to the creation of a Regional Observer Scheme (ROS) to collect verified catch data and other scientific data related to the fisheries for tuna and tuna-like species in the IOTC Area through the implementation of national programmes (refer to IOTC Resolution 11/04 On a Regional Observer Scheme).

Since 2011, a vast array of observer initiatives, with different training curricula, data collection methods and procedures have been developed across the Indian Ocean by a range of organisations. As a result, an assortment of data of varying quality are being collected and reported, with many inconsistencies and gaps, and overall a lack of standardisation in the procedures employed by national observer schemes and conformity with IOTC mandatory data requirements. The Secretariat has received several requests for accreditation or recognition of national or sub-regional data collection programmes. However, there is currently no formal mechanism in place through which to do this, or a concrete and auditable set of standards against which programmes can be assessed.

To promote the harmonisation of national observer schemes operating under the regional mandate of the ROS, a set of draft [Programme Standards and Guidelines](#) has been developed. These were developed by an independent consultant based on the existing guidance and standards, reviewed and revised by an Expert Workshop and discussed by the IOTC Working Party on Data Collection and Statistics and the IOTC Scientific Committee in 2018.

CPCs are invited to provide a review of the document prior to it being considered by the Commission. Given the standards relate to matters of fisheries science, compliance and law, CPCs are invited to engage their national specialists, as they see fit, to assist in the review.

Please send any comments to IOTC-Secretariat@fao.org by 1 May 2019.

Yours sincerely



Christopher O'Brien
Executive Secretary

Attachments:

- Programme Standards and Guidelines for the IOTC Regional Observer Scheme

Distribution

IOTC Contracting Parties: Australia, Bangladesh, China, Comoros, Eritrea, European Union, France (Territories), Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Rep of), Japan, Kenya, Rep. of Korea, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, United Rep. of Tanzania, Thailand, United Kingdom (OT), Yemen. **Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties:** Liberia, Senegal.
Intergovernmental Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations. Chairperson IOTC. Copy to: FAO Headquarters, FAO Representatives to CPCs.

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