

MoP-07-27

7th Meeting of the Parties of the South Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement
(MoP7)
17-20 November 2020 (online)

The SIOFA-FIRMS Partnership

Relates to agenda item: 12.4

Working paper Info paper

Delegation of FAO – FIRMS Secretariat

Abstract

FIRMS – Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System is an information sharing partnership to facilitate the monitoring of stocks status and fisheries among 17 intergovernmental organizations / 22 RFBs.

FIRMS aims to facilitate access to global high-quality information on the status and trends of marine resources and fisheries for decision makers and other relevant stakeholders to develop effective fisheries policies and management plans.

Following a process initiated at the Fourth Meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC4) in March 2019, and the mandate given by the SIOFA Meeting of the Parties in July 2019 (MoP6), the SIOFA-FIRMS Partnership Arrangement was signed by the SIOFA Secretary and by the Director of the FAO Fisheries Division on behalf of the FIRMS partners, on the 21st of August 2020.

This working paper provides a brief overview of FIRMS, including how SIOFA can utilize FIRMS in pursuit of its sustainability and SDG14 agenda. It also gives some directions to encourage the SIOFA Members to collaborate with their Secretariat for its first data contribution on stocks and fisheries, as described in the Partnership Arrangement.

About FIRMS

FIRMS <http://firms.fao.org> is an information sharing partnership to facilitate the monitoring of stocks status and fisheries among 17 intergovernmental organizations / 22 RFBs.

FIRMS provides access to a wide range of high-quality information on the global monitoring and management of fishery marine resources. Its monitoring is based on inventories of stocks and fisheries, including identification of single marine resources/stocks and indicators of Stock State/total catch/landings.

Potential benefits and opportunities the FIRMS partnership can offer to its partners

At national level: FIRMS supports the need for easy access to high quality information for the development/enhancement of fisheries policies and management plans at national and regional levels. Such high quality is achieved by formalizing, collating, and standardizing information, and disseminating it through a variety of FIRMS data services (e.g. map viewer, analytical tools, fact sheets, status summaries). **In the context of SIOFA, FIRMS could disseminate the inventories of fisheries that are included in the FAO publications on world deep seas fisheries, with SIOFA ensuring regular updates to this inventory.**

At regional level, the FIRMS monitoring system ensures: i) **dissemination of relevant SIOFA's information on the state of deep seas fisheries and resources in SIOFA's competence area**, and ii) proper visibility of SIOFA's regional information as part of the broader landscape of other deep seas RFMOs. Being part of FIRMS contributes to best practices among RFB agencies (as stipulated by the RSN - Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network). To date CCAMLR, GFCM, NAFO, NEAFC, SEAFO, and SPRFMO are FIRMS members relating to high seas deep seas matters.

At global level: FIRMS ensures national and regional visibility at global level, and thus enabling uptake in the global policy agenda of the global stock status monitoring including the promotion of sustainability of high seas and deep seas fisheries in collaboration with other deep-sea RFMOs. An example is on the traceability of fishery products and SDGs: thanks to the Global Record of Stocks and Fisheries (GRSF) placed under the FIRMS governance umbrella since 2019, FIRMS is now in a position to **publish unique identifiers of stocks and fisheries contributed by its partners, which can be used in certification schemes to trace back the best scientific evidence on the fishery status**; as well, FIRMS together with the complementary FAO Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems database **can support SDG14 with internet based evidence of stocks status, and estimation of areas under Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECM).**

About the SIOFA – FIRMS Partnership

The SIOFA-FIRMS Partnership Arrangement was signed by the SIOFA Secretary Mr Thierry Clot and by the Director of the FAO Fisheries Division Mr Manuel Barange on the 21st of August 2020.

The Partnership Arrangement is made of two sections, the standard Arrangement (see template at <http://www.fao.org/3/ca7313en/ca7313en.pdf>) signed by FAO (on behalf of FIRMS Partners) and the applicant Partner, and two Annexes with 1) the list of the current FIRMS Partners on the date of

signature by the two Parties, and 2) the "Outline and detailed arrangements on the nature of information and the conditions under which it is made available under the partnership arrangement".

The SIOFA-FIRMS Annex 2 includes the list of species reported by SIOFA (see Table 1) for which summaries of stocks and fisheries status and trends will be submitted to FIRMS for being published in the FIRMS website as SIOFA marine resources and fisheries fact sheets.

Table 1. List of Species reported by SIOFA.

Common name	FAO code	Scientific name
Pelagic armourhead	EDR	<i>Pseudopentaceros richardsoni</i>
Patagonian toothfish	TOP	<i>Dissostichus eleginoides</i>
Oreos	APO	<i>Neocyttus rhomboidalis</i> <i>Pseudocyttus maculatus</i>
Orange roughy	ORY	<i>Hoplostethus atlanticus</i>
Dogfish	CYO	<i>Centroscymnus coelolepis</i>
Bluenose Warehou	BWA	<i>Hyperoglyphe antarctica</i>
Alfonsino	BXD	<i>Beryx splendens</i>

References

FIRMS website <http://firms.fao.org>

SIOFA-MoP6 Report http://apsoi.org/sites/default/files/documents/meetings/MoP6-Report_FINAL.pdf

SIOFA-MoP6 meeting document on FIRMS

<http://apsoi.org/sites/default/files/documents/meetings/MoP6-Doc10%20Rev1%20SIOFA-FIRMS%20Partnership.pdf>

SIOFA-SC5 Report

<https://www.apsoi.org/sites/default/files/documents/meetings/MOP-07-18%20Report%20of%20the%205th%20Scientific%20Committee.pdf>

SIOFA-SC4 Report

<http://apsoi.org/sites/default/files/documents/meetings/Report%20of%20the%20Fourth%20Meeti ng%20of%20the%20SIOFA%20Scientific%20Committee.pdf>

SIOFA-SC4 meeting document on FIRMS

<http://apsoi.org/sites/default/files/documents/meetings/SC-04-11%20SIOFA-FAO-FIRMS-Partnership.pdf>

Recommendations

1] The meeting is requested to note the potential benefits of making use of FIRMS and to provide guidance as to where priorities should go;

2] It is proposed to develop the SIOFA marine resources inventory based on the list of species (Table 1) for the SIOFA competence area, and to populate fact sheets with stock status information based on bibliographic sources as per guidance of MoP7;

3] Regarding the Fisheries domain, it is proposed to develop the SIOFA fisheries inventories and fact sheets starting from the main fisheries operating in the SIOFA area as indicated in the SIOFA SC5 report (see Table 2), including with the necessary updates from SIOFA Members:

Table 2. SIOFA fisheries (list produced from SIOFA SC5 report

<https://www.apsoi.org/sites/default/files/documents/meetings/MOP-07-18%20Report%20of%20the%205th%20Scientific%20Committee.pdf>)

Key species	Gear	Participants (reported in national reports between 2000 and 2019)	SIOFA Sub-area
Patagonian toothfish	Demersal longline Traps	eu-spain, france (territories), japan, korea	3b, 7
Orange roughy Demersal trawl		Australia, Cook Islands, China (2000-02)	Associated with seafloor features
Alfonsino	Midwater trawl	Australia, Cook Islands, Japan, Korea	Associated with seafloor features
Sauries and scads	Demersal trawl, Traps	Thailand	8, Saya de Malha Bank
Shallow-water (<200m) snappers, emperors and groupers	Demersal longline Hook and line Demersal trawl Traps	EU-France, Mauritius (?) Thailand, Comoros	8, Saya de Malha Bank
Deeper water snappers, lutjanids, Hapuku	Demersal longline, Dropline	Australia China EU	
Deepwater sharks – Portuguese dogfish	Demersal longline	EU-Spain	
Mackerel and Brama spp	Purse seine with lights	China	

