



03 October 2019

## IOTC CIRCULAR

2019–39

Dear Sir/Madam

### REQUEST FOR OBSERVER STATUS FROM SHARKPROJECT INTERNATIONAL.

Please find attached a request letter from SHARKPROJECT International to participate as an Observer to the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission processes.

In accordance with Rule XIV of the IOTC Rules of Procedure, Contracting Parties of the Commission may wish to allow SHARKPROJECT International to participate as an Observer given their interest in the IOTC as stipulated in the attached letter. Thus, unless any objections are received within 30 days of the date of this Circular, the IOTC Secretariat will consider that approval has been granted for the Executive Secretary to issue an invitation to the potential Observer to attend IOTC meetings accordingly.

Yours sincerely

Christopher O'Brien  
Executive Secretary

#### Attachment:

- Letter from SHARKPROJECT International

#### 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.

This message has been transmitted by email only

Ms Susan Imende Ugandi,  
Chairperson of the Commission,

Indian Ocean Tuna Commission  
Le Chantier Mall (2nd floor)  
PO Box 1011  
Victoria Mahé  
Seychelles

Heusenstamm, 29.09.2019

## SHARKPROJECT International e.V.: Application for Observer Status to IOTC Meetings

Dear Ms Imende Ugandi,  
Dear Secretary of the Commission,

SHARKPROJECT International e.V. is an internationally active environmental NGO based in Germany. We are registered as a charity and our mission is the protection of our ocean for this and future generations, with a specific focus on shark conservation and the protection of biodiversity, with sharks being the top predators and therefore absolutely vital for healthy marine ecosystems.

Fishing provides an important source of protein for millions of people on our planet and seafood is essential for the livelihoods of many more people, especially in developing countries. Therefore, a sustainable use of marine resources and effective conservation of the biodiversity of marine ecosystems are challenging but mandatory tasks mankind must achieve.

However, today more than a third of all commercially fished species are already overfished and we are at risk of losing more than 30% of all known species of sharks and rays, and more than a third of all marine mammals and of the reef building corals - and all of this within the next decades because of the impacts of commercial fishing over the last 50 years.

Many rays and large pelagic sharks are already categorized as threatened by the IUCN's Red List and a growing number of species has been categorised as critically endangered or endangered while the majority of species is actually still "data deficient". And although a growing number of species has been included into the Annexes of CMS and CITES for better protection this has so far only triggered some improvements for a few of these species and only in a few regions but has so far not been effective to improve overall shark abundance in most areas, including the Indian Ocean.

Therefore, SHARKPROJECT has engaged in assessments of sustainable fisheries since 2016 and has provided input and recommendations to many assessments on how to improve fisheries' sustainability with regard to ecosystem impacts and bycatch rates, with sharks obviously being our main but not our only focus and concern.

As part of our engagement we have also been involved in the assessment of the impact of dFAD associated tuna fishing of purse seine fleets and their impact on *Carcharhinus falciformis* and *Carcharhinus longimanus*, as well as on vulnerable ecosystems. And we will continue working on these topics as more tuna fisheries are in the process of

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### VORSTAND

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VP. Denise Smolinsky  
VP. Heiner Endemann  
VP. Meik Obrock

### BANKVERBINDUNG

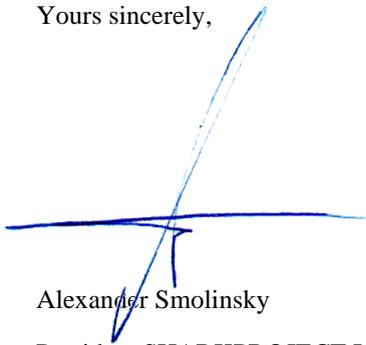
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IBAN DE47 5056 1315 0005 0555 55

certification for the use of dFADs and this has become an increasingly important topic, that needs to be addressed urgently for the Indian Ocean as well as for other oceans. Besides dFADs, also bycatch and impact on shark populations from long lining fleets and the impact of coastal fisheries on benthic shark species are areas we would like to engage in, besides combating IUU such as shark finning and illegally retained megafauna bycatch.

Therefore, we are very much interested in all efforts and developments with regard to sharks and bycatch mitigation in general and as such have a major interest in fisheries in the IOTC.

We therefore, would appreciate attending upcoming meetings of the IOTC as an observer and hereby ask for observer status at the IOTC meetings at the earliest possible time. Thank you very much for considering our application.

Yours sincerely,



Alexander Smolinsky

President SHARKPROJECT International e.V.

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