



SIOFA | APSOI

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

9th Meeting of the Compliance Committee (CC9) and 12th Meeting of the Parties (MoP12)

Ebene, Mauritius, 25–27 June 2025 and 30 June – 04 July 2025

MoP-12-23

Meeting Documents Policy

SIOFA Secretariat

Meeting	Compliance Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting of the Parties <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Document type	working paper <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> information paper <input type="checkbox"/>
Distribution	Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted ¹ <input type="checkbox"/> Closed session document ² <input type="checkbox"/>
Abstract	
<p>In reference to paragraph 18 of the MoP11 report, the MoP requested that the Secretariat present a working paper to MoP12 with an overview of the criteria and process by which papers are classified as working papers or information papers and for determining whether papers should be made public or their access restricted. The MoP requested that the Secretariat indicates the potential implications for the Rules of Procedure (RoP) of the MoP when preparing the paper and highlight any relevant provisions from the RoP.</p> <p>This paper recaps the current understanding on the terms “proposals”, “working paper” and “information paper” and the current process by which the Secretariat classify these documents. The current practises regarding meeting documents are set in several SIOFA documents such as the Rules of Procedures and the CMMs.</p> <p>This paper also discusses the access to meeting documents and the status <i>restricted</i> that lacks clear definition but is currently used for documents that contain non-public data and that need to be provided to meeting participants. SIOFA would also benefit from a revised definition of <i>public data</i> as set CMM03. Using the information available, and the outputs from SIOFA meetings and consultancies, a draft SIOFA Meetings Documents Policy, covering document distribution and access, storage and disposal rules, has been proposed in Annex A.</p>	

¹ Restricted documents may contain confidential information. Please do not distribute restricted documents in any form without the explicit permission of the SIOFA Secretariat and the data owner(s)/provider(s).

² Documents available only to members invited to closed sessions.

Recommendations

- The MoP to endorse a definition of “proposal”, “working paper” and “information paper” and the people that can submit them and amend the RoP accordingly.
- The MoP to advise on the definition of “restricted” and revise the definition of “public data” and amend CMM 03 or the RoP accordingly.
- The MoP to review the current practice notably the access rights to meeting documents and to endorse a SIOFA Meeting Document Policy based on the draft proposed in Annex A.

Introduction

The MoP requested the Secretariat to clarify the rules in use regarding classification of papers and distribution of data (ref MoP11 Report, paragraph 18)

Meeting document types are well described in the Rules of Procedures and within several CMMs. Several aspects of the document distribution are also addressed within those rules and measures (e.g. Draft SIOFA budget in the SIOFA RoP or Draft SIOFA Compliance Report in CMM 11). While the Agreement, in Article 14, promotes transparency in general, the current practise regarding the distribution of classified documents is described in Annex G of MoP-09-10. This process was proposed by the Scientific Committee (SC) and is adapted to SC documents. However, its implementation has been extended to the MoP and the other subsidiary meetings' documents.

The distribution of meeting documents has been a recurrent subject in SIOFA. However, SIOFA still lacks a comprehensive policy document, that addresses and considers all the requirements and recommendations made to date, and especially those in relation to the definition criteria, the access and the distribution of meeting documents.

Method

The suggested SIOFA Meeting Document Policy, in Annex A, would stand as single SIOFA reference.

Several templates and guidelines have also been developed by the SC to streamline the process related to meeting documents and scientific reports. Some of these templates, when relevant to the meeting document policy, have been added as annexes to the policy (Annex A1 to A3).

This paper seeks to address the current gaps in the handling of meeting documents by proposing a meeting document policy and cover the following topics:

- Definition
- Document creation
- Document classification
- Access
- Submission and Storage
- Retention and Disposal

Discussion on meeting documents

First and foremost, SIOFA Rules of Procedure (RoP) does not refer to the terms “working paper” and “information paper” are not used. The RoP only refers to “proposal”.

For the purpose of this document, we shall agree that a proposal and a working paper refers to the same type of document. A proposal, or a working paper, refers to a document on which the Meeting of the Parties (MoP) needs to take action. While an information paper, also referred to as “any other document” in SIOFA RoP, is a document that can be submitted by CCPs and the Secretariat to inform the MoP on a subject that does not need action from the MoP.

A proposal involving a CMM (modification or new suggestions) can only be submitted and proposed to a meeting by, the MoP and its subsidiary bodies, the Secretariat, a Contracting Party (CP) or a Participating Fishing Entity (PFE), while any other proposal can be submitted and suggested by the MoP and its subsidiary bodies, the Secretariat, a CP, a PFE, a Cooperating Non-Contracting Party (CNCP), and developing States as well as Small Island Developing Countries (SIDS).

In SIOFA three types of documents are considered:

1. Administrative Documents, providing general information relevant to the meeting (logistics, arrangements, agenda, list of meeting papers etc.)
2. Proposals, also referred to as Working Papers, that are to be considered and discussed by the ordinary meeting accordingly with the recommendations suggested in the cover page to give guidance in the decision process. They should be transmitted to the Secretariat and circulated prior to the start of the meeting according to Rule 10 of the SIOFA RoP.
3. Information papers or any other documents provide background or additional information as well as technical information that do not require any action from the meeting. These documents are not necessarily discussed during the meeting. They also need to be provided prior to the meeting as described in Rule 10 of the SIOFA RoP.

The current access to a meeting document regarding its status and the group of users is detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Access rules to meeting documents regarding its status and group of users.

✓ access granted

✗ access denied

Context	Document Status	Group/Role			
		Head of Delegation	Delegate	Observer	<i>public</i>
SC	Public	✓	✓	✓	✓
SC	Restricted	✓	✓	✓	✗
SC	Confidential	✓	✗	✗	✗
CC - MoP	Public	✓	✓	✓	✓
CC - MoP	Restricted	✓	✓	✓	✗
CC - MoP	Closed-Session	✓	✗	✗	✗

Discussion on confidentiality and data distribution

SIOFA CMM 03(2016) clearly defines what is **public** data. Its definition currently limits public data to (i) general vessels information, (ii) to 5° monthly aggregate of observers' data and (iii) to 5° monthly aggregate of catch and effort data. However, several conditions apply:

- The catch of no individual vessel can be identified;
- For observer data, the flag state shall provide its written authorisation that such data can be considered public.

Since several SIOFA flag state operate only one vessel, most of flag-level data cannot be public. Alternatives have been proposed by the SEC 2021-05 project, which suggested several options for making annual fisheries summary publicly available and informative (ref SEC-2021-05 Consultant Report paragraph 5.4).

There remains a lack of clarity regarding the **restricted** status. This term is not defined in SIOFA and in CMM 03(2016) on data confidentiality. However, this status is used in practice for meeting documents, when there is an understanding that a document should not be in public access but should be made available to meeting participants, and that its content does not deserve a confidential status.

Paragraphs 121 to 129 of MoP9 report raised several questions that are relevant to this issue and directed the SC to clarify some of those.

Those issues have been addressed by the SC (SC8) where it has been proposed a 3 tiers classification for documents (ref SC8 report, para 101) with defined access rules described in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Classification of documents and access rules.

Classification	Type of information or data	Access to documents	Website access	Display in open or closed session?
Tier 1: Public	Public domain data / public domain catch and effort data as defined in CMM 2016-03 Economic information at the country level	Open access	Publicly available on SIOFA website	Open session
Tier 2: Restricted	1x1 degrees and does not identify a single fishing event	CCPs, + Observers, External scientists (under conditions of confidentiality)	Abstract publicly available on SIOFA website. Document available on restricted section of SIOFA website	Open session
Tier 3: Confidential	Confidential documents as per Rule 20(1) that are submitted for consideration in closed sessions meeting	HoDs or to CP and PFE SC representatives invited to closed sessions	Abstract publicly available on SIOFA website. Document available on confidential section of SIOFA website	Closed session

CMM 03 only distinguishes between public and confidential data (and only in the context of fisheries catch, effort and observers' data).

Officialising and defining a **restricted** status would help SIOFA parties, external consultants and the Secretariat, when it comes to classify a document. Regarding data, **restricted data** could be defined as any combinations of data aggregations as long as no sensitive information or precise locations of fisheries' operations are displayed. Such combinations, considering species, flags, gears, temporal and spatial aggregations, etc. would still need to be specified. The restricted status suggested by the SC in the above table is one combination that consider the spatial resolution. SC7 recommended that access to restricted documents be allowed to SIOFA observers (ref. SC-07-31 transparency and distribution of meeting documents).

According to CMM 03, the **confidential** status prevents any distribution unless the data owner has provided his formal agreement for releasing the data. It should also prevent access by Head of Delegation. By default, if a document contains confidential data, the whole document is considered confidential. However, if a CCP submits a document and classifies it as public or restricted, even if it contains confidential data, the document will be in public access or in restricted access accordingly. A paper can also have the confidential data part removed, and when it is done, it allows the paper to be more widely distributed.

The SIOFA Rules of Procedure clearly defines that financial matters and discussion relevant to the appointment of the Executive Secretary shall be conducted in **closed session**. Only budget contributors are allowed in these session (i.e. CP and PFE). Therefore, any documents relevant to financial matters, usually the budget and financial audits, are classified as **closed session** papers. The current practise is that closed sessions are attended by the Heads of Delegation of the relevant parties and the Chairperson. Considering the sensitive status of the closed session documents, it is proposed that these documents be removed from the website once a meeting has concluded.

Conclusion

A SIOFA document policy would give guidance on the creation and categorisation of the documents in preparation for the meetings, noting that they don't respond to the same deadlines, nor they require the same actions from the meetings.

The current SIOFA RoP does not define which authority is allowed to submit a document to a meeting. To date any documents submitted by the Secretariat, CCPs, Observers are considered. The author of the document set a classification status as it seems appropriate in regard of its content. There is no record of a meeting documents being rejected by the chairperson.

There are several aspects of the confidentiality and distribution of the meeting documents that still need fine tuning, but it does not prevent to start using a standardized policy, knowing that this policy can be adjusted anytime it is necessary.

This policy may also be included to the future SIOFA Information System Security Policy (ref paper MoP-12-22 on Terms of Reference for a SIOFA ISSP).

References

- SIOFA Rules of Procedures (2023 update), rule 10, rule 20
- Report of the 4th Meeting of the Parties, paragraph 60-64
- SIOFA CMM 03(2016) (Data Confidentiality)
- Document MoP-04-14 Transparency and Distribution of Meeting Documents
- Document SC-07-31 Transparency and distribution of Scientific Committee meeting documents
- Document MoP-09-08 Report of project SEC2021-05: SIOFA-Data-audit-access-dissemination-and-presentation-of-data (restricted access)
- Document MoP-09-10 Transparency and distribution of Scientific Committee meeting documents
- Report of the 9th Meeting of the Parties, para 121-129
- Document SC-08-INFO-16 Transparency and distribution of Scientific Committee meeting documents
- SIOFA Scientific Committee Terms of Reference



SIOFA MEETING DOCUMENT POLICY

V.DRAFT 2025

1. Purpose and scope

The SIOFA Meeting Documents policy aims to clarify and strengthen the methods and process around the management and the access for all SIOFA meeting documents.

The scope of this policy is limited to the documents that are submitted to the SIOFA Meeting of the Parties or to any meeting of its subsidiary body, and that are provided through the SIOFA website. Meeting Reports are not included in this policy.

2. Definitions and acronyms

2.1. Definitions

Document: Any document that is submitted and provided to a meeting organized and managed by SIOFA. A document can have several files.

File: Any digital file that is attached to a document.

Document type: Type of document, such as *Proposal* or *Information Paper* as referred in Rule 10 of the SIOFA Rules of Procedures.

Document classification: Status of a document regarding its confidentiality

Proposal or Working Paper: A document that is to be considered by the ordinary meeting accordingly with the recommendations suggested in the cover page to give guidance in the decision process. They should be transmitted to the Secretariat by Contracting and Cooperating Party (CP), a Participating Fishing Entity (PFE), or a Cooperating Non-Contracting Party (CNCP) no less than 40 days before the ordinary meeting and circulated by the Secretariat no later than 35 days prior to the ordinary meeting.

Information Paper: A document that provides background or additional information as well as technical information that do not require any action from the ordinary meeting. They can be transmitted to the Secretariat until 14 days prior to the ordinary meeting and submitted by the Secretariat no later than 10 days prior to the ordinary meeting.

General document or Administrative Paper: A document that provides general information relevant to the meeting (logistics, arrangements, agenda, list of meeting papers etc.)

Head of Delegation : A designated representative of a Party as expressed in Rule 3.1 of the Rules of Procedure that has been communicated to the Executive Secretary ahead of the meeting according to the Rule 3.3 of the Rules of Procedure.

Official Contacts : Representatives, alternates, experts or advisers, designated by a delegation from a Contracting and Cooperating Party (CP), a Participating Fishing Entity (PFE), or a Cooperating Non-Contracting Party (CNCP), that has been communicated to the Executive Secretary ahead of the meeting according to the Rule 3.3 of the Rules of Procedure.

Observer: In accordance with Article 14 of the Agreement and these Rules of Procedure, the following may participate as observers to Meetings of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies: Coastal States with waters under national jurisdiction adjacent to the Area who are not Contracting Parties; cooperating non-Contracting Parties, cooperating non-participating fishing entities and non-Contracting Parties; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and other relevant United Nations bodies; the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission; regional fisheries management organisations with competence over high seas waters adjacent to or overlapping the Agreement Area; and other intergovernmental organisations and regional economic integration organisations concerned with matters relevant to the implementation of this Agreement.

Participants: An identified person registered by a delegation (alternate, expert, shipowner, syndicate, company...) to attend physically or remotely to a meeting..

Secretariat: the SIOFA headquarter Secretariat staff including the rapporteur and eventually the interpreters, under the responsibility of the SIOFA Executive Secretary.

2.2. Acronyms

CCP: Contracting Parties (CP), Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CNCP) and Participating Fishing Entities (PFE)

CMM: Conservation and Management Measures

CC: SIOFA Compliance Committee

HoD: Head of Delegation

MoP: SIOFA Meeting of the Parties

NGO: Non-governmental organisation

PDF: Portable Document Format (Adobe Systems)

RoP: Rules of Procedures

SC: SIOFA Scientific Committee

3. Document creation

3.1. File Format and Extension

Any standard file format that is adapted to online publication may be used for SIOFA meeting documents. The Secretariat usually uses the following format: Ms Word (or similar word processor), Ms Excel, Adobe PDF and Ms PowerPoint.

3.2. SIOFA cover page template

When a document file is created to be submitted to a meeting it should use the SIOFA standard template for its cover page. Using this template helps CCPs to quickly identify the document and its properties. The cover page template is illustrated in annex A-1.

This cover page should contain:

- The SIOFA logo which identifies that it is a SIOFA document
- The meeting to which the document is submitted, and the meeting dates
- The document code, that is made of 3 parts (1st part give the acronym of the meeting, 2nd part provide the number of the meeting (2 digits) and the 3rd part give the number of the document within the meeting (2 digits, from 01 to XX)
- The document title
- The delegation that submitted the document.
- A table that identifies the type of document and its status
- An abstract
- A summary of the recommendations addressed to the meeting participants

For each new meeting, the Secretariat shall publish a cover page template that contains the meeting name, location and dates.

3.3. Other considerations relevant to the document creation

Image scans shall be avoided to the extent possible since this method tends to increase a lot the size of the file. Moreover, amending image type document is much more cumbersome.

Digital file should be as small as possible. Avoiding the insertion of picture or limiting the picture resolution will help to maintain files to a reasonable size. In general, any file above 5 MB should be avoided.

File name should also be standardized and be as short as possible. File name should contain:

- The meeting reference and a number assigned by the Secretariat
- Comprehensive keywords or a short title in accordance with the document content
- The distribution status for restricted and closed-session documents as a trailing suffix
- No space (space to be replaced by '-')
- The extension

E.G : MoP-12-23-meeting-document-policy.pdf

4. Classification

Meeting document types, status and format

A meeting document has one of the 3 following types:

Table A.1: Meetings document types

Type	Description
Administrative document (ADM)	Document providing general and public information relevant to the meeting (logistics, templates, agendas, etc.)
Proposals / Working papers (WP)	Document to be considered by the meeting, and that also provide summary recommendations (e.g. CMM proposals, stock assessment report, etc.).
Information papers (INFO)	Document providing background information, external report, that don't have to be discussed in the meeting.

A meeting document has one of the 4 classification status:

Table A.2: Meetings documents classification status

Status	Description
Public	Document considered public and contains non-sensitive information or data.
Restricted	Document that is not in public access and contains non-public information or data.
Confidential	Document containing confidential data as defined by CMM 03. Data can be provided either in charts or as raw values in the document.
Closed-Session	Document discussed in closed session of meetings.

Each meeting document that are restricted, confidential or for closed-session must have a watermark on each page for identifying its status. The file name should also have a trailing suffix that specify its status

EG: MoP-09-04_SIOFA-Draft-Budget_**closed-session**.pdf

Meeting document can have up to 4 formats:

Table A.3: Meeting documents formats

Format	Description
Abstract	Document which contains only the abstract of the main paper
Full (<i>default</i>)	Integral document
Draft	Document to be revised in plenary, in a transitional stage, and not finalised (e.g. work in progress on a CMM, draft IUU vessel list, provisional SIOFA Compliance Report, etc.).
Presentation	A presentation and a screen adapted format of a document (usually PowerPoint).

5. Access

The access to a document shall be driven by its status and by the permissions of the user.

5.1 Website users' groups definition

Since the website is the tool used for distributing and accessing meetings' documents, CCP and Observer participants need to have an individual login for the SIOFA website.

Once a participant requests a login to the website for accessing meeting documents, the participant shall be attributed in one or several groups according to the registration or to the listing on the contact list that has been provided through the official contact list provided to the Secretariat by each HoD or each representative.

The current groups that exist are detailed in Table A.4 below.

Table A.4: Users groups defined on SIOFA website.

Group name	Description
Public	Non-registered visitors of the website
SC Observer	Participants attending SC meetings as an Observer or as a Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CNCP).
SC Delegate	Participants attending SC meetings as a delegate of a Contracting Party (CP) or as delegate of a Participating Fishing Entity (PFE).
SC Head of Delegation	Participants attending SC meetings as Head of Delegation and SC Head of Delegation of a CP or a PFE.
MoP-CC Observer	Participants attending MoP or CC meetings as an Observer or as a CNCP.
MoP-CC Delegate	Participants attending MoP or CC meetings as a delegate of a CP or as delegate of a PFE.
MoP-CC Head of Delegation	Participants attending MoP or CC meetings as Head of Delegation, and MoP Heads of Delegation.

5.2 Meeting document access

The access to a meeting document regarding its status and the group of users is detailed in Table A.5 below.

Table A.5: Access rules to meeting documents regarding its status and group of users.

✓ access granted

✗ access denied

□ access status to be confirmed by the MoP

Context	Document Status	Group/Role			
		Head of Delegation	Delegate	Observer	public
SC	Public	✓	✓	✓	✓
SC	Restricted	✓	✓	✓	✗
SC	Confidential	✓	✗	✗	✗

		Group/Role			
Context	Document Status	Head of Delegation	Delegate	Observer	<i>public</i>
CC - MoP	Public	✓	✓	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	✓
CC - MoP	Restricted	✓	✓	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	✗
CC - MoP	Closed-Session	✓	✗	✗	✗

The access to restricted document should be allowed to Observers unless it is advised otherwise.

The access to a meeting document regarding its format is defined in Table A.6 below.

Table A.6: Access rules to meeting documents regarding its format.

✓ access granted

✗ access denied

	Group/Role			
Document Status	Head of Delegation	Delegate	Observer	<i>public</i>
Abstract	✓	✓	✓	✓
Normal	<i>See rules above</i>			
Draft	✓	✓	✓	✗
Presentation	✓	✓	✓	✗

In cases where a confidential or a closed-session paper needs to be revised outside of the Secretariat infrastructure, the document would not transit via the website but would be provided directly by email to the relevant Heads of Delegation following the rules regarding circulation and storage (see next section). Also, usually there are no presentation format for such classified papers.


6. Submission, circulation and storage

Meeting documents should be available prior to the meetings to allow participants to consider them.

The SIOFA Rules of Procedure (RoP), its Financial Regulation and several CMMs provide with the deadlines according to meeting document type and content. They are summarized in the Table A.7 below.

Table A.7: Required circulation delay (in days) of type documents according to their meeting of consideration.

Document type (and provider)	Handling Reference	Meeting	Circulation (or website availability)	Note
Meeting provisional agenda (ES-Chair)	RoP 10	All	60	
Revised provisional agenda (ES-Chair)	RoP 10	All	40	Agenda items revisions to be provided 50 days in advance by CCPs
SIOFA Draft Budget (ES)	Financial Regulation, 3.5	MoP	60	
Financial Report (ES)	Financial Regulation 9.3	MoP / SCAF	June 1 st	
Draft SIOFA Compliance Report (SEC)	CMM 11	CC	20	
Provisional SIOFA Compliance Report (CC)	CMM 11	CC	At the conclusion of the CC	
SIOFA draft IUU Vessel List (SEC)	CMM 06 para 6	CC	21 (3 weeks)	
Provisional IUU Vessel List (CC)	CMM 06 para 10	CC	At the conclusion of the CC	
Proposal and working papers (CCP, Obs, SEC)	RoP 10	All	35	To be provided to the Secretariat 40 days before meeting starts
Any other document (CCP, Obs, SEC)	RoP 10	All	10	To be provided to the Secretariat 14 days before meeting starts

 Documents that are provided late to a meeting should be clearly identified; with a late tag and the date it has been made available.

The submission and the storage of a document shall be consistent with the distribution of the document. Table A.8 below identifies how should be handled the documents according to their classification status.

Table A.8: Submission, circulation and storage requirements for meetings documents according to their classification status.

Status	Submission and circulation	Storage	
		Device	Website
Public	Any method suitable	Any	Any part
Restricted	File sent by email (generic recipient shall be avoided) or provided through online platform with access control.	Individual computer and/or Cloud platform with access control (username/password)	Secure folder of website
Confidential	File to be encrypted before being circulated by email or provided via online platform. Decryption password to be provided to the recipient with a different communication method (phone msg, alternate email)	Encrypted disk of personal computer with access control (username/password)	Secure folder of website

Closed Session	File to be encrypted before being circulated by email or provided via online platform. Decryption password to be provided to the recipient with a different communication method (phone msg, alternate email)	Encrypted disk of personal computer with access control (username/password)	Secure folder of website
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7. Retention and Disposal


For security and confidentiality reasons, meeting participants who had access to restricted or confidential meeting documents shall not keep them after the meeting has concluded and are requested to secure delete them from their device(s).

Regarding the retention and disposal rules for the meeting documents published on the SIOFA website, the rules set in the Table 8 below shall apply.

Table A.9: Retention and disposal rules according to documents format and classification status.

Status	Format			
	Abstract	Full	Draft	Presentation
Public	Perpetual	Perpetual	n/a	n/a
Restricted	Perpetual	Perpetual	Disposal after the meeting	Perpetual
Confidential	Perpetual	Disposal after the meeting. Retention at the Secretariat	Disposal after the meeting	n/a
Closed-Session	Perpetual	Disposal after the meeting. Retention at the Secretariat	Disposal after the meeting	n/a

Annex A-1: Standardized cover page for SIOFA meeting document:

 SIOFA APSOI Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement Accord relatif aux Pêches dans le Sud de l'Océan Indien	
Meeting name	
<i>Meeting location and dates</i>	
Document code (##-##-##)	
Document title	
Delegation or entity (date)	
Document type	General information <input type="checkbox"/> Proposal or Working Paper <input type="checkbox"/> Information Paper <input type="checkbox"/>
Distribution	Public <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted* <input type="checkbox"/> Close session / Confidential ** <input type="checkbox"/>
Abstract	
Abstract text here	
Recommendations (for proposals and working papers only)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R1 • R2 	
<p><i>*Restricted documents may contain confidential information. Please do not distribute restricted documents in any form without the explicit permission of the SIOFA Secretariat and the data owner(s)/provider(s).</i></p> <p><i>**Closed session or Confidential documents are available only to members invited to closed sessions meeting or to heads of delegation.</i></p>	

Annex A-2: Submission and publication of scientific working group documents

Subject to any rules relating to the confidentiality of data and commercially sensitive information and financial matters, all Scientific Committee or any of its working groups or subsidiary bodies (collectively, SC in the sections below) meeting documents will be made publicly accessible on the SIOFA website.

1. SC meeting documents subject to rules relating to confidentiality of data and commercially sensitive information and financial matters will

a. Be made accessible only as restricted or confidential documents on the SIOFA website.

b. The title, author and optionally the abstract that contains no confidential data, will be made publicly available on the website along with a note that the document is available only as a restricted document

c. The content of restricted or confidential documents will not be visible to the public

2. Any document submitted to the SC originating from a contributor that is not a CCP, including the Secretariat, must be assessed for the risk that it may be subject to rules relating to the confidentiality of data and commercially sensitive information and financial matters.

a. Where there is any risk, the Executive Secretary must consult with the author, the appropriate scientific Chair, and the relevant CCPs before approving the document for submission.

3. Any document submitted by consultants will undergo a two-stage review process (see details in Annex B) that is intended to check for potential confidentiality issues and ensure that the quality of the paper is sufficient for submission to the scientific bodies of SIOFA. The final stage of this review process should clearly indicate whether the document access is to be restricted and to what level.

4. Any document submitted to the SC by a CCP must indicate, as a part of the document submission, if this document should be placed on the restricted section of the SIOFA website or if it is to be considered confidential.

5. Access to public documents on the SIOFA website is granted to everyone that can access the website.

6. Access to restricted documents on the SIOFA website is to be granted only to registered meeting participants (to a CP or a PFE and to a CP or a PFE official contact), and to officially registered SIOFA Observers. Restricted documents are not to be shared in any form, as per the confidentiality agreement of all SIOFA meetings. If a non-registered Observer or external scientist wishes to have access to a restricted document, he/she should make a request to the Secretariat, justify his/her need and fill in a Confidentiality Agreement (see **Annex A-3**). The Secretariat will then contact the relevant CCPs to obtain their consent prior to any transmission of documents.

7. Access to confidential documents on the SIOFA website is to be granted only to HoDs, or to members invited to specific closed sessions as per Rule 20 of the SIOFA Rules of Procedure. No exceptions are foreseen.

8. Revisions of SC documents

a. Revisions of documents prior to and through the course of a meeting will be made available on the SIOFA website.

b. Revised documents will be subject to the rules relating to confidentiality of data and commercially sensitive information and financial matters, and be made available as either a public or restricted document as appropriate

c. Revised documents will replace previous versions on the website, and will be denoted by a suffix indicating the revision number (e.g., rev1, rev2, etc.)

9. Meeting reports signed and approved by the Chair will be made available as public documents on the SIOFA website, unless an explicit request is made by CCPs to restrict access to the document.

Annex A-3 – Attestation of honour on the respect of confidentiality of data for non-registered Observers or external scientists to access restricted papers



CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT FOR NON-REGISTERED OBSERVERS OR EXTERNAL SCIENTISTS TO ACCESS RESTRICTED PAPERS

This Confidentiality ("Agreement") is entered into between Mr/Ms _____ ("the Observer") and _____ ("SIOFA Executive Secretary"), concerning the following document _____

- a. The Observer understands that the Confidential Information and Proprietary Data of SIOFA are not public and must ensure that reasonable steps are taken to protect the confidentiality of said information.
- b. The Observer agrees not to use any Confidential Information or Proprietary Data for their personal benefit or for the benefit of others.
- c. The Observer agrees that he or she will not disclose to any other person or entity, either directly or indirectly, the Confidential Information or Proprietary Data. Any use or disclosure of Confidential Information or Proprietary Data is cause for legal proceedings and sanctions.
- d. If this agreement is terminated for any reason, the Observer must destroy the information and data, and must not make any copies.

Drawn up in (place) _____, on (date) _____

Signature of the Observer

Signature of the Executive Secretary

Annex B - MOP-09-10 (Annex G) Proposed classification system for restricted and confidential documents and regulation of access by meeting participants.

Papers that present information considered restricted could be posted in a secured section of the website, and only their title and authors (and optionally the abstract) made publicly available. Additionally, confidential documents intended for closed sessions as provided in Rule 20 of the SIOFA Rules of Procedure might be provided only to members of those closed sessions.

Based on Annex A, we propose that a three-tier classification system be adopted for documents:

Tier 1 – Public documents

All meeting documents shall be made publicly available on the accessible part of the SIOFA website prior to any meeting, subject to any rules relating to the confidentiality of certain data and commercially sensitive information and financial matters. Meeting reports (including their annexes) signed/approved by the Chairperson shall be considered public documents.

Tier 2 – Restricted documents

Meeting documents subject to rules relating to confidentiality, shall be made accessible only via a secure part of the SIOFA website. Access to the restricted documents on of the website shall be made available only to official contacts (SIOFA Contracting Party or Participating Fishing Entity HoDs) and registered participants (including Observers) of a meeting that the documents are submitted to.

Non-registered Observers or external scientists can request the Secretariat to access restricted documents. However, non-registered Observers' or external scientists' access to restricted document shall be subordinated to the explicit consent of the relevant CCPs and the signature of a corresponding attestation of honour (Annex C).

Tier 3 – Confidential documents

According to Rule 20 art. 1 of the SIOFA Rules of Procedure, the Meeting of the Parties or the subsidiary body concerned can decide that exceptional circumstances require that a meeting, or part thereof, be held in closed session. Notwithstanding art. 1, art. 2 provides that closed meetings be arranged in any case for financial matters (restricted to budget contributors) and the selection and appointment of the Executive Secretary. Confidential documents are documents submitted for consideration in one of these closed sessions and shall therefore be made available only to members invited to the closed sessions.

No other access to confidential documents shall be foreseen.

However, we also note that in order to improve transparency and following the recommendations of MoP-04-14, we are proposing that document titles and authors (and optionally an abstract) of restricted and confidential documents also be made available on the public section of the SIOFA website. This would allow external observers and scientists to be aware of the existence of reports (but not the confidential content) that may be relevant to their work within and outside SIOFA.

Revisions of papers through the course of a meeting will be made available on the appropriate (public, restricted, or confidential) part of the SIOFA website, according to their original classification.