

The Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties  
01-05 July 2019

Pearle Beach Resort & Spa conference centre, Flic en Flac, Mauritius

MoP6-INFO-08

Cooperation with the Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission  
(SWIOFC)

*Relates to agenda item: 14.1*

Proposal ☐ Working Document ☐ Information Paper ☒ Other Document ☐

## Delegation of [SWIOFC]

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### Abstract

Collaboration between SWIOFC and SIOFA was discussed at recent meetings of both organizations. At the last SWIOFC Session, the SIOFA Executive Secretary proposed three main areas of possible collaboration (i.e. Saya de Malha, IUU, SIOFA's CMM).

SWIOFC is willing to collaborate with SIOFA and the three proposals are briefly addressed in the paper. For the Saya de Malha bank, a formal request should be put forward by the two Member Countries involved; for the fight against IUU SWIOFC would support a possible participation of SIOFA in the SADC MCSCC Centre that is going to be established; and SWIOFC could promote application of SIOFA's CMM if a specific proposal on how this should be done is received.

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The Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC) and the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) are two adjacent Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs) in the Southwest Indian Ocean. SWIOFC area of competence includes waters within the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of its 12 Members States while SIOFA mandate covers Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) excluding tuna species but extending also to the Southeast Indian Ocean. SIOFA has regulatory powers to adopt conservation and management measures that are binding on Contracting Parties while SWIOFC, established in 2005 under Article VI of the FAO Constitution, is an advisory RFB.

Collaboration between SWIOFC and SIOFA was discussed at recent meetings of both organizations. A Concept Note for a possible common project was presented at the 5<sup>th</sup> SIOFA Meeting of the Parties, 25-29 June 2018 Phuket, Thailand. At the 9<sup>th</sup> SWIOFC Session, Cape Town, South Africa, 9-12 October 2018, the SIOFA Executive Secretary proposed the following three main areas for a SWIOFC and SIOFA possible collaboration:

1. Research on the transboundary demersal fishery resources of the Saya de Malha bank fisheries;
2. Activities aimed at fighting IUU fishing activities;
3. Projects to promote the application of SIOFA Conservation and Management Measures.

The Commission requested the SWIOFC Secretariat to participate in future SIOFA meetings to follow up on the above proposals.

### **1. Research on the transboundary demersal fishery resources of the Saya de Malha bank fisheries**

Saya de Malha is a transboundary area, encompassing the EEZs of two SWIOFC Member Countries (i.e. Mauritius and Seychelles) and with an areas beyond national jurisdiction of SIOFA competence. Mauritius and Seychelles have already an agreement (Joint Management Area (JMA)) to manage the area but it excludes the water column and the living organisms above the shelf and extends beyond the EEZs of the respective two coastal States.

Research is needed to assess the status of the living resources in the area and determine an appropriate common management strategy. Provided that a formal request is received by the two Member Countries involved and the availability of funds, SWIOFC would be pleased to be engaged in a joint research programme with SIOFA on the status of the living resources in the Saya de Malha bank.

### **2. Activities aimed at fighting IUU fishing activities**

For the time being, SWIOFC has not developed specific activities to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fisheries. However, as an FAO RFBs, it supports the implementation of the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA). At 1<sup>st</sup> June 2019, 9 out of 12 SWIOFC Member are Parties to the Agreement. National Strategy and Action Plan for compliance with the PSMA are under development in some SWIOFC Member Countries.

In the SWIOFC region, work is under way for the establishment of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Fisheries Monitoring Control and Surveillance Coordination Centre (MCSCC). In the meantime that the Charter establishing the SADC MCSCC is signed at least by two thirds of the SADC Member States, an Interim Project management Unit (IPMU) is being set up in Maputo, Mozambique. Collaboration between the FISH-I Africa project and the Stop Illegal Fishing (SIF) NGO, that have been very active in the fight against IUU in the Southwest Indian Ocean, and the MCSCC was approved by SADC Ministers.

SWIOFC is expected to be a partner of SADC in the MCSCC and its Secretariat will be hosted in the MCSCC premises when they are completed. Once MCSCC is more established, SIOFA may consider a possible participation in the Centre, that SWIOFC would support with the MCSCC Secretariat, although it should be verified if the MCSCC equipment would be able to monitor and control also the SIOFA area of competence that it is very vast and distant from the coast of mainland Africa.

### 3. Projects to promote the application of SIOFA Conservation and Management Measures

Following specific proposals from SIOFA on how SWIOFC could promote the application of SIOFA Conservation and Management Measures, the SWIOFC Secretariat would be pleased to present them at its next Session, that will take place 1-3 October 2019 in Maldives.