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

**Report of the 5th Meeting of
the Working Group to
Support the Establishment of the
Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement
Vessel Monitoring System
(VMSWG-05)**

Virtual

13 March 2025

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Agenda item 1 – Opening of Session

1. The Chair, Ms Fiona Harford (European Union (EU)), opened the 5th Meeting of the Working Group (WG) to Support the Establishment of the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement Vessel Monitoring System (SIOFA VMS; VMSWG-05) 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 Compliance Officer, Mr. Johnny Louys, outlined the list of meeting documents as presented in VMSWG-05-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 – Review of the Revised Options Paper for the Hosting of the SIOFA Vessel Monitoring System

6. The Chair and the Compliance Officer presented the revised options paper for the hosting of the SIOFA VMS (VMSWG-05-01). The paper was based on the options paper presented at VMSWG-04 (VMSWG-04-01) and had been revised based on the discussions at VMSWG-04 to indicate the VMS WG's preference for a Software as a Service (SaaS) option; include the number of active vessels on the SIOFA Record of Authorised Vessels and the number of active hours by those vessels in the SIOFA Area; and include reference to the need for the MoP to consider how some potential costs would be covered, including any increase in utility costs arising from the implementation of a Software as a Product (SaaS), considering potential implications for the SIOFA budget and the Headquarters Agreement.
7. The VMS WG reviewed and endorsed the revised options paper. The VMS WG agreed to forward the paper to the Compliance Committee (CC) and the Meeting of the Parties (MoP) for their consideration.

Agenda item 4 – Review of the Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the provision of a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) for the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)

8. The Chair and the Compliance Officer presented the draft ToR for the provision of a VMS for SIOFA (VMSWG-05-02) for the VMS WG's review.
9. In section 4, General Description of Services, the VMS WG noted that the ToR described one of the application layers as "Email format through secured connections (HTTPS)" and questioned the appropriateness of this. The Compliance Officer reviewed the SIOFA VMS Standards, Specifications and Procedures (SSPs) adopted by the MoP and suggested to amend the text to just "Email" to make it consistent with the SSPs.
10. In the same section, the VMS WG also noted that the VMS Timeline used the term "testing", whereas the ToR used the term "pilot phase". The VMS WG agreed to make the terminology of the ToR consistent with the timeline and to change "pilot phase" to "testing phase". The VMS WG agreed that "testing" could potentially entail a pilot testing phase in which the rollout is limited only to some CCPs, as well as a subsequent full testing phase in which all CCPs would check that the system and all connections are working before the

VMS goes live.

11. In section 5, Required Service Availability, Japan noted that the proposed resolution times were quite demanding, which could lead to higher running costs and/or a reduced number of bidders. The VMS WG noted that the Secretariat had reviewed the ToRs of some regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) when developing this paper, but requested that the Secretariat double-check the appropriateness of the proposed resolution times.
12. Australia suggested that it may be useful for the contract to include contractual penalties when the response times of support services are not met.
13. The VMS WG noted the need for the Secretariat to conduct an annual review of the eventual service provider's performance, as well as the need to conduct a third-party audit of the information security of the VMS. Regarding the annual performance review, the VMS WG noted that paragraph 35 of Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) 16(2023) (VMS) stipulates that the Secretariat shall report annually to MoP on the implementation of, and compliance with, said CMM, and suggested that the performance of the service provider could be included as part of that report. Regarding the information security audit, the VMS WG noted that SIOFA has previously conducted such an audit and that one option may be to have the previous information security auditor conduct a follow-up review of the actions taken by SIOFA in response to the audit findings and to include the VMS in the scope of the review.
14. Regarding the evaluation of bids, the VMS WG agreed to hold further discussions at its next meeting on the establishment of an evaluation panel, the selection of panel members, and the definition and application of clear and standardised selection and evaluation criteria. The VMS WG noted that SIOFA has experience evaluating bids for scientific consultancies and that some of those procedures and evaluation criteria could be adapted to the evaluation of bids for the VMS. The VMS WG requested the Secretariat to further develop Section 9, Evaluation Criteria for the Selection of Bidders, to reflect these points.
15. When reviewing the Data Confidentiality and Security Provisions section in Appendix 1, the VMS WG discussed the issue of a potential change in service provider. The VMS WG agreed to add a provision in the ToR to the effect that, in such a case, the service provider should return the data to SIOFA and delete the data from its own records within a specified timeframe and provide confirmation in writing that this has been done. The VMS WG also noted the need to include a handover provision in the contract to be signed with the service provider, whereby the service provider is required to continue to provide services during the transitional period to ensure a smooth handover to the new service provider.
16. In the Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Specifications section of Appendix 1, Australia suggested that it would be highly desirable for the VMS to not only be able to receive notifications from vessels, but also to send notifications from the SIOFA VMS to vessels, such as alerts by email or SMS that a vessel has entered the SIOFA Area or that it is close to or about to enter a protected area. The VMS WG was generally supportive of the suggestion, while noting the need to bear two key considerations in mind: firstly, that the flag State remains responsible for monitoring and controlling the activities of its vessels including making sure they do not enter any closed areas; secondly, the potential cost implications of such an option.
17. As next steps, the VMS WG requested the Secretariat to prepare an initial revised draft ToR reflecting the points raised during the meeting and to circulate it within one or two days. The VMS WG requested CCPs to provide written comments on the initial revised draft ToR by 20 March and the Secretariat to circulate a further revised draft ToR reflecting

these comments by 25 March.

18. The VMS agreed to hold another meeting, tentatively scheduled for 2 April, to review the updated draft ToR and to review any CMMS that may need to be modified to accommodate the VMS work.

Agenda item 5 – Other Business

a. NPFC VMS Visit

19. The Compliance Officer informed the VMS WG that he will visit the Secretariat of the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC), which is similar in size to the SIOFA Secretariat and uses a similar VMS to the one envisaged for SIOFA, from 21 to 23 April to learn from the NPFC's experience. During the visit, the Compliance Officer and the NPFC Secretariat will discuss matters including the ongoing efforts to establish the SIOFA VMS, the resource and operational aspects of the NPFC VMS, the NPFC's VMS data management, the NPFC's internal security measures, and any other elements that SIOFA may have missed. The Compliance Officer will share any new findings with the VMS WG for its consideration.
20. The Compliance Officer also explained that he is currently coordinating a potential visit to another RFMO to learn more about its VMS.

Agenda item 6 – Close of Meeting

21. The meeting was closed at 09:05 a.m. UTC, 13 March 2025.
22. The report was adopted via correspondence on 21 March 2025.

Annex A – List of meeting participants

Delegation	First name	Last name	Title	Position (e.g. Designated Representative , Alternate, etc.)	Organisation	Email
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Annex B – Agenda of the 5th Meeting of the SIOFA Vessel Monitoring System Working Group - SIOFA VMSWG05

- 1) Opening of Session
- 2) Administrative Arrangements
 - a) Adoption of Agenda
 - b) Meeting Documents
 - c) Appointment of rapporteurs
- 3) Review of the Revised Options Paper for the Hosting of the SIOFA Vessel Monitoring System
- 4) Review of the Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the provision of a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) for the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)
- 5) Other Business
 - a) NPFC VMS Visit
- 6) Close of Meeting

Annex C – List of meeting documents

List of Meeting Documents

Code	Document Title	Agenda Item
<i>Administration and Meeting organisation</i>		
VMSWG-05-ADM-01	Provisional Agenda	2. i.
VMSWG-05-ADM-02	List of Meeting Documents (This)	2. ii.
VMSWG-05-ADM-03	Registration Template - VMSWG-05	N/A
VMSWG-05-ADM-04	List of Registered Participants - VMSWG-05	N/A
<i>Working Papers</i>		
VMSWG-05-01	Revised Options Paper for the Hosting of the SIOFA Vessel Monitoring System	3
VMSWG-05-02	Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the provision of a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) for the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)	4