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

Report of the 6th Meeting of
the Working Group to
Support the Establishment of the
Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement
Vessel Monitoring System
(VMSWG06)

Virtual

2 April 2025

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Agenda item 1 – Opening of Session

1. The Chair, Ms Fiona Harford (European Union (EU)), opened the 6th Meeting of the Working Group (WG) to Support the Establishment of the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement Vessel Monitoring System (SIOFA VMS; VMSWG-06) 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-06-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* Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the provision of a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) for the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)

6. The Chair and the Compliance Officer, Mr. Johnny Louys, presented the revised draft ToR for the provision of a VMS for SIOFA (VMSWG-06-01) for the VMS WG's review. The draft ToR was revised following VMS WG05 to reflect the discussions at VMS WG05 and comments received from CCPs following the meeting, and to include some editorial amendments.
7. Regarding Section 5. Required Service Availability, the Compliance Officer explained that as requested by CCPs at VMS WG05, he had re-examined the ToRs for the VMS at other regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) and held discussions with a service provider for some of these RFMOs. Based on this, the Compliance Officer suggested that, with a software as a service (SaaS) option, 99% uptime, 4-hour resolution time for critical severity issues, 20-hour resolution time for medium severity issues, and 3-business-day resolution for low severity issues would be appropriate. The VMS WG agreed to the suggestions. The VMS WG also agreed to include a provision to allow for the possibility to modify the suggested resolution times based on negotiation with the chosen service provider.
8. The VMS WG noted the importance of ensuring that all requirements, including all core and after-sale support, are covered in the initial contract cost, and agreed to amend item vi. under Section 8. Submission of Applications accordingly.
9. Regarding paragraph 24 iv. under the monitoring, control and surveillance specifications in Appendix 1, the VMS WG noted the usefulness of a function for the transmission of notifications when a vessel enters certain areas. The VMS WG agreed that the notification should be transmitted to the flag State, rather than to the vessel, as well as to the Secretariat, and amended the text accordingly. The VMS WG requested that the Secretariat make further edits to the text to specify the areas for which such a notification would be made, taking also into consideration new managed areas that may be defined by the Meeting of the Parties (MoP) in the future. The VMS WG reaffirmed that the inclusion of such a notification function in the SIOFA VMS would not discharge flag States from their responsibility to monitor and control the activities of their vessels in the SIOFA Area.

Agenda item 4 – Potential amendments to CMMs and the SIOFA SSPs to support the entry into operation of the SIOFA VMS

10. The Chair explained that she and the Compliance Officer had conducted a review of the Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) currently in force with the provisions of CMM 16 (2023) (Vessel Monitoring System), and the Standards, Specifications and Procedures (SSPs) for the SIOFA VMS, and suggested potential amendments to these instruments that may need to be made to ensure compatibility among them and a smooth implementation of the SIOFA VMS once it enters into operation.

a. Conservation and Management Measure for Data Confidentiality and Procedures for access and use of data (CMM 03(2016) Data Confidentiality)

11. The Chair and the Compliance Officer presented potential amendments to CMM 03(2016) (VMSWG-06-01, Annex 1) for the VMS WG's consideration.
12. The VMS WG suggested one additional editorial amendment.
13. France (Overseas Territories (OT)) reminded the VMS WG that it is currently preparing a proposal for amending CMM 03(2016) that it will present to the ninth Meeting of the Compliance Committee (CC9) and 12th Meeting of the Parties (MoP12). France (OT) offered to incorporate the potential amendments discussed by the VMS WG in its proposal and invited any interested CCPs to provide any suggestions for further amendments to CMM 03(2016).
14. The VMS WG welcomed the offer from France (OT).

b. Conservation and Management Measure for Vessel Authorisation and Notification to Fish (CMM 07(2024) Vessel Authorisation)

15. The Chair and the Compliance Officer presented potential amendments to CMM 07(2024) (VMSWG-06-01, Annex 2) for the VMS WG's consideration.
16. One CCP asked for clarification on the purpose of the suggested addition of footnote 4, pointing out that the CMM stipulates that vessels shall be entered onto the SIOFA Record of Authorised Vessels (RAV) only if the information required under paragraph 2, including Automatic Location Communicator (ALC) details, has been submitted to the Executive Secretary and, therefore, that any vessels for which such information has not been submitted should not be on the SIOFA RAV.
17. The Chair and the Compliance Officer explained that when the MoP revised CMM 07(2022) to include ALC details as part of the information to be submitted for vessels to be included on the RAV and adopted CMM07 (2024), it did so with the understanding that the CMM would be read in conjunction with the SSPs for the SIOFA VMS. They explained that Section 3. General Provisions, paragraph 5 of the SSPs for the SIOFA VMS provides a grace period whereby for vessels entered onto the SIOFA RAV prior to the entry into force of CMM 16(2023), CCPs shall provide the ALC details no later than 30 days before the entry into operation of the SIOFA VMS. As for footnote 4, they explained that the intention was to provide an updated deadline, with a specific date, for the submission of ALC details, which would be required for the testing phase of the SIOFA VMS prior to its entry into operation.
18. The other CCPs shared the understanding explained by the Chair and the Compliance Officer.
19. The EU offered to prepare a proposal for amending CMM 07(2024), incorporating the potential amendments discussed by the VMS WG, and to present the proposal to CC9 and MoP12.
20. The VMS WG welcomed the offer from the EU.

c. Conservation and Management Measure for the establishment of a SIOFA Vessel Monitoring System (CMM 16(2023) SIOFA VMS)

21. The Chair and the Compliance Officer presented potential amendments to CMM 16(2023) (VMSWG-06-01, Annex 3) for the VMS WG's consideration.
22. Regarding the potential amendment to stipulate that VMS position reports shall be transmitted to the SIOFA VMS using one of the data formats in Annex 2, the VMS WG noted that this provision should only apply to VMS position reports sent pursuant to paragraph 6a), i.e., to the SIOFA VMS via a CCP's fisheries monitoring centre.
23. The VMS WG also suggested some additional editorial amendments.
24. The EU offered to prepare a proposal for amending CMM16(2023), incorporating the potential amendments discussed by the VMS WG, and to present the proposal to CC9 and MoP12.
25. The VMS WG welcomed the offer from the EU.

d. Standards, Specifications and Procedures (SSPs) for the SIOFA VMS

26. The Chair and the Compliance Officer presented potential amendments to the SIOFA VMS SSPs (VMSWG-06-01, Annex 4) for the VMS WG's consideration.
27. The VMS WG noted that the matter of entry/exit notification, which was previously discussed in an earlier VMSWG meeting remains open and should be revisited in the future as part of broader discussions related to CMM 16(2023) and CMM 10(2023). The VMS WG agreed that an appropriate timing for addressing this matter would be after the testing phase of the SIOFA VMS has been conducted and the MoP has decided on a date for its entry into operation.

Agenda item 5 – Other Business

a. High-Value Procurement Policy for SIOFA

28. The VMS WG noted that SIOFA does not currently have a horizontal policy for high-value procurements, such as for the SIOFA VMS. The VMS WG noted that the MoP may wish to discuss such a policy, which is beyond the VMS WG's mandate.
29. The Compliance Officer informed the VMS WG that the Secretariat is preparing a paper on a high-value procurement policy for SIOFA. However, the Secretariat will need to seek the views of the MoP Chairperson and the other chairpersons on what would be the best approach to submit this policy to MoP12 for its consideration.

Agenda item 6 – Close of Meeting

30. The VMS WG agreed to meet again as necessary after the completion of CC9 and MoP12.
31. The VMS WG agreed that the Chair and the Secretariat will submit a paper to CC9 summarising the work done by the VMS WG to date, including issues that have been discussed and resolved, and those that remain open.
32. The VMS WG agreed that CCPs may provide further written comments to the Secretariat on the revised draft ToR for the provision of a VMS for SIOFA, the potential amendments to CMMs, and the SSPs for the SIOFA VMS by 30 April 2025. The VMS WG agreed that editorial comments would be incorporated into the relevant documents, as appropriate. The VMS WG agreed that any further substantive comments would not be reflected directly into the relevant documents and would instead be summarised and included in the abovementioned summary paper to be presented to CC9.
33. The VMS WG agreed to forward the revised SSPs for the SIOFA VMS, subject to further editorial amendments, to CC9 and MoP12 for their consideration and potential endorsement.
34. The VMS WG agreed that the Chair and the Secretariat will coordinate with the CCPs that

have offered to prepare proposals with the amendments to CMMs discussed by the VMS WG.

35. The VMS WG noted that the Secretariat, in consultation with the MoP Chairperson and the other chairpersons, will identify the appropriate mechanism for facilitating discussions among CCPs on a high-value procurement policy for SIOFA.
36. The meeting was closed at 09:25 a.m. UTC, 2 April 2025.
37. The report was adopted via correspondence on 18 April 2025.

Annex A – List of meeting participants

Delegation	First name	Last name	Title	Position (e.g. Designated Representative , Alternate, etc.)	Organisation	Email
VMS WG Chairperson	Harford	Fiona	Ms	VMS WG Chairperson	SIOFA	fiona.harford@ec.europa.eu
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Delegation	First name	Last name	Title	Position (e.g. Designated Representative , Alternate, etc.)	Organisation	Email
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Delegation	First name	Last name	Title	Position (e.g. Designated Representative , Alternate, etc.)	Organisation	Email
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Annex B – Agenda of the 6th Meeting of the SIOFA Vessel Monitoring System Working Group - SIOFA VMS WG06

1. Opening of Session
2. Administrative Arrangements
 - a. Adoption of Agenda
 - b. Meeting Documents
 - c. Appointment of rapporteurs
3. Review of the Revised Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the provision of a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) for the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)
4. Potential amendments to CMMs and the SIOFA SSPs to support the entry into operation of the SIOFA VMS
 - a. Conservation and Management Measure for Data Confidentiality and Procedures for access and use of data (CMM 03(2016) Data Confidentiality)
 - b. Conservation and Management Measure for Vessel Authorisation and Notification to Fish (CMM 07(2024) Vessel Authorisation)
 - c. Conservation and Management Measure for the establishment of a SIOFA Vessel Monitoring System (CMM 16(2023) SIOFA VMS)
 - d. Standards, Specifications and Procedures (SSPs) for the SIOFA VMS
5. Other Business
 - a. High-Value Procurement Policy for SIOFA
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-06-ADM-01	Provisional Agenda	2. a.
VMSWG-06-ADM-02	List of Meeting Documents (This)	2. b.
VMSWG-06-ADM-03	Registration Template - VMSWG-06	N/A
VMSWG-06-ADM-04	List of Registered Participants - VMSWG-06	N/A
<i>Working Papers</i>		
VMSWG-06-01	Revised Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the provision of a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) for the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)	3
VMSWG-06-02	Potential amendments to CMMs and the SIOFA SSPs to support the entry into operation of the SIOFA VMS	4