

SC-04-11

4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) Scientific  
Committee  
25-29 March 2019, Yokohama, Japan

SIOFA-FIRMS Partnership

*Please note that National Reports and SC Working Group reports shall be classified as working papers*

*Relates to agenda item: 10.2*

Working paper  Info paper

Delegation of FIRMS Secretariat

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## Abstract

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### 1. Background

#### 1.1. About FIRMS

Since 2004, the Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS, <http://firms.fao.org>) draws together a unified partnership of 14 international organizations and 19 regional fishery bodies (RFBs) aiming to provide access to a wide range of high-quality information on the global monitoring and management of fishery marine resources.

On January 2019, the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Commission of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO) approved the Partnership Arrangement with the FIRMS Partnership, the signature is in progress and eventually it will be the 15<sup>th</sup> FIRMS Partner.

The backbone information of FIRMS consists of Excel based Marine Resource and Fishery inventories where information provided by the partners is organized in a database and published in the form of Fact sheets, under two domains:

- The biological domain (see example on Orange roughy): <http://firms.fao.org/firms/resource/13377/en>
- The Fisheries domain (see example on the Northeast Atlantic Mackerel fisheries) <http://firms.fao.org/firms/fishery/485/en>

This system provides the data owner with tools to ensure controlled dissemination of high quality and updated information. These Fact sheets can be accessed through dedicated search interfaces and through the recently developed “Stocks and Fisheries map viewer” (<http://firms.fao.org/firms/stocks-fisheries-map-viewer>).

FIRMS only disseminates public data, always acknowledging the provenance and ownership, and its content can be re-used by the partners.

#### 1.2. 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 these FAO publications on world deep seas fisheries<sup>1</sup>.

At regional level, the FIRMS monitoring system ensures: i) dissemination of relevant SIOFA’s information on the state of deep seas fisheries and resources, 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

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<sup>1</sup> FIRMS inventories based on FAO publications: 1) FAO. Review of the state of world marine Fishery resources. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No. 569. Rome, FAO. 2011. 334 pp.; 2) Bensch, A.; Gianni, M.; Gréboval, D.; Sanders, J.S.; Hjort, A. Worldwide review of bottom fisheries in the high seas. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper. No. 522, Rev.1. Rome, FAO. 2009. 145p.

Secretariats Network). To date CCAMLR, GFCM, NAFO, NEAFC, SEAFO, and soon SPRFMO are FIRMS members relating to high seas deep seas matters.

At global level: FIRMS ensure 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, traceability of fishery products, SDGs; as well as access to national, regional and global programs and project opportunities. FIRMS and the complementary FAO Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems database together contribute to the broader “Fisheries and Aquaculture knowledge base”<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. Cost associated with joining FIRMS

The costs for the system are mostly borne by FAO. There are two options to join FIRMS:

### 2.1. FIRMS “Partnership Arrangement”<sup>3</sup>:

The Partnership Arrangement is made of two sections:

- The standard Arrangement signed by FAO (on behalf of FIRMS Secretariat) and the applicant Partner, and
- Two Annexes:
  - Annex 1: Current FIRMS Partners on the date of signature by the two Parties, and
  - Annex 2: Outline and detailed arrangements on the nature of information and the conditions under which it is made available under the partnership arrangement. Find, as example, the Annex 2 of NAFO:  
[http://www.fao.org/fishery/docs/DOCUMENT/FIGIS\\_FIRMS/2013/2iNAFOe.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fishery/docs/DOCUMENT/FIGIS_FIRMS/2013/2iNAFOe.pdf)

Each Partner submits the agreed information in the formats required and covers the travel to FIRMS Steering Committee (FSC) meetings. Withdrawal from the Arrangement is possible at any time with three months’ notice.

### 2.2. “FIRMS Collaborative Arrangement”:

The Collaborative Arrangement aims at a more flexible collaboration with focus on content provision but without the right to vote within FIRMS. Thus, the ability for SIOFA to influence FIRMS development, policies and related global standards under this arrangement are much reduced.

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## Recommendations

1. The SIOFA Scientific Committee is invited to recommend whether SIOFA joins the FIRMS (as a Partnership Arrangement or as a Collaborative Arrangement).

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<sup>2</sup> The Fishery and Aquaculture knowledge base is a public or access-restricted pool of information available as a coherent package of knowledge for easy access by the fisheries and aquaculture community. RSN/2016/10 Our Fishery and Aquaculture knowledge base - A community approach to collective knowledge  
<http://www.fao.org/fi/static-media/MeetingDocuments/RSN/sixth/10e.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.fao.org/fishery/docs/DOCUMENT/FIGIS\\_FIRMS/Partnership\\_Arrangement/FIRMS\\_Partnership\\_Arrangement.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fishery/docs/DOCUMENT/FIGIS_FIRMS/Partnership_Arrangement/FIRMS_Partnership_Arrangement.pdf)