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

Report of the 8th Meeting of
the Working Group to
Support the Establishment of the
Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement
Vessel Monitoring System
(VMSWG-08)

Virtual

27 November 2025

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Agenda item 1 – Opening of Session

1. The Chair, Ms Fiona Harford (European Union (EU)), opened the 8th Meeting of the Working Group (WG) to Support the Establishment of the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement Vessel Monitoring System (SIOFA VMS; VMSWG-08) and welcomed the participants.
2. The list of meeting participants is included in Annex A.

Agenda item 2 – Administrative Arrangements

a. Adoption of Agenda

3. The agenda was adopted (Annex B).

b. Meeting Documents

4. The Chair outlined the list of meeting documents as presented in VMSWG-08-ADM-02 (Annex C).

c. Appointment of rapporteurs

5. The VMS WG agreed to appoint Mr Alexander Meyer (Urban Connections, Tokyo) as rapporteur.

Agenda item 3 – Consideration of the use of the SIOFA VMS for the submission of entry and exit notifications

6. The Compliance Officer, Mr Johnny Louys, presented a paper exploring the feasibility of automating entry and exit notifications within the SIOFA Area using the forthcoming SIOFA VMS (VMSWG-08-01). It reviewed current reporting obligations under Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) 10(2023) (Monitoring) and assessed the extent to which VMS-based transmissions could satisfy these requirements, including possible technical pathways and associated policy, operational, and data-related considerations.
7. The Compliance Officer confirmed that the paper had incorporated information gained from his communications with the NPFC Secretariat, which is at a similar phase of implementing entry and exit notifications using VMS, and through the Secretariat's consultations with other RFMOs and other experts on the matter.
8. The VMS WG expressed general support for using the SIOFA VMS to automate entry and exit notifications, noting that this would reduce the administrative burden for CCPs and the Secretariat of transmitting and processing entry and exit notifications.
9. The VMS WG noted that the current wording of paragraph 15 of CMM 10 (2023) (Monitoring) may be reasonably interpreted as sufficiently broad to allow the use of VMS for transmitting entry and exit notifications, but acknowledged that the explicit inclusion of reference to "VMS" would provide clarity and reassurance to CCPs that automated transmissions generated through VMS are formally recognised as an acceptable means of fulfilling entry and exit notification obligations.
10. The VMS WG noted that paragraph 15 and Annex I of CMM 10(2023) stipulate the information required to be included in entry and exit notifications as follows: vessel name, vessel flag CCP, IMO number, registration number, radio call sign, entry or exit, latitude, longitude, date, time, activity in the Agreement Area, and observer on board.
11. The VMS WG noted that VMS position reports would automatically include the time, date, latitude and longitude (as well as the vessel's unique vessel identifier, speed, and course), but that most Automatic Location Communicators (ALCs) do not automatically transmit vessel name, vessel flag CCP, IMO number, registration number, and radio call sign. However, this information could be added by the flag CCP's fisheries monitoring centre (FMC), in an automated manner, in the case that vessels transmit their VMS position

- reports to the SIOFA VMS via their flag FMC.
12. Regarding the requirement to indicate whether the notification is of an entry or an exit, the VMS WG noted that this could be determined based on the positions of the vessel in the VMS position reports immediately after entry or before exit and that this process could potentially be automated.
 13. The VMS WG noted that it would be unfeasible or technically difficult to report activity in the Agreement Area and observer on board via the SIOFA VMS. CCPs were generally of the view that these two items could be removed from the list of required information or made optional. Regarding the 'observer on board' reporting, it was suggested that this could be a requirement only in cases when there is an observer on board, which would reduce the frequency of reporting.
 14. The VMS WG discussed the potential need to increase the frequency of VMS position reporting if the VMS is used for entry and exit notification to provide more precise position information. The current required frequency is once every two hours, which could, in some cases, result in the reporting of a position that is 20–30 nm away from the actual point of entry or exit on the boundary of the SIOFA Area. The VMS WG noted that a two-hour frequency would satisfy the requirement to provide notifications within 24 hours of each entry or exit.
 15. Some CCPs suggested that paragraph 15 of CMM 10(2023) might become redundant and could therefore be deleted, and/or that a new paragraph on entry/exit notification could be added to CMM 16(2025) (VMS). Other CCPs acknowledged the potential need to review paragraph 15 of CMM 10(2023) but considered it necessary to retain the stipulation that attributes responsibility over entry and exit notifications to the flag CCP.
 16. The Compliance Officer suggested that if the MoP agreed to allow entry and exit notification through the SIOFA VMS, it would be prudent to conduct tests to ensure adequate technical performance. He suggested that the appropriate timing to conduct such tests would be after the completion of the SIOFA VMS pilot phase.
 17. The VMS WG requested the Secretariat to prepare a revised version of VMSWG-08-01 and agreed to hold further discussions at its next meeting.

Agenda item 4 – Update on the ongoing procurement of the SIOFA VMS

18. The Compliance Officer provided an update on the ongoing procurement of the SIOFA VMS. The tender process was initiated after the conclusion of the MoP12. In parallel, an evaluation panel was constituted, including members nominated from three CCPs. The call for bids closed at the end of October and the evaluation panel has been evaluating the bids received. The evaluation panel has completed the technical evaluation and is due to begin evaluation of the financial components soon. Overall, good progress is being made in accordance with the planned timeline. The winning bid is expected to be announced to all official contact points by the 1 December 2025 deadline. This will also be reported to the VMS WG.
19. The VMS WG welcomed the progress being made in the procurement process for the SIOFA VMS and the active involvement of CCPs. The VMS WG looked forward to hearing the final outcome of the process.

Agenda item 5 – Update on preparations for the SIOFA Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) Pilot Phase

20. The Compliance Officer provided an update on preparations for the SIOFA VMS pilot phase. Following VMSWG-07, the Secretariat sent out a circular calling for the participation of CCPs in the pilot phase. Nine CCPs have responded to the call. Eight of the respondents are committed to participating in the pilot phase, with six committing all their active

vessels in the SIOFA Area. The Secretariat had also reminded CCPs that had not submitted their ALC details to do so before the deadline of 31 December 2025. These details have been received from most CCPs and the Secretariat intends to send another reminder to the remaining CCPs shortly after this meeting. In addition, the Secretariat had requested CCPs to inform the Secretariat whether they intend to have their vessels report directly to the SIOFA VMS or via their FMC. Most CCPs have responded to the request.

21. The VMS WG welcomed the good progress being made and looked forward to receiving a written progress report at its next meeting.

Agenda item 6 – Close of Meeting

22. The VMS WG agreed to tentatively schedule its next meeting for early February 2026.
23. The meeting was closed at 8:30 a.m. UTC, 27 November 2025.
24. The report was adopted via correspondence on 26 December 2025.

Annex A – List of meeting participants

Delegation	First name	Last name	Title	Position	Organisation	Email
VMS WG Chairperson	Harford	Fiona	Ms	VMS WG Chairperson	SIOFA	fiona.harford@ec.europa.eu
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Annex B – Agenda of the 8th Meeting of the SIOFA Vessel Monitoring System Working Group - SIOFA VMS WG08

- 1) Opening of Session
- 2) Administrative Arrangements
 - a) Adoption of Agenda
 - b) Meeting Documents
 - c) Appointment of rapporteurs
- 3) Consideration of the use of the SIOFA VMS for the submission of entry and exit notifications
- 4) Update on the ongoing procurement of the SIOFA VMS
- 5) Update on preparations for the SIOFA Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) Pilot Phase
- 6) Close of Meeting

Annex C – VMSWG-08-ADM-02-List of meeting documents

VMSWG-08-ADM-02



List of Meeting Documents

Code	Document Title	Agenda Item
<i>Administration and Meeting organisation</i>		
VMSWG-08-ADM-01	Provisional Agenda	2. a.
VMSWG-08-ADM-02	List of Meeting Documents (This)	2. b.
VMSWG-08-ADM-03	Registration Template - VMSWG-08	N/A
<i>Working Papers</i>		
VMSWG-08-01	Consideration of the use of the SIOFA VMS for the submission of entry and exit notifications	3