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Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement
Accord relatif aux Pêches dans le Sud de l'Océan Indien

Report of the Ninth Meeting of the Compliance Committee (CC) of the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)

Hennessy Park Hotel, Ebene, Mauritius

25–27 June 2025

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Agenda item 1 – Opening of the session

1.1 Opening statements

1. The Compliance Committee (CC) Chairperson, Mrs Meera Koonjul (Mauritius), opened the meeting at 09:00. The meeting was held at the Hennessy Park Hotel in Ebene, Mauritius.
2. The Chairperson welcomed all delegates and thanked them for their attendance, noting that this symbolized their shared commitment to the sustainable management and conservation of marine resources in the Southern Indian Ocean. She also thanked the Secretariat for their extensive efforts to prepare for the meeting. The Chairperson looked forward to constructive discussion and dialogue, and wished for a fruitful meeting.
3. The Chairperson opened the floor for delegation introductions. The list of participants is available in **Annex A**.
4. The Chairperson welcomed the Observers present at the meeting, which included Comoros as a Cooperating Non-Contracting Party (CNCP), Kenya, South Africa, the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), the Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew), and the Southern Indian Ocean Deepsea Fishers Association (SIODFA).

Agenda item 2 – Administrative arrangements

2.1 Adoption of the agenda

5. The CC reviewed the revised provisional agenda (CC-09-ADM-04).
6. The Chairperson explained that two additional papers had been received from Japan and the European Union (EU) and suggested that these be added under agenda item 14 (Any Other Business) as “14.2 Proposal for the Designation of the Comoros’ lobster fishery as a New and Exploratory Fisheries” and “14.3 Working Paper to continue the discussion on Research Cruise and Scientific Research”. The CC agreed to the suggestion.
7. Thailand noted that many of the proposals under agenda items 4.1 and 4.2 were based on the recommendations from the Scientific Committee (SC), which would be presented under agenda item 4.3. Thailand suggested moving “Recommendations from the Scientific Committee” from agenda item 4.3 to 4.1 and to adjust the other agenda item numbering accordingly. The CC agreed to the suggestion.
8. The CC incorporated the above revisions and adopted the agenda (**Annex B**).

2.2 Confirmation of meeting documents

9. The Compliance Officer, Mr Johnny Louys, explained that one information paper, CC-09-INFO-01, had been submitted late. He further explained that the paper had been submitted by Pew for information purposes and that the paper was not intended to be taken up for discussion during the meeting.
10. Pew explained that the paper provided an overview of a new self-assessment tool that it had developed to help countries evaluate their capacity to engage in RFMO compliance review processes and offered to provide further explanations to CCPs individually on the sidelines of the meeting.
11. The list of meeting documents is presented in CC-09-ADM-05-Rev[2] (**Annex C**).

2.3 Appointment of rapporteur

12. The CC agreed to appoint Mr Alexander Meyer (Urban Connections, Tokyo) as rapporteur.

Agenda item 3 – SIOFA Compliance Monitoring Scheme

3.1 Consideration of the Draft SIOFA Compliance Report (dSCR) and adoption of the Provisional SIOFA Compliance Report (pSCR)

13. The Compliance Officer presented the draft SIOFA Compliance Report (dSCR) outlined in CC-09-01. He explained that the Cook Islands and India provided their CCP Compliance Reports (CCRs) after the deadline, which was 1 May 2025. Furthermore, two CCPs did not provide any feedback on their respective section of the dSCR, which, while non-binding, does provide the Secretariat with valuable information prior to completing the dSCR. The Compliance Officer also pointed out that this year's compliance assessment was done using the new compliance template for the first time, which should have streamlined CCPs' reporting process and the Secretariat's assessment process. It also provided CCPs with the opportunity to note potential adjustments to further improve reporting, which will be considered in next year's template.
14. The CC reviewed the dSCR and assigned the compliance status and relevant follow-up actions in accordance with the provisions of Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) 11(2020) (Compliance Monitoring Scheme) as described in CC-09-01-Rev1.
15. During its review, the CC held detailed discussions on a number of matters as described below.
16. Regarding the status of Comoros' compliance with the obligations stipulated in paragraph 22 of CMM 01 (2024) and CMM 01 (2023) (Interim Management of Bottom Fishing), the CC disagreed with the preliminary proposed compliance status of "Compliant". The CC agreed to apply a status of "non-compliant", noting that although Comoros had previously been compliant with the obligation to submit a bottom fishing impact assessment (BFIA) for its bottom fishing activities, Comoros was no longer compliant with this obligation once it began new fishing activities for lobster for which it had not submitted a relevant updated BFIA within the requested timeframe specified in CMM 01. The CC further noted that Comoros did subsequently submit the BFIA for its lobster fishery in August 2024, this which was assessed during the 2nd Extraordinary Meeting of the SC on November 7, 2024, and the fishery was eventually allowed to resume in December 2024.
17. Regarding the status of Seychelles' compliance with paragraphs 1 and 7 of CMM 07 (2024) and CMM 07 (2022) (Vessel Authorisation), several CCPs noted that this matter was related to a technically complex issue regarding how to handle tuna longline vessels that operate under the jurisdiction of another regional fisheries management organisation (RFMO), namely the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), in areas that overlap with the jurisdiction of SIOFA and catch SIOFA species as bycatch. These CCPs asserted that these vessels and their operations should be governed by IOTC rules and noted that catch data-sharing cooperative arrangements are under discussion between SIOFA and the IOTC. These CCPs suggested that the status should be kept as pending. One CCP acknowledged the complexity of the matter and that discussions are ongoing and agreed to keep the status as "pending" until further discussions by the MoP, while also pointing out that compliance assessments should be made based on the underlying CMM and that even if there are practical difficulties for CCPs to implement a provision, the CC still should assess compliance with the existing requirements. This CCP noted that the other option would be to amend the applicable obligation, which has not occurred.
18. Regarding the status of the Cook Islands' compliance with paragraph 21 of CMM 10 (2023) (Monitoring), one CCP questioned the applicability of the provision to the at sea transfer in question, as the donor vessel was an oil tanker and therefore not a fishing vessel. The Compliance Officer explained that the oil tanker did constitute a fishing

vessel as defined by the Agreement, as one of the definitions of fishing is “any operation at sea in support of, or in preparation for (fishing) except for any operation in emergencies involving the health or safety of crew members or the safety of a vessel”. Furthermore, the CC agreed with the provisionally proposed compliance status of “compliant” as the report of the at sea transfer only needs to be made by either the donor vessel or the receiving vessel and that the receiving vessel, which is flagged to the Cook Islands, did make such a report according to the requirements of the CMM provisions.

19. The CC agreed with the provisionally proposed compliance status of “non-compliant” for the Cook Islands’ implementation of paragraph 33 of CMM 10 (2023) (Monitoring), while acknowledging the potential confusion regarding the applicable period being assessed. The CC recognised that the Cook Islands had submitted a report for each transshipment and at sea transfer conducted by vessels flying its flag in 2024, but that this submission would be subject to assessment in the 2026 compliance assessment process, whereas the current 2025 compliance assessment process concerns the transshipment and at sea transfer activities conducted in 2023, which the Cook Islands had not reported while submitting its CCP Compliance Report in 2024. The CC suggested that as a follow-up action, the Cook Islands could submit the report of these activities when it submits its CCR next year.
20. The CC agreed with the provisionally proposed compliance status of “non-compliant” for Comoros’ implementation of paragraphs 21, 23, 27, 28, 30, and 32 of CMM 10 (2023) (Monitoring), while recognising that Comoros had intended to provide information on its relevant domestic measures but had misunderstood the distinctions that SIOFA makes regarding at sea transshipments, at sea transfers, and at port transshipments, and welcoming Comoros’ intention to submit information on these measures next year.
21. Regarding the Cook Islands’ compliance with paragraph 12 of CMM 11 (2020) (Compliance Monitoring Scheme), the CC noted that although the Cook Islands’ initial CCR was missing some of the required information, the Cook Islands had subsequently submitted an updated CCR with the necessary information. The CC therefore agreed to change the provisional compliance status from “non-compliant” to “compliant”.
22. The Cook Islands noted that the SC had recommended that the MoP note that the SC had difficulties interpreting the current provisions of CMM 17(2024) (New and Exploratory Fisheries) that define established fisheries and new and exploratory fisheries, in the case of Mauritius’ planned bottom trawling activities (para 154, SC10 Report). The Cook Islands noted that the interpretation of these provisions would impact Mauritius’ compliance status with respect to obligations under CMM 17(2024).
23. The CC noted that the SC has requested MoP advice on the interpretation of the current provisions of CMM 17(2024) (New and Exploratory Fisheries) and the definition of established fisheries and new and exploratory fisheries. The CC noted that the MoP’s advice will inform CCPs’ final compliance status against these provisions.
24. Australia raised questions to the EU and the Secretariat regarding the EU’s compliance with paragraph 2 of CMM 12(2024) (Sharks), which states that “CCPs shall ensure that fishing vessels flying their flag do not target any deep-sea shark species listed in Annex 1 within the Agreement Area”. Australia asked the EU what information it used to determine that the EU vessel was not targeting deep-sea sharks and the Secretariat what it considered when assigning a status of “compliant”.
25. The EU acknowledged that the vessel had substantial bycatch of deep-sea shark species, including those listed in Annex 1 of CMM 12(2024) (Sharks). However, the EU stated that

it did not consider this to be a targeted fishery and that it is taking voluntary measures to reduce such incidental bycatch, including a voluntary move-on rule of 5 nm, and pilot projects to test different gear configurations to reduce shark bycatch. The EU stated that it is currently complying with all provisions of CMM 12 (2024) and that it has also tabled a proposal to amend CMM 12 to incorporate recommendations from the SC. The EU also pointed out that SIOFA has not determined any definitions regarding target or bycatch fisheries.

26. The Compliance Officer explained that when the Secretariat conducts its assessments, it relies on the information submitted by CCPs and is unable to consider catch and effort data, as these have yet to be reported by CCPs at the time of the compilation of the dSCR. He also explained that it is difficult for the Secretariat to assess compliance with this provision as SIOFA has no definition of bycatch or target fisheries.
27. Australia expressed concern that less than 90 tons of the purported targeted species of ribaldo and wreckfish were caught in 2024, while 1,245 tons of deep-sea sharks were retained in this fishery. Australia suggested that it would be difficult to treat a species that accounted for over 90% of the catch as bycatch. At the same time, Australia welcomed the actions being taken by the EU and the EU's proposal to amend CMM 12 with additional measures. Australia pointed out that it has also prepared a proposal to strengthen the measures in CMM 12(2024) and looked forward to working with the EU and other CCPs to implement the relevant recommendations from the SC. Australia also expressed understanding for the challenges encountered by the Secretariat given the lack of a SIOFA definition of target and bycatch fisheries. Australia noted that there was a request from the SC to the CC to help clarify the definition of targeting and hoped that the CC would be able to establish a clear definition that the Secretariat could apply for compliance assessment purposes going forward.
28. **The CC adopted the provisional SIOFA Compliance Report (pSCR) outlined in Annex D and agreed to forward it to the Meeting of the Parties (MoP) for its consideration, noting the pending status of the provisional compliance status of Seychelles for implementation of paragraph 1 & 7 of CMM 07 (2024) on Vessel Authorisation.**

3.2 Review of Recommendations from the Final SIOFA Compliance Report (fSCR) adopted by the 11th Meeting of the Parties

29. The Compliance Officer explained that pursuant to paragraph 5 of CMM 11(2020) (Compliance Monitoring Scheme) the CC and the MoP are required to review any other recommendations made by the MoP in the previous years' Final Compliance Reports. The Compliance Officer presented CC-09-02, which provided a review of recommendations of MoP11 on the SIOFA Final SIOFA Compliance Report (fSCR).
30. The CC reviewed and updated the status of the implementation of the recommendations from MoP11, as described in CC-09-02-Rev1.
31. **The CC recommended that the MoP note the status of the implementation of the recommendations from MoP11 outlined in CC-09-02-Rev1.**
32. The CC expressed disappointment that India had not provided further information on the implementation of its obligations in relation to paragraph 1 of CMM 05(2016) (Pelagic Driftnets and Deepwater Gillnets), paragraph 19 of CMM 06(2022) (IUU Vessel List), and paragraph 26 of CMM 08(2020) (Port Inspection) and that it was absent from the CC meeting and unable to address the CC's questions and concerns.

3.3 Informal Workshop on the SIOFA CCPs Compliance Report Template

33. The Compliance Officer presented CC-09-03, which reported on the Informal Workshop

on the SIOFA CCPs CCR Template held virtually on 4 March 2025. As recommended by CC8 and MoP11, the workshop was organised to facilitate the transition to the new CCR template. At the workshop, the Compliance Officer presented the new template structure and guidelines for completion and the Secretariat offered ongoing one-on-one consultations to assist CCPs until the submission deadline of 1 May 2025.

34. **The CC noted the outcomes of the Informal Workshop on the SIOFA CCPs Compliance Report Template.**

35. The CC thanked the Secretariat for organising and conducting the workshop. The CC encouraged the Secretariat to continue to provide one-on-one consultations to assist CCPs in completing and submitting their CCRs.

Agenda item 4 – New or Amended Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs)

4.1 Recommendations from the Scientific Committee

36. The SC Vice Chairperson, Dr Zhou Fang (China), presented a summary of the SC10 report and the recommendations from SC10 that were relevant to the CC (CC-09-17).

37. The CC discussed paragraph 154 of the SC10 Report regarding the SC's difficulties in interpreting the current provisions of CMM 17(2024) (New and Exploratory Fisheries) that define established fisheries and new and exploratory fisheries, in the case of Mauritius' planned bottom trawling activities, while recognising that this matter would be discussed further at the MoP.

38. The CC sought further clarification regarding the discussions at the SC and the impact of the suspension of fishing for an extended period of time. The Science Officer, Dr Marco Milardi, explained that the suspension of fishing for an extended period of time could reduce the effects of fishing on the target stock and the ecosystem, thus allowing for recovery, although the extent of this recovery would differ by status at the time of suspension, species, area, and gear. As for the SC's discussions, he explained that while the SC was of the view that established fisheries and new and exploratory fisheries were defined by a combination of area, fishing gear and CCP, together, some CCPs had expressed less restrictive views during the discussion.

39. **The CC noted that CCPs continued to hold different views on the interpretation of the definition of established fisheries and new and exploratory fisheries and that it would be more appropriate to discuss this matter further at the MoP.**

40. Australia noted that the definition of established fisheries and new and exploratory fisheries related not only to CMM 17(2024) but also to CMM 01(2024) (Interim Management of Bottom Fishing) and noted the need to consider the two CMMs together when discussing this matter.

41. The CC considered the SC's request in paragraph 362 of the SC10 Report that the CC help clarify/assess the definition of targeting in Article 2 of CMM 12(2024) (Sharks), in respect to paragraph 358 of the SC10 report, in line with the adopted (MoP10, para 130) definition for SIOFA use for SC planning and prioritisation.

42. Australia noted that the SC had developed a definition of targeted species to guide its work during SC8 (para 207, SC8 Report) and that both the Australian and EU proposals for amending CMM 12(2024) applied a catch composition threshold of 50% deepwater shark species for triggering a move-on rule. Australia suggested that, to give greater clarity in relation to CMM requirements around targeting, the following definition could be adopted to assist with determining compliance with these provisions: Any species that makes up over 50% of the retained catch in any one fishing operation is considered

to be a target species for that operation. Australia suggested that this definition be applied from the 2027 compliance review process.

43. The EU agreed that having a definition for a targeted fishery specific to bycatch of deep-sea sharks would be useful for compliance purposes but pointed out that applying a 50% threshold for setting a move-on rule was a different issue to setting such a threshold for defining a targeted fishery. The EU pointed out that the definition developed by the SC was for SC planning and prioritisation and that the SC did not attempt to develop a definition for use for compliance assessment or management of species. The EU cautioned against adopting definitions developed by the SC for scientific purposes and applying them for CC or MoP purposes, noting that this risked politicising the SC.
44. Australia noted the definition proposed by Australia is not the SC definition of targeting and is instead a definition designed to be used for compliance assessment purposes.
45. The Cook Islands disagreed, stating that although the SC did develop its definition for SC planning and prioritisation, the SC also considered the need to prioritise for management purposes. The Cook Islands also pointed out that the SC has given this issue much consideration at SC8 and had advised that a retained catch composition of 50% or more would be appropriate for most fisheries except for certain highly diverse fisheries, such as shallow-water trawl fisheries. The Cook Islands also pointed out that the SC has established a list of target species in Annex 1 of the SC8 report. The Cook Islands suggested that a threshold of 50% would be appropriate for longline and trawl fisheries where few other species are retained. Furthermore, the Cook Islands was of the view that if a fishery is catching more than 50% deep-sea sharks and is using gear that is typically used to target sharks, and if the sharks are retained and have economic value, it should be considered a targeted fishery.
46. The EU reiterated its position that its fishery is not targeting deep-sea sharks and stated that it acknowledges that the high level of bycatch is an issue and is therefore taking mitigation measures to reduce it. The EU also considered it unfair to single out one particular fishery, pointing out that the EU has been transparent and cooperative in sharing data from its fishery, even though it involves only one vessel, and noting that some CCPs have not been as transparent in sharing their data. The EU expressed discomfort with adopting Australia's proposed definition without knowing the implications for the CC and the MoP, as well as with excluding shallow-water trawls from the scope of application. The EU pointed out that there needs to be more comprehensive discussion of the definitions of target and bycatch species and that the SC should also consider more data from other CCPs and other fisheries when providing advice on such definitions. Furthermore, the EU noted that few other RFMOs have adopted definitions of bycatch and that in its experience, attempting to do so would require several rounds of discussions and the consideration of more formal written proposals. As a way forward, the EU suggested that the Secretariat could be tasked to review the consequences of the adoption of Australia's proposed definition on each CCP fishery, including whether it would change the declared target for any fisheries.
47. The Cook Islands reiterated its view that the SC has deliberated this issue extensively and that the SC would stand by its previous advice, which was to apply a retained catch composition threshold of 50% or more for all fisheries except those that have diverse catch species, such as shallow-water trawl fisheries.
48. Australia disagreed with the EU suggestion of tasking the Secretariat to review the application of a 50% threshold on each CCP fishery at this time and noted this discussion can continue during MoP12.

49. **The CC noted that CCPs could not reach consensus on defining targeting for compliance purposes and recommended that the MoP discuss this matter further at MoP12.**
50. Australia expressed disappointment that the CC could not agree on a definition of targeting for assessing compliance with the SIOFA CMMs, particularly paragraph 2 of CMM 12(2024) (Sharks), which continues to impact on the integrity of SIOFA's compliance assessment process.
51. In response to a question regarding why the SC had proposed more restrictive measures for Subarea 5 than Subarea 4 when a deep-sea shark stock assessment had not been conducted in either area, the Science Officer explained that while stock assessments had not been conducted specifically in these areas, risk assessments had been conducted in the SIOFA Area and trend analyses presented for these areas. Some of the factors considered in the SC recommendation were the level of fishing activity and preliminary information available on catch trends, and the SC had recommended more precautionary measures in Subarea 5 based on these.
52. One CCP sought further clarification regarding the SC's recommendation in paragraph 374 of the SC10 Report for the adoption of a skate tagging rate that is based on a level of observer coverage as high as opportunity allows, asking what further action the SC envisioned and if CCPs should specify a particular tagging rate. The Science Officer explained that the SC had been unable to agree on a specific tagging rate and had therefore recommended that CCPs tag skates at as high a rate as they are able to without having to increase their observer coverage further.
53. Regarding the recommendation in paragraph 419 of the SC10 Report that the MoP update CMM 13(2022) (Mitigation of Seabirds Bycatch) to include specifications or guidance for the mitigation of seabird bycatch from trawl vessels, Japan expressed its intention to provide further comments when discussing the proposal for amending CMM 13(2022) under agenda item 4.2.
54. China sought clarification regarding the SC's recommendation in paragraph 443–467 of the SC10 Report regarding protected area designation, aiming to clarify whether SIOFA has a clear conceptual definition of Benthic Protected Areas (BPAs) or specific designation criteria for BPAs, given that the term "BPAs" has no precedents in other RFMOs. Additionally, China sought clarification on whether BPAs are equivalent to the term "bottom fishing closures" like in other RFMOs.
55. The Cook Islands explained that the SC started developing criteria for designating BPAs in SC3, had updated them recently in the SC workshop to progress future protected area designation (WS2024-PAD), and had applied them to assess and designate the proposed BPAs. The Cook Islands also explained that fishing activities using gears that could contact the bottom would be prohibited in most of the BPAs.
56. Some CCPs expressed support for the recommendation in paragraph 542 of the SC10 Report that the MoP task the SC to develop e-monitoring standards for gear types other than pelagic longlines, using the IOTC e-monitoring standards as a basis, while recognising the need to tailor the standards to the SIOFA context.

4.2 Proposals for amendments to Conservation and Management Measures

57. France Territories presented CC-09-19, which proposed amendments to CMM 03(2016) (Data Confidentiality) to implement modifications related to the VMS implementation process and to address longer-term considerations on data confidentiality within SIOFA bodies. The proposed amendments aimed to:
 - a. add catch-and-effort and length-frequency data grouped by sub-area by year as

- public domain data;
 - b. modify the qualification “confidential” to “restricted” in article 2(d);
 - c. add a confidentiality categorisation for “economic information”; and
 - d. introduce necessary modifications related to VMS implementation.
58. Based on comments from CCPs, France Territories updated the proposal (CC-09-19-Rev2), including:
- a. adding a paragraph concerning the handling of VMS data, as endorsed by the VMS WG;
 - b. adding editorial corrections to 3c bis) to align the language with that endorsed by the VMS WG;
 - c. specifying economic data, which was added based on the discussions at MoP9 (MoP9 Report, para 127) and SC8 (SC8 Report, para 101); and
 - d. adding reference to the SIOFA standard operating procedure for data use and data requests.
59. **The CC noted that there was general support for the proposal (Annex E) but that CCPs needed time for further consideration, particularly regarding the treatment of economic data. The CC recommended that the MoP discuss the proposal further at MoP12.**
60. The Cook Islands presented CC-09-20-Rev1, a joint proposal by the Cook Islands and France Territories to amend CMM 13(2022) (Mitigation of Seabirds Bycatch). The proposal was aimed at implementing recommendations made by the SC (SC10 Report, para 419) for more effective seabird bycatch mitigation in SIOFA fisheries in light of global concerns about seabird population declines and the latest scientific advice, including the addition of mitigation requirements for trawl vessels. It also sought to remove redundant text from the current measure.
61. Japan and Thailand recognised the importance of seabird mitigation measures but did not think there was sufficient reason for the proposal to apply such measures to trawl vessels as the incidental seabird mortalities from trawl fisheries in the SIOFA Area are rare.
62. Thailand also pointed out that paragraph 1 of the CMM already addressed the geographical scope of application of this measure as south of 25°S, so it may not be necessary to repeatedly address this point in each paragraph for each fishing gear. However, if the intention is to emphasise the measure applies to gears in this specific area, Thailand suggested that the area of application, south of the 25°S, be specified in the paragraph regarding trawlers (paragraph 8) as well.
63. The Cook Islands pointed out that the SC noted the impact of trawl fisheries on seabird mortalities and the convincing evidence presented to the SC by the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) and France Territories. The Cook Islands further noted that all its vessels, including trawl vessels, are required to implement seabird bycatch mitigation measures, and that in its experience, these measures have significantly reduced vessel interactions with seabirds.
64. The Cook Islands presented an updated proposal (CC-09-20-Rev2), explaining that it was able to incorporate some comments from CCPs, but needed more time to consider others.
65. **The CC agreed that the proposal (Annex F) requires further discussion and recommended that the MoP develop the proposal further at MoP12.**
66. Australia presented CC-09-23, which proposed amendments to CMM 15(2024) (Management of Demersal Stocks) to implement recommendations from SC10 and to

reduce the operational burden on vessel operators and the Secretariat in relation to notification requirements in Williams Ridge. The proposed amendments aim to:

- a. establish the South Indian Ridge (SIR) management area and the SC recommended catch limit;
 - b. include an interim catch sharing arrangement similar to current practice in Del Cano;
 - c. recognise the ability to transfer catch limits as is currently practiced for Del Cano;
 - d. update the catch limit for Del Cano;
 - e. update the requirement to report catch from Del Cano and SIR to weekly instead of monthly;
 - f. move the VMS requirement in Del Cano to the “general provisions” for toothfish;
 - g. make minor changes to the toothfish reporting forms in the relevant Annexes; and
 - h. trigger daily notifications only when two or more vessels have notified their intent to fish in Williams Ridge.
67. The Cook Islands noted that the EU had proposed amendments to the same CMM and that some of the amendments in the EU’s proposal also concerned toothfish. The Cook Islands expressed its preference for Australia’s proposal as a starting point and encouraged Australia and the EU to work together to combine the toothfish-related elements of their two proposals.
68. **The CC agreed that the proposal (Annex G) requires further discussion and recommended that the MoP develop the proposal further at MoP12.**
69. Australia presented CC-09-25, which proposed amendments to CMM 12(2024) (Sharks) to implement recommendations made by the SC (SC10 Report, paras 347, 358 and 360). The proposed amendments aimed to:
- a. update the list of “high risk” and “of concern” deep sea shark species in Annex 1;
 - b. limit the catch of deepwater sharks associated with the bottom longline fishery in Subareas 2, 4 and 5 by introducing precautionary measures in Subareas 4 and 5 and retaining the bycatch limit in Subarea 2; and
 - c. prohibit wire trace on bottom longlines until results from the proposed wire trace trial are analysed by the SC.
70. The Cook Islands noted that the EU had proposed amendments to the same CMM and indicated its preference for Australia’s proposal as a starting point, which it considered a closer reflection of the SC’s recommendations.
71. **The CC agreed that the proposal (Annex H) requires further discussion and recommended that the MoP develop the proposal further at MoP12.**
72. Seychelles presented CC-09-26, which proposed amendments to CMM 07(2024) (Vessel Authorisation) to address incidental catches of SIOFA fishery resources in line with SC advice (SC8 Report, para 207) and enhance administrative consistency. The proposed amendments aimed to:
- a. allow fishing vessels operating under a different RFMO’s authorisation to catch, retain, tranship or land SIOFA fishery resources provided such resources constitute less than 50% of total catch and the capture is incidental and fully documented; and
 - b. require CCPs to notify the Executive Secretary within 15 days of any changes to vessel data to ensure uniform interpretation of the reporting process.
73. Several CCPs acknowledged that Seychelles and other CCPs face the technically complex issue of how to address incidental catches of SIOFA fishery resources by vessels operating under the jurisdiction of the IOTC in waters that overlap with the SIOFA Area,

and that the proposal from Seychelles seeks to remedy this issue. However, these CCPs disagreed with the proposed mechanism, expressing concern about the impacts of allowing vessels operating under the jurisdiction of other RFMOs to catch and retain SIOFA species.

74. **The CC agreed that the proposal (Annex I) requires further discussion and recommended that the MoP develop the proposal further at MoP12.**
75. The EU presented CC-09-27, which proposed amendments to CMM 07(2024) (Vessel Authorisation) based on discussions by the Working Group to Support the Establishment of the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement Vessel Monitoring System (VMS WG; (VMSWG06 Report, para 19). The proposed amendment aimed to establish procedures for handling vessels with incomplete Automatic Location Communicator (ALC) details.
76. The CC reviewed and endorsed the proposed amendment.
77. **The CC agreed to forward the proposal (Annex J) to the MoP for its consideration, with a view to adopting a revised CMM at MoP12.**
78. The EU presented CC-09-28, which proposed amendments to CMM 12(2024) (Sharks) to incorporate recommendations from SC10 (SC10 Report, paras 347 and 358). The proposed amendments aimed to:
 - a. update the list of “high risk” and “of concern” deep sea shark species in Annex 1; and
 - b. introduce additional mitigation measures to reduce shark mortality.
79. **The CC agreed that the proposal (Annex K) requires further discussion and recommended that the MoP develop the proposal further at MoP12.**
80. Australia and the EU expressed their willingness to work together and with other interested CCPs to further develop their proposed amendments to CMM 12(2024) (Sharks).
81. Japan expressed concern about the proposed measure to prohibit the bottom longline operations in Subarea 5 in the case where no stock assessment of deep-sea sharks has been conducted.
82. The EU presented CC-09-29, which proposed amendments to CMM 16(2023) (Vessel Monitoring System) based on discussions by the VMS WG (VMSWG06 Report, para 24). The proposed amendments aimed to refine technical specifications and operational procedures for the SIOFA VMS.
83. The CC reviewed and endorsed the proposed amendments.
84. **The CC agreed to forward the proposal (Annex L) to the MoP for its consideration, with a view to adopting a revised CMM at MoP12.**
85. The EU presented CC-09-30, which proposed amendments to CMM 15(2024) (Management of Demersal Stocks) to incorporate recommendations from SC10 regarding the management of toothfish, orange roughy, and alfonsino. The proposed amendments aimed to:
 - a. establish the South Indian Ridge management area with a total allowable catch (TAC) for toothfish and a mechanism for allocating said TAC (SC10 Report, paras 264 and 270);
 - b. increase the TAC for Del Cano Rise (SC10 Report, para 267);
 - c. amend the management system for Williams Ridge by retaining the catch limit while removing effort-based management (SC10 Report, para 248);
 - d. establish a catch limit for orange roughy (SC10 Report, para 224); and
 - e. establish a catch limit for alfonsino (MoP10 Report, para 79).
86. Australia expressed concern about the proposed toothfish catch-sharing arrangements

in the South Indian Ridge as well as the proposed removal of the grid cell-based management measures without first seeking the SC's advice on an appropriate catch limit for Williams Ridge.

87. The Cook Islands and Mauritius expressed concern regarding the proposed establishment of catch limits for orange roughy and alfonsino without first establishing an allocation, which would result in an Olympic fishery.
88. The EU explained that as CMM 15(2024) covers all demersal stocks, not only toothfish, and that the SC has previously also provided advice on precautionary limits for orange roughy and alfonsino, the EU considered it more appropriate to establish limits for all three species. The EU further explained that as it does not operate orange roughy and alfonsino fisheries, it had hoped that those CCPs with such fisheries would be able to develop the relevant allocation mechanisms.
89. France Territories expressed general support for the proposal, particularly the establishment of a TAC for toothfish. However, it did not support the proposal to amend the allocation mechanism based on proportionality in Del Cano Rise. France Territories also expressed its preference to have a share of the catch in South Indian Ridge.
90. **The CC agreed that the proposal (Annex M) requires further discussion and recommended that the MoP develop the proposal further at MoP12.**
91. The EU presented CC-09-31, which proposed amendments to CMM 17(2024) (New and Exploratory Fisheries) to specify the area of China's established squid jigging fishery in the Agreement Area based on information submitted by China on its historic squid fishery (SC10 Report, paras 311-313).
92. China expressed general support for the proposal but wished to seek further amendments that would reflect the SC advice that "squid are mobile and ... should not be considered to be restricted to a specific area" (SC10 Report, para 309).
93. **The CC agreed that the proposal (Annex N) requires further discussion and recommended that the MoP develop the proposal further at MoP12.**

4.3 Proposals for new Conservation and Management Measures

94. The Cook Islands presented CC-09-21-Rev1, a joint proposal by Australia, the Cook Islands, and Japan, which proposed a new CMM for Benthic Protection in the Agreement Area. The proposal aimed to enact the recommendations from the workshop to progress future protected area designation (WS2024-PAD) and SC10 (SC10 Report, paras 443, 445, 447, 449, 451, 453, 455, 457, 459, 461, 463 and 465) to establish 12 BPAs within the Agreement Area, comprising nine areas closed to all bottom fishing and three areas closed to bottom fishing but with allowances for bottom longlining.
95. China expressed concerns regarding the form and procedure of the proposal. From the perspective of preventing bottom fishing from adversely impacting vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs), China held that the proposed new CMM on BPAs demonstrated no substantive difference from the existing Interim Bottom Fishing CMM, as both aim to achieve the protection of relevant areas by prohibiting bottom fisheries. Therefore, China preferred to incorporate the seven newly added areas into the existing CMM 01(2024) (Interim Bottom Fishing).
96. The Cook Islands explained that the SC felt that it would be more prudent to have a standalone bottom protection measure and to remove the duplicative elements from CMM 01(2024) if the new CMM is adopted.
97. The CC suggested some additional editorial amendments, including changing the name of the CMM to "CMM for Benthic Protected Areas in the Agreement Area".
98. Mauritius expressed its reservation and disagreement on one of the nine proposed

BPA, which is within the Mid-Indian Ridge, which overlaps with the maritime zone that is the subject of a formal submission by Mauritius to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) in accordance with Article 76 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) by the Prime Minister's Office.

99. Taking into consideration Mauritius' reservation, the Cook Islands proposed two potential ways forward, either amending the boundary of the Mid-Indian Ridge BPA to avoid it overlapping with the concerned Mauritian extended maritime zone or adding a footnote to the proposal clarifying that the establishment of the Mid-Indian Ridge BPA under the CMM shall not prejudice any CCP's rights in respect to territorial claims submitted in accordance with international law.
100. The Cook Islands presented an updated proposal based on CCPs' comments (CC-09-21-Rev2).
101. **The CC agreed that the proposal (Annex O) requires further discussion and recommended that the MoP develop the proposal further at MoP12.**
102. The Cook Islands presented CC-09-22, which proposed a new CMM for a SIOFA allocation framework based on the direction of the MoP and the discussions of the SC. The proposed interim allocation framework would establish allocation criteria and include stipulations related to catch management measures such as allocation transfers and the management of overages, underages and carryovers. The framework would apply to all established SIOFA fisheries on an interim basis until harvest strategies with allocation mechanisms are adopted.
103. The EU noted that several other criteria could be incorporated in a TAC allocation framework, such as a CCP's contribution to research and science. France Territories supported the inclusion of a CCP's contribution to research and science as a criterion.
104. The EU expressed concern about having a framework that would be reviewed and revised on a frequent basis and preferred one that would provide fishing operators with more stability.
105. China sought clarification on three points: first, whether the 5% allocation ratio has a scientific rationale, and second, since the proposed CMM is supposed to apply to all fisheries, how to ensure that it is applied scientifically to fisheries that have not undergone resource assessments. Lastly, as each species has its own characteristics, China suggested that the allocation framework should consider and treat each species with separate allocation arrangements.
106. The Cook Islands explained that it proposed the 5% figure with the aim of making participation by new entrants economically viable and noted that a similar approach has been taken by other RFMOs.
107. Several CCPs noted that the framework would not apply to fisheries for which an allocation is already adopted.
108. Based on CCPs' comments, the Cook Islands updated its proposal (CC-09-22-Rev1), including:
 - a. removing "interim" from the title;
 - b. adding a reference to allocation agreement within the functions of RFMOs;
 - c. clarifying that the MoP shall apply the allocation framework to SIOFA fisheries on a stock or species basis;
 - d. deleting a paragraph that some CCPs felt made the CMM's application unclear;
 - e. clarifying that historical catch under the SIOFA framework may differ between species based on when SIOFA adopted CMMs;
 - f. including reference to coastal States;

- g. including reference to contributions to science; and
 - h. deleting the review clause.
109. Some CCPs questioned the rationale for setting the reference period for defining historical catch as 2013 onwards, pointing out that CCPs' historical fishing footprints include catch from prior years.
 110. The Cook Islands explained it proposed 2013 as the start date as this marked the entry into force of the Agreement and that this was the date from which SIOFA has verified data.
 111. **The CC agreed that the proposal (Annex P) requires further discussion and recommended that the MoP develop the proposal further at MoP12.**

4.4 Discussion on the application of current CMMs

112. No papers were submitted under this agenda item.

Agenda item 5 – Listing of IUU Vessels

113. The Compliance Officer presented CC-09-04, which provided information relevant to the listing of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing vessels, including the draft IUU vessel list, a request for the removal of a vessel from the SIOFA IUU Vessel List and relevant supporting documents, proposed modifications to the current SIOFA IUU vessel list, and vessels proposed for cross-listing from the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) IUU Vessel List.

5.1 Draft IUU Vessel List

114. **The CC noted that no vessels had been proposed for inclusion on the draft SIOFA IUU vessel list.**

5.2 Current SIOFA IUU Vessel List

115. The CC considered the current SIOFA IUU vessels list, which includes vessels listed by SIOFA (part 1 of the SIOFA IUU Vessel List), as well as vessels cross-listed from other RFMOs and CCAMLR (part 2 of the SIOFA IUU Vessel List).
116. South Africa explained its request for the removal of the vessel El Shaddai from the current SIOFA IUU vessels list. South Africa explained that its Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (Department) conducted a comprehensive investigation of the alleged transgressions and presented the findings to the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP). The DPP decided not to prosecute the vessel owner, Braxton Security Services (Braxton), because the permit conditions attached to Braxton's Patagonian toothfish permit did not clearly delineate where on the high seas Braxton was permitted to fish. South Africa has taken follow-up actions including a comprehensive set of permit conditions as part of the high seas fishing licences, reviewing Patagonian toothfish permit conditions to clearly stipulating applicable international measures such as those under CCAMLR and SIOFA, updating the Department's VMS to include RFMO boundaries, and engaging with parties associated with the El Shaddai to clearly explain the nature of the contraventions and the seriousness of the conduct, and committing to amending South Africa's Marine Living Resources Act. South Africa also informed the CC that, based on these follow-up actions, CCAMLR removed the El Shaddai from its IUU vessel list by consensus and the IOTC removed the El Shaddai from its IUU vessel list, but the IOTC is keeping the matter on the IOTC CoC agenda for next year's meeting (pending the SIOFA outcome). South Africa requested that SIOFA consider removing El Shaddai from its IUU Vessel List given that South Africa has adopted measures that will ensure that the vessel complies with all

relevant and applicable SIOFA CMMs, will continue to assume effectively its responsibilities as regards the monitoring and control of the vessel's movements in the SIOFA Area, has taken effective action in that although the prosecution did not result in a successful conviction, Braxton's Patagonian toothfish right was effectively suspended for around four years by the Department's refusal to issue a permit to Braxton, resulting in a substantial loss of income that is far more significant than any fine that could have been imposed from a criminal prosecution.

117. In response to a request for further clarification, South Africa confirmed that for the foreseeable future, it has no intention to allow the El Shaddai or other vessels to conduct fishing in the SIOFA and that this is stipulated in the high seas fishing conditions in the fishing licenses it issues.
118. The EU was not convinced that all the necessary conditions for delisting the El Shaddai, as stipulated in CMM 06(2024) (IUU Vessel List), had been met, specifically paragraphs 28c and 28d, which require the flag State to take effective action in response to the IUU fishing, including prosecution and imposition of sanctions of adequate severity, or alternatively a change in vessel ownership. The EU recognised that South Africa has made some improvements, such as adding certain conditions to fishing licenses, but emphasised the importance of satisfying the conditions stipulated in CMM 06(2024) and encouraged South Africa to engage in effective enforcement of its legislation and impose sanctions of adequate severity for the serious IUU infringements by the vessel. Given that SIOFA CMM 6(2024) paragraphs 28c and d cover clear conditions for the de-listing, taking a decision to de-list a vessel when those conditions have not been met would amount to not respecting SIOFA CMMs. That should be a matter for the MoP and not for the CC.
119. South Africa explained that it had exhausted all available options under its legal framework and could not take further punitive measures. South Africa explained that it has instead updated its legal framework to close any loopholes going forward.
120. Japan agreed with the EU that South Africa had not imposed sanctions on the vessel, but recognised that under South Africa's framework prosecution action is outside the control of the fisheries authority and that the fisheries authority has exerted its utmost efforts to take appropriate follow-up actions. Japan also noted that, while the ownership of the vessel has not changed, under the FAO Compliance Agreement, if the fishing authority of the flag State has given firm affirmation that the vessel will not engage in any further IUU fishing activities, it can be authorised to fish. In addition, Japan noted that while the SIOFA decision to list or delist the vessel should be independent of any CCAMLR decision, it should be acknowledged that the original decision to include the vessel on the SIOFA IUU Vessel List was influenced by the decision by CCAMLR to do the same and that CCAMLR has now agreed to remove the vessel from its IUU vessel list. For the reason stated above, Japan has no objection to deleting the vessel from the current SIOFA IUU vessels list.
121. The CC considered the request for the removal of the vessel El Shaddai from the current SIOFA IUU vessels list but could not reach a consensus.
122. **The CC noted that CCPs could not reach a consensus decision on the request for the removal of the vessel El Shaddai from the current SIOFA IUU vessels list and recommended that the MoP discuss this matter further at MoP12.**
123. **The CC noted the proposed modifications to the current SIOFA IUU vessels list to reflect the most recent changes from other RFMOs and to correct typographical errors, as shown in CC-09-04, so that the most recent changes from other RFMOs are reflected**

therein, and recommended that the MoP adopt these modifications.

124. Japan noted that one of the vessels on the current SIOFA IUU vessels list, WANG TONG (now renamed to AN TON), was flagged to Comoros and asked for more details about the background to how the vessel was allowed to fly the Comoros flag.
125. Comoros responded that it did not have the information immediately at hand and would follow up in due course.
126. The EU expressed concern that Comoros was not ready to answer a question about potentially allowing an IUU vessel to fly its flag and questioned Comoros' ability to exercise its authority as a flag State.
127. The CC discussed this matter further when considering Comoros' application for renewal of its CNCP status under agenda item 9.
128. Regarding the addition of vessels from the IOTC IUU Vessel List for cross-listing on the SIOFA IUU Vessel List, the Compliance Officer explained that the normal procedure would be for the Secretariat to circulate the final IUU Vessel List adopted by other RFMOs for the purpose of amending the SIOFA IUU Vessel List during the intersessional period in accordance with Rule 13 of the Rules of Procedure. However, given the timing of the adoption of IOTC's final IUU Vessel List, which was immediately prior to CC9, the Secretariat wished to present this information during CC9 and thanked the CC for its indulgence. Going forward, the Secretariat will in principle continue to follow the normal procedure.
129. **The CC noted the addition of three new vessels on the IOTC IUU Vessel List, and recommended that the MoP include these vessels on the SIOFA IUU Vessel List as cross-listed vessels.**
130. **The CC did not make any recommendations to the MoP to remove any vessel from the current SIOFA IUU vessel list.**

Agenda item 6 – Monitoring, Control and Surveillance

6.1 Port inspection reports (CMM 08 (2020) Port Inspection)

131. The Compliance Officer presented a summary of port inspection reports received by the Secretariat pursuant to CMM 08(2020) (Port Inspection) as described in CC-09-05-Rev2. A total of 64 inspection reports were submitted to the Secretariat in 2024, with 2 from Australia, 22 from the EU, 12 from Mauritius, and 28 from South Africa. One report received from a CCP was submitted after the 30-day deadline, and the CCP did not notify the Secretariat of the delayed report prior to the end of the mandated deadline. For one other report, the Secretariat could not confirm whether it had been submitted to the competent authority, as required under paragraph 24 of CMM 11 (2020) (Compliance Monitoring Scheme). None of the port inspection reports identified potential compliance issues.
132. The Compliance Officer also explained that, as requested by CC8, the Secretariat sought to broaden the range of data sources used in the analysis of potential landings or transshipments of SIOFA species at ports under the jurisdiction of non-Cooperating non-Contracting Parties (non-CCPs), including data held by external organisations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The Secretariat undertook consultations with the FAO as well as several relevant non-governmental organisations (NGOs) but was not able to obtain suitable or verifiable port landing data during the reporting period and was therefore not able to complete the requested analysis. However, the Compliance Officer has been able to engage in informal consultations with some non-CCPs, notably Mozambique, during recent missions and

encouraged them to provide such information to the SIOFA Secretariat on a voluntary basis.

133. **The CC noted the summary of port inspection reports provided in CC-09-05-Rev2.**

6.2 Sighting of Vessels without Nationality (CMM 04(2016) Vessels without Nationality) and vessels flagged to Non-CCPs (CMM 09 (2022) Control)

134. The Compliance Officer presented a summary of reports of sightings of vessels without nationality (CMM 04(2016) (Vessels without Nationality)) and vessels flagged to non-CCPs (CMM 09(2022) (Control)) as described in CC-09-05-Rev2. No reports of sightings of vessels without nationality or vessels flagged to non-CCPs in the Agreement Area were provided to the Secretariat in the 2024.

135. **The CC noted the summary of reports of sightings of vessels without nationality and vessels flagged to non-CCPs provided in CC-09-05-Rev2.**

6.3 Review of Catches of Portuguese dogfish in Subarea 2 (CMM 12(2024) Sharks)

136. The Compliance Officer presented a review of catches of Portuguese dogfish in Subarea 2 as described in CC-09-05-Rev2. For 2024, the Secretariat received 12 monthly reports of catches of Portuguese dogfish from one CCP, which indicated catches of Portuguese dogfish for the months of January and February only. The total recorded catch for 2024 was 319.502 t, which amounts to 41.62% of the established catch limit of 767.6 t. Of this amount, 151.244 t was reported for January and 168.258 t for February. All reports but one were submitted within the provided deadline. The Secretariat was of the view that there were no compliance issues with the monthly report submitted after the deadline, as the concerned report reported null catches, and the CMM imposes reporting requirements only in instances where there were actual catches of Portuguese dogfish.

137. **The CC noted the review of catches of Portuguese dogfish in Subarea 2 provided in CC-09-05-Rev2.**

6.4 Register of Authorised Vessels (CMM 07(2022) Vessel Authorisation)

138. The Data Officer, Mr Pierre Périès, presented an update on the status of the SIOFA Record of Authorized Vessels (RAV). As of the end of 2024, 106 vessels were registered on the SIOFA RAV, as described in CC-09-05-Rev2.

139. **The CC noted the summary of the status of the SIOFA RAV provided in CC-09-05-Rev2.**

6.5 Entry/Exit reports (CMM 10(2019) Monitoring)

140. The Data Officer presented the entry/exit notifications summary report, as described in CC-09-05-Rev2. A total of 2404 entry-exit notifications were received at the Secretariat from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2025. 68 notifications were provided late, after the 24-hour period of delay.

141. **The CC noted the entry/exit notifications summary report provided in CC-09-05-Rev2.**

6.6 At sea Transfer and Transshipment reports (CMM 10(2019) Monitoring)

142. The Data Officer presented a report of CCPs' at sea transfers and transshipments, as described in CC-09-05-Rev2. For 2024, the Secretariat received notifications for 388 at sea transfers from the Cook Islands, 12 at sea transshipments from Seychelles, 446 at sea transshipments and 209 at sea transfers from Chinese Taipei, and 6 at sea transshipments from Thailand.

143. **The CC noted the report of CCPs' at sea transfers and transshipments provided in CC-09-05-Rev2.**

Agenda item 7 – Operationalisation of the SIOFA VMS

7.1 Update of Workplan & Progress Toward Operationalization of SIOFA VMS

144. The Compliance Officer presented CC-09-06, which provided an update on the progress made by the VMS WG since MoP11. The VMS WG held three intersessional meetings, during which it produced an options paper for hosting the SIOFA VMS, drafted terms of reference for procurement, and suggested potential amendments to CMMs and SIOFA SSPs to support the entry into operation of the SIOFA VMS. The VMS WG also prepared an updated work plan with the implementation status of planned activities and necessary new activities. The Compliance Officer invited the CC to review the updated work plan and provide guidance as appropriate.
145. The CC noted that reviewing paragraph 15 of CMM 10(2023) ([Monitoring](#)) is one of the future works of the VMS WG. Therefore, the timeline for potential amendment of CMMs should be extended to July 2026, after MoP13.
146. The CC reviewed the updated work plan and made some further modifications to the timelines, as described in CC-09-06-Rev1 (**Annex Q**).
147. **The CC noted the progress made by the VMS WG towards the operationalization of the SIOFA VMS.**
148. **The CC recommended that the MoP adopt the updated VMS WG Work Plan (Annex Q) and recommended that the MoP task the VMS WG to continue its work.**

7.2. Review of the Hosting Options for the SIOFA VMS

149. The Compliance Officer presented CC-09-07, which provided the outcomes of the VMS WG's assessment of potential hosting options for the SIOFA VMS and an Options Paper for the Hosting of the SIOFA Vessel Monitoring System prepared based on the VMS WG's discussions. The VMS WG considered two possible hosting options: Software as a Product (SaaS) and Software as a Service (SaaS), along with their operational and technical considerations, indicative costs and resource implications, and practices by other RFMOs. The key difference between the options is that SaaS requires the Secretariat to host the necessary infrastructure to operate the VMS, while SaaS involves the VMS being hosted online by the service provider. The VMS WG noted that a SaaS system may have substantially higher operational costs and resource requirements compared to a SaaS system while offering minimum additional benefit. The VMS WG expressed general support for a SaaS option over a SaaS option.
150. **The CC recommended that the MoP opt for a SaaS-deployed SIOFA VMS.**

7.3. Review of the Draft Terms of Reference for the Provision of a Vessel Monitoring System for the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement

151. The Compliance Officer presented CC-09-08, which provided draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for procuring a SaaS-based VMS. The draft ToR was prepared by the Secretariat and VMS WG Chairperson, based on several rounds of review by the VMS WG. This version includes some additional comments and additions that were proposed by CCPs following the conclusion of the 6th VMS WG meeting and have not yet been reviewed by the VMS WG.
152. The CC reviewed the draft ToR for procuring a SaaS-based VMS and added some technical and editorial amendments (CC-09-08-Rev1).
153. **The CC recommended that the MoP adopt the draft ToR for procuring a SaaS-based VMS (Annex R) and that the MoP task the Secretariat to launch the procurement process of the SIOFA VMS on the basis of the approved ToR.**

7.4 Proposed Amendments to SIOFA CMMs and the Standards, Specifications and Procedures (SSPs) for the SIOFA VMS

154. The Compliance Officer presented CC-09-10, which provided potential amendments to CMMs and the SIOFA SSPs to support the entry into operation of the SIOFA VMS as discussed by the VMS WG. The potential amendments are as follows:
 - a. CMM 03(2016) (Data Confidentiality) – Annex 1
 - i. Addition of a paragraph that classifies VMS data as “Confidential Data”
 - ii. Additional provisions that would require CCPs and the Secretariat to take necessary data protection measures
 - b. CMM 07(2024) (Vessel Registration) – Annex 2
 - i. Inclusion of a footnote to paragraph 2 r. to align with proposed changes in the SIOFA VMS SSPs
 - c. CMM 16(2023) (Vessel Monitoring System) – Annex 3
 - i. Additional provision in paragraph 1 f) to classify “VMS Provision Reports” as “Confidential Data”
 - ii. Inclusion of some core provisions from the SIOFA VMS SSPs including annexes
 - iii. Inclusion of new provisions to require the treatment of data in accordance with CMM 02(2023) (Data Standards) and CMM 03(2016) (Data Confidentiality)
 - iv. Additional provisions to require annual reporting and monitoring of the Service Provider’s performance
 - v. Minor editorial changes
 - d. SIOFA VMS SSPs – Annex 4
 - i. Sets a deadline for CCPs to submit ALC details to the Secretariat to allow the commencement of the testing phase of the SIOFA VMS
 - ii. Classification of ALC Details as “Confidential Data”
 - iii. Added clarity to paragraph 20
 - iv. Minor editorial changes to the SSPs and Annex 2 thereof
155. **The CC noted the potential amendments to CMM 03(2016) (Data Confidentiality), CMM 07(2024) (Vessel Registration), CMM 16(2023) (Vessel Monitoring System) to support the entry into operation of the SIOFA VMS as discussed by the VMS WG, and noted that these amendments have been taken up in CCP proposals that are discussed under agenda item 4.2.**
156. **The CC endorsed the potential amendments to the SIOFA SSPs to support the entry into operation of the SIOFA VMS as discussed by the VMS WG (Annex S).**
157. The CC thanked Ms Fiona Harford for her hard work and leadership as the VMS WG Chairperson and the Secretariat for its diligent efforts to support the work to establish and enter the SIOFA VMS into operation.

Agenda item 8 – Data access and dissemination

8.1. Review of Data Required to be collected by CCPs and reported by the Secretariat

158. The Data Officer presented CC-09-09, which described the data required to be collected by CCPs, the data required to be reported to the Secretariat, and the differences between the two types of data, as tasked by MoP11. The Data Officer explained that these two types of data are mostly the same. Regarding Catch and Effort and Observer data, he noted that separating the data collection and the data submission requirements in CMM 02(2023) (Data Standards) would improve flexibility and efficiency when the SC provides recommendations on data to be collected and how the collection should be undertaken. Furthermore, if the data collection requirements were set outside the CMM, there would not be a need to amend and adopt a new CMM every time the data collection needs change. In addition, a few data items are requested to be collected and

submitted by two different CMMs but on a different periodicity. Regarding MCS data, the requirements are well defined and the implementation of a SIOFA VMS would support the Agreement Area entry-exit and MCS report data submission.

- 159. **The CC recommended that the MoP note that the data to be collected and the data to be reported are usually the same.**
- 160. **The CC recommended that the MoP continue to keep the data collection requirements and the data submission requirements that are set in CMM 02 (2023) in said CMM, rather than setting the data collection requirements outside the CMM.**

8.2. Review of draft Terms of Reference for a consultancy for the development of the SIOFA Information System Security Policy (ISSP)

- 161. The Data Officer presented CC-09-11, which provided a draft ToR for a consultancy to develop the SIOFA Information System Security Policy (ISSP).
- 162. Some CCPs expressed concern about the potential budgetary implications of the proposed consultancy. One CCP believed that the funding for the consultancy had already been included in the draft SIOFA budget, but this issue still needed to be reviewed and confirmed at MoP12.
- 163. **The CC reviewed the draft ToR for a consultancy to develop the SIOFA ISSP (Annex T) and recommended it for adoption by the MoP, subject to further discussion by the MoP about the allocation of funding for this work.**

Agenda item 9 – Review of the status of Cooperating Non Contracting Parties (CNCPs)

- 164. The CC acknowledged that Comoros had written to the Secretariat on 25 April 2025 to apply to retain its CNCP status (CC-09-12).
- 165. The CC requested the Comoros to provide further follow-up on the earlier question from Japan regarding Comoros allowing the vessel WANG TONG (now renamed AN TON) to fly the Comoros flag. Comoros explained that the vessel is a refrigerated cargo vessel and had undergone two changes of ownership before coming under the ownership of Aries Navigation Ltd in July 2024. At that time the vessel did not have any registration as the previous registration under the flag of Cameroon was cancelled on July 26, 2023. Under Aries Navigation Ltd, the vessel applied for a Comorian provisional registration to bring the vessel from Taizhou, China to Chittagong Breakyard in Bangladesh to be scrapped. Comoros issued such a provisional registration to the vessel, valid for only a single journey with no cargo or passengers, from July 5, 2024 to October 1, 2024. The vessel departed from Taizhou, China on July 15, 2024 and arrived at Chittagong, Bangladesh on August 5, 2024, where it was scrapped. Comoros circulated the supporting documentation, namely the provisional registration and record of the scrapping of the vessel, to the CC participants.
- 166. In response to a query from the EU, Comoros confirmed that it has lowered the VME bycatch threshold applied by its vessel operating in the SIOFA Area to one that is more in line with the thresholds applied by other CCPs, as had been recommended by the EU, and that the vessel and the onboard observers are applying said threshold.
- 167. **The Compliance Committee recommended that the MoP determines that Comoros qualifies to retain its CNCP status.**
- 168. In response to a question from the CC, Comoros confirmed its intention to eventually apply to become a Contracting Party of SIOFA.
- 169. The CC acknowledged that India had written to the Secretariat on 25 April 2025 to apply to retain its CNCP status (CC-09-13).

170. The CC reiterated its disappointment that India had not provided follow-up information regarding its implementation of the SIOFA CMMs, despite previously expressing its commitment to doing so. The CC also noted with concern that India was once again not present at the meeting, nor had it responded to feedback from the Secretariat in the compliance assessment process, and that India had yet to demonstrate its full engagement with the CC and the SIOFA compliance assessment process.
171. **The CC noted that, given the absence of India at CC9, it is unable to make a recommendation on the renewal of India's status as a CNCP, and agreed to defer this discussion to the MoP.**

Agenda item 10 – Implementation of Article 13 of the Agreement

172. On behalf of the Executive Secretary, who was unable to attend the meeting due to unforeseen circumstances, the Compliance Officer presented CC-09-14-Rev1, which provided an overview of the existing mechanisms to provide support to developing States under article 13 of the Agreement, focusing on the needs of the developing States bordering SIOFA, the cooperation between the parties, and the provision of financial assistance to eligible countries. SIOFA appears to be compliant with the Agreement. However, the Agreement has no clear definition of “developing States”. The Secretariat used the World Bank's classification on some CCPs, but this could disadvantage small island States that might soon achieve high-income status while remaining dependent on the level of the previous supports that it would no longer be eligible to receive. To avoid this, it could be appropriate to introduce vulnerability indices that make it possible to identify the needs of any CCP more precisely and to draw up an action plan with each of them progressively.
173. **The CC noted the work done by the Secretariat to develop a paper that outlines the existing mechanisms to provide support to developing States and other relevant information relating to Article 13, as tasked by MoP11.**
174. **The CC noted the need to establish a clear definition of “developing States” in one of SIOFA's official documents as a reference for future capacity building improvements and enlargement of SIOFA membership.**
175. The EU pointed out that, while it may have been a pragmatic choice to use the World Bank's classification of a developing State, the particular context of this RFMO and fisheries management in the Southern Indian Ocean require further reflection. For these reasons, it would be important to distinguish between long-distance developing States and developing States that are adjacent to the SIOFA Area.
176. The Cook Islands pointed out the need for broader references to developing States, and specifically recognition for Small Island Developing States and developing States in transition.
177. **The CC recommended that the MoP establish an intersessional working group to progress work to develop a definition of “developing States”, with the outcomes to be presented at MoP13.**

Agenda item 11 – Capacity Building

178. The Compliance Officer presented CC-09-15, a paper that was developed by the Secretariat following the request from the MoP to identify capacity building needs of developing States and provide options for addressing these needs. The paper was prepared through consultation with CCPs, who identified a range of needs spanning science, data, general capacity, compliance, and needs straddling data/compliance and data/science. The paper presented potential options for addressing these needs and the

Compliance Officer invited the CC to comment on capacity building needs/mechanisms related to compliance and straddling themes.

179. The CC reviewed the potential options for addressing capacity needs and provided further comments (CC-09-15-Rev1).
180. **The CC noted the work done by the Secretariat in preparing the paper (CC-09-15-Rev1) on options for facilitating and addressing the capacity building needs of CCP developing States as requested by the MoP.**
181. **The CC recommended that the MoP consider the CC's input on potential options for addressing capacity needs related to compliance and straddling themes (Annex U).**
182. **The CC recommended that as the next step, the MoP should consider the implications on the SIOFA budget of the various capacity building options and conduct a prioritisation of the potential capacity building options.**
183. **The CC recommended that, when conducting the prioritisation, the MoP should take into consideration:**
 - a. **the views of all CCPs, not only those that are developing States;**
 - b. **distinguishing between capacity building activities that would be specific to one CCP and those that would benefit multiple CCPs or SIOFA as a whole;**
 - c. **which activities could be conducted virtually; and**
 - d. **any overlaps between CCPs' capacity building needs and existing capacity building programmes.**

Agenda item 12 – The SIOFA Performance Review

184. The Compliance Officer presented CC-09-16-Rev1, which provided a summary of the status of the implementation of the recommendations proposed by the SIOFA Performance Review Panel in 2023 and adopted by MoP10. The summary was updated at MoP11, with input from the SC and the CC. Further updates have been proposed by SC10. The Compliance Officer highlighted the recommendations relevant to the CC and invited the CC to provide further comments as appropriate.
185. The CC reviewed the implementation plan and added further comments. The updated implementation plan is attached as CC-09-16-Rev2 (**Annex V**).
186. **The CC recommended that the MoP note the CC's input and the current status of the plan adopted at MoP11 for the implementation of the SIOFA Performance Review Panel recommendations as detailed in Annex V.**

Agenda item 13 – Election of a Chair and Vice Chair for the Compliance Committee

187. The CC noted that the Chairperson, Mrs Meera Koonjul (Mauritius), and the Vice Chairperson, Mr Patrick Sachs (Australia), will have completed the first year of their two-year terms at the end of the CC9 meeting and that both intend to continue to serve in their positions in the coming year.

Agenda item 14 – Any other business

14.1 EU SWIOP Project

188. The Compliance Officer presented CC-09-18, which proposed EU support for SIOFA under the new Sustainable Western Indian Ocean Programme (SWIOP) and sought agreement for the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Expertise France, the implementing partner for the "Support to RFMOs (IOTC & SIOFA)" component of SWIOP. The project would include activities contributing to the general strengthening of SIOFA and designing capacity-building activities that would benefit the

entire membership of SIOFA and would support specific CCPs, namely Mauritius, Seychelles and the Comoros. Due to the project timing, the MoU would need to be signed intersessionally by the end of 2025.

189. The EU provided some additional background information regarding SWIOP, emphasising that it would not significantly add to the Secretariat's workload, nor require any additional allocation to the SIOFA budget.
190. In response to a question for clarification, the EU explained that in the case of direct in-country activities, SWIOP could only support ones conducted in Mauritius, Seychelles, or Comoros, but that SWIOP could also support other activities that support SIOFA as a whole, provided they are not in-country activities in other CCPs' countries.
191. **The CC noted the proposed EU Support.**
192. **The CC recommended that the MoP agree to the participation of SIOFA in the SWIOP Project and task the Secretariat to sign the proposed MoU between SIOFA and Expertise France on its behalf.**

14.2 Proposal for the Designation of the Comoros' lobster fishery as a New and Exploratory Fisheries

193. The CC recognised that it did not consider FOPs submitted under CMM 17(2024) as it is required to do under paragraph 10 of CMM 17(2024). The CC requested the MoP to consider Comoros' FOP and any implications in accordance with CMM 17(2024) ([New and Exploratory Fisheries](#)) paragraph 10.
194. Japan presented CC-09-24, which proposed a process through which the authorisation of the Comoros lobster fishery could be considered. Japan noted that the Comoros lobster fishery has been examined through MoP11, an extraordinary SC meeting (SC-EXTRA2) and the Intersessional decision 2024-II but that the status of the fishery has not yet been designated. Japan recommended designating the fishery as a new and exploratory fishery, establishing interim monitoring measures until, in accordance with CMM 17(2024) (New and Exploratory Fisheries), the formal approval thereon as a new and exploratory fishery has been made, in order for the Comoros to properly implement the requirements stipulated in SIOFA CIRCULAR n° 2024-40.
195. The Cook Islands noted the importance of the proposal and suggested further improvements including specification of the TAC and the total allowable effort (TAE), specification of data monitoring and reporting requirements, and some editorial refinements.
196. Comoros expressed general support for the proposal, pointing out potential technical difficulties in conducting daily effort reporting.
197. The EU indicated that if the Comoros lobster fishery is to be designated as a new and exploratory fishery and receive interim authorisation, Comoros would need to update its BFIA and ensure that the current voluntary VME bycatch threshold becomes a mandatory one.
198. Japan welcomed the feedback and expressed its intention to develop the proposal further.
199. **The CC noted that there was general support for the proposal (Annex W) but that further refinement of the details was required. The CC recommended that the MoP further develop the proposal at MoP12.**

14.3 Working Paper to continue the discussion on Research Cruise and Scientific Research

200. The EU presented CC-09-32, a paper to facilitate continued discussions on developing a framework for research cruises and scientific research in the SIOFA Area. The paper built on a previous EU proposal from MoP6 (2019) and considered SC discussions and

recommendations from SC6 to SC10. The EU recognised that further development of the working paper is required, invited initial comments from CCPs, and welcomed further engagement from CCPs at the meetings of the MoP and its subsidiary bodies, as well as intersessionally, towards the adoption of a new CMM at MoP13.

201. The Cook Islands noted the need for SIOFA to develop a framework for research cruises and scientific research in the SIOFA Area and considered the proposal to be a good basis for working towards the adoption of a CMM at MoP13.
202. China noted the potential need for CCPs to be able to submit a research cruise plan directly to the MoP, rather than the SC, pointing out that if it were to conduct a research cruise in the second half of the calendar year, having to wait until the SC meeting could result in significant delays. China also noted the potential need for research quotas for certain species. In addition, China reminded the CC that the SC plans to hold a workshop on research cruises later this year.
203. Thailand wished to seek more clarity on whether raw or analysed data are to be submitted from research cruises, noting the lengthiness of the 9-month period allowed for submission.
204. Chinese Taipei suggested that further consideration should be given to whether a fishing vessel could be used as a research vessel, whether research catch could be landed and sold, and whether research vessels commissioned by a CCP needed to be registered on the SIOFA RAV and comply with the provisions of all SIOFA CMMs.
205. The EU thanked CCPs for their feedback and expressed its intention to continue to work with them to develop the working paper further.

Agenda item 15 – Adoption of the CC report

206. The report of the 9th meeting of the SIOFA CC was adopted.

Agenda item 16 – Close of the meeting

207. The CC thanked the Chairperson for her excellent leadership.
208. The CC also thanked the rapporteur, the Secretariat and the interpreters for organising and conducting the CC meeting.
209. The Chairperson thanked the meeting participants and all support staff for their cooperation.
210. The Chairperson closed the meeting at 3:30 p.m., 27 June 2025.