

**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-12-40**

# Proposal for the Designation of the Comoros’ lobster fishery as a New and Exploratory Fisheries

## Proposed by Japan

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Meeting** | Compliance Committee ✔  Meeting of the Parties ✔ |
| **Document type** | working paper ✔  information paper ☐ |
| **Distribution** | Public ✔  Restricted [1](#_bookmark0) ☐  Closed session document [2](#_bookmark1) ☐ |
| **Abstract** | |
| **This document briefly describes the proposed process through which could materialize the authorisation of the Comoros’ lobster fishery which has been examined through MoP11, the extraordinary meeting (SC-EXTRA2) and the Intersessional decision 2024-II(see SIOFA CIRCULAR n° 2024-40). As its status of fishery has not yet been designated , in this paper, we recommend to provide the status of “new and exploratory fishery” to the Comoros’ lobster fishery. Also, it is recommended to establish an interim monitoring measures until, in accordance with CMM17, the formal approval thereon as a new and exploratory fishery has been made in order for the Comoros to properly implement the requirements stipulated in SIOFA CIRCULAR n° 2024-40.** | |

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.

Southern Indian Ocean fisheries Agreement – SIOFA [www.siofa.org](http://www.siofa.org/)

|  |
| --- |
| **Recommendations** |
| * **To designate the Comoros’ lobster fishery as a New and Exploratory Fishery from the end of MoP12 to the beginning of MoP13.** * **To provide an interim authorization of the Comoros’ lobster fishery under the proposed designation process.** * **To establish interim monitoring measuresfor the Comoros New and Exploratory Fishery in accordance with CMM17.** * **To note that** **this designation is for 1 year from the end of MoP12 to the beginning of MoP13 and the MoP shall not consider any extension of the designation of Comoros lobster fishery unless CMM 17 has been complied with in full, including SC11 and CC10 consideration of the FOP and MoP13’s approval of a CMM submitted in accordance with all SIOFA procedural requirements.** * **To note the expected procedures including that Comoros are encouraged to prepare a draft of CMM stipulated in para 12 of CMM17 (2024) for SC’s review or comment in SC11.** |

# Proposal for the Designation of the Comoros’ lobster fishery as a New and Exploratory Fisheries

## Background

At MoP11 in June 2024, some CCPs expressed their concerns and stated that the Comoros was required to submit Bottom Fishing Impact Assessment (BFIA) on its lobster fishery before conducting it. In response, the MoP agreed that the SC will assess the BFIA regarding the Comoros’ lobster fishery in an extraordinary SC meeting and provide recommendations and advice to the MoP.

At the 2nd SC Extraordinary Meeting (SC-EXTRA2) on 7th November 2024, the SC assessed the BFIA and advised to the MoP that the BFIA proposed by Comoros met the requirements of the SIOFA BFIAS (Bottom Fishing Impact Assessment Standard).

Based on the recommendation by SC-EXTRA2, on 18th November 2024, Executive Secretary circulated SIOFA CIRCULAR n° 2024-36 that MoP Chairperson proposed the conditions for authorization of the Comoros’ lobster fishery and requested the response from Official contacts. On 18th December 2024, Executive Secretary circulated SIOFA CIRCULAR n° 2024-40 that eight CCPs responded and all of these responded positively to this proposal. As a result, Comoros’ lobster fishery approved to be authorized from 18th December 2024 to the timing when MoP12 reviews. In the same circular, MoP Chairperson requested CCPs to consider these comments at SC10 and intersessionally in order for the MoP12 to come up with appropriate recommendations.

At SC10 in March 2025, the SC noted that there was not enough time for Comoros to prepare and submit the logbook data as its fishing trip had only been completed recently, and therefore the SC agreed to review the data and the fishery after such data have become available. The status of the fishery, as was commented by some CCPs listed in SIOFA CIRCULAR n° 2024-40, is an issue to be considered in MoP12, but this was not discussed in SC10 thus there is no progress so far.

## Proposals

1. The status of fishery and interim authorization for Comoros lobster fishery

The status of Comoros lobster fishery shall be a New and Exploratory Fishery with reference to the paragraph 3 of CMM 17. In order to conduct the lobster fishery as a New and Exploratory fishery, the Comoros shall complete the necessary procedures and get approval to conduct it in accordance with CMM17, and at the same time, the MoP should examine how this fishery could tentatively be authorised before providing such approval.

Therefore, it is firstly recommended that MoP designates the Comoros lobster fishery as a New and Exploratory Fishery, in accordance with CMM 17. Secondly, it is recommended that the MoP provides an interim authorization to the Comoros lobster fishery under the following transition process, so that the formal procedures to get approval to conduct this fishery will be completed in accordance with CMM 17 in a timely fashion.

* + In accordance with CMM17(2024), the proponents shall develop a Fishery Operational Plan (FOP) which shall be reviewed by SC11 and CC10 in accordance with their established processes (e.g. Fisheries Operation Plan Checklists).
  + In accordance with CMM17(2024), the proponents shall develop a CMM for consideration by MoP13.
  + In accordance with paragraph 12 of CMM17(2024) the CMM shall be time bound for no more than 3-years from the commencement of the fishery (18th December 2024).

This authorization shall be made under the conditions such as TAC and TAE as stipulated in Annex1. The period of authorization is for 1 year from the end of MoP12 to the beginning of MoP13 and the MoP shall not consider any extension of the interim authorization unless CMM 17 has been complied with in full, including SC11 and CC10 consideration of the FOP and MoP13’s approval of a CMM submitted in accordance with all SIOFA procedural requirements.

2 Provisional monitoring measures

The MoP shall establish the following provisional monitoring measures with a view to properly monitoring and ensuring the compliance by the Comoro’s lobster fishery to the conditions (TAC, TAE) required by the intersessional decision, before its approval for the Comoros to conduct this proposed fishery as a new and exploratory fishery in accordance with CMM 17(2024).

* + In order to monitor the use of the TAC in a transparent manner, the Comoros shall send monthly catch reports of its lobster fishery to the Secretariat using the template in Annex II.

The Secretariat will circulate this report to CCPs without delay.

* + In order to monitor the use of the TAE in a transparent manner, the Comoros shall ensure the FV Rinascente reports daily tothe Secretariat of the trap settings, including the position of traps (30 minutes resolution), using the template in Annex III. This daily report is required when at least one trap remains to be set under the water.
  + The Secretariat will circulate this report to CCPs as soon as possible during its business hours[[1]](#footnote-1).

3 The expected procedure

The expected procedure is as follows;

* + From MoP12 to the beginning of of MoP13：

The Comoros’ lobster fishery to be provisionally authorised under the conditions in Annex I. SC11 will review all documents and data, including FOP, DCAP, “annual vessel catch and effort data”, “observer data”, reports required under the provisional monitoring measures (described in the section 2. Provisional Monitoring Measures), and other relevant documents/data required by relevant CMMs. Comoros are encouraged to prepare a draft of CMM stipulated in para 12 of CMM17 (2024) for SC’s review or comment. The Comoros also follow revised or new conditions if SC11 recommends any.

* + After the MoP13 ：

The Comoros’ lobster fishery can be authorised provided MoP13 approves the review and the recommendations from SC11 and adopts them with a CMM stipulated in para 12 of CMM17 (2024), and formally approve to conduct this fishery as a New and Exploratory Fishery. The Comoros also follow revised or new conditions if MoP recommends any.

## Recommendations

* **To designate the Comoros’ lobster fishery as a New and Exploratory Fishery from the end of MoP12 to the beginning of MoP13.**
* **To provide an interim authorization of the Comoros’ lobster fishery under the proposed designation process.**
* **To establish interim monitoring measures for the Comoros New and Exploratory Fishery in accordance with CMM17.**
* **To note that this designation is for 1 year from the end of MoP12 to the beginning of MoP13 and the MoP shall not consider any extension of the designation of Comoros lobster fishery unless CMM 17 has been complied with in full, including SC11 and CC10 consideration of the FOP and MoP13’s approval of a CMM submitted in accordance with all SIOFA procedural requirements.**
* **To note the expected procedures including that Comoros are encouraged to prepare a draft of CMM stipulated in para 12 of CMM17 (2024) for SC’s review or comment in SC11.**

**Annex I - Conditions for the Comoros’ lobster fishery**

1. The vessel shall be subject to a maximum Total Allowable Catch of 300 tonnes (all crustacean species combined) annually.
2. The vessel shall be subject to a maximum Total Allowable Effort of 150 days per calendar year and a maximum of 14 days fishing per seamount per trip.
3. When significant quantities of VME indicator taxa are found (SIOFA CMM 01 Annex 1) in or attached to traps more than 1% of the total lobster weight per trap or more than 0.2 kg, whichever is reached first, the vessel will move on to the next fishing ground one (1) nautical mile away.
4. Gear type shall be limited to single trap method only.

**Annex II - Template for monthly catch reports of lobster fisheries.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Vessel name |  |
| Vessel flag |  |
| Month |  |
| Catch live weight (Kg) (All crustacean species combined) |  |

**Annex** **III - Template for daily lobster fisheries reporting to the Secretariat.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Reporting number |  |
| Reporting date |  |
| Vessel name |  |
| Vessel flag |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Trap ID | Set date and time | Haul date and time | Set position (30 minutes resolution) | The total catch per species(kg) | |
| *Jasus* | *Projasus* |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

\*Alternative procedure when a daily report using Annex III is impossible due to internet disconnection

1. When an internet connection is not available due to unforeseen reason or force majeure, the master of the fishing vessel shall report to its Fisheries Monitoring Centre (FMC) the followings;

1) occurrence of an internet disconnection and the reason therefor

2) if it is on the day the vessel sets the first trap in a certain sea mountain during the trip, the set position of the first trap in 30 minutes resolution.

3) if it is on the day the vessel hauls the last trap in a certain sea mountain during the trip, the haul position of that last trap in 30 minutes resolution.

2. FMC shall convey the information listed in 1 to the Secretariat without delay. The Secretariat shall circulate the received information as soon as possible during its business hours.

3. After the internet connection is revived, all the daily reports during the disconnection period shall, without delay, be submitted to the Secretariat using AnnexIII. The Secretariat shall circulate the received reports as soon as possible during its business hours.

1. The Secretariat need not to review the content of the received reports till annual compliance review process. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)