



10th Meeting of the SIOFA Compliance Committee (CC10) and 13th Meeting of the Parties to SIOFA (MoP13)

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Review of the options to facilitate and address the capacity building needs of CCP developing States, including Article 13

The SIOFA Secretariat

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Abstract	This paper responds to the tasking from the twelfth Meeting of the Parties (MoP12 Report, para. 368). It presents the results of a second round of consultations with CCP developing States, setting out the capacity-building needs identified by those CCPs, the options selected to address those needs, proposed implementation modalities, and indicative budget estimates. The paper also provides an overview of existing mechanisms available to support developing States under Article 13 of the Agreement. Rev 1 includes the prioritisation and the wording submitted by Thailand.

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 CC to **consider and revise** the options of capacity building related to Compliance listed in this document, and **recommend** its preferences to the MoP
- The MoP to **note** the capacity building needs and selected options submitted by CCP developing States as presented in Tables 1 to 4 of this paper;
- The MoP to **decide** whether to include projects aimed at capacity development for SIDS within the scope of a potential consultancy to develop a Capacity-Building Action Plan;
- The MoP to **endorse** the recruitment of a consultant to prepare a Capacity Building Action Plan, that will be assessed during SC12, CC11 and presented for adoption to MoP14.

Review of the options to facilitate and address the capacity building needs of CCP developing States, including Article 13

Background

Developing States and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) bordering the SIOFA Agreement Area face administrative and technical constraints in implementing the Agreement and its conservation and management measures (CMMs). Capacity building strengthens the technical skills, institutional capabilities, and resources of these States to enable them to fulfil their obligations effectively.

At MoP11, the Parties established a standing agenda item on Article 13 and tasked the Secretariat to develop a paper on existing support mechanisms. At MoP12, the Secretariat was further tasked to conduct a second round of consultations with CCP developing States on their preferred capacity-building options, and to submit an updated paper for review by SC11, CC10, and MoP13 (MoP12 Report, paragraph 368). This paper fulfils that tasking and incorporates outcomes from SC11.

Legal framework for capacity-building

Article 13 of the Agreement

Article 13 (Special Requirements of Developing States) is the legal basis for recognising and addressing the needs of developing States bordering the Agreement Area. Its key provisions are:

- Article 13(1) requires Contracting Parties to give full recognition to the special requirements of developing States bordering the SIOFA Area, in particular the least-developed among them and SIDS, in relation to the conservation and management of fishery resources and their sustainable development.
- Article 13(2) requires Contracting Parties to recognise the vulnerability of least-developed States and SIDS dependent on fishery resources, the need to protect subsistence, small-scale, and artisanal fishers and fish workers, and the need to ensure that conservation measures do not place a disproportionate burden on these States.
- Article 13(3) requires Contracting Parties to cooperate to enhance the ability of least-developed States and SIDS to manage fishery resources, develop their own fisheries, and participate in fisheries for such resources.
- Article 13(4) provides that such cooperation may include financial assistance, human resources development, technical assistance, and technology transfer directed towards data collection and analysis, stock assessment, scientific research, monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS), capacity building, observer programmes, and participation in the Meeting of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies.

Participation and Transparency

Ensuring the full and effective participation of CCP developing States in SIOFA's decision-making and compliance processes is a key aspect of operationalising Article 13. In accordance with Rule 10.3(g) of the Rules of Procedure, consideration of the special requirements of CCP developing States is a standing agenda item at all ordinary meetings

Existing Capacity Building mechanisms

Secretariat Capacity-Building activities

Between MoP12 and MoP13, the SIOFA Secretariat undertook one capacity-building activity. At the request of the Cook Islands, the Data Officer (DO) spent one week at the Ministry of Marine Resources providing training and technical support in fisheries data management, with an emphasis on Microsoft Access databases and SIOFA data-checking procedures. Training covered general database modelling and best practices, the design and construction of a fishery database including tables, forms, and queries, an introduction to VBA, and a focused session on checking and importing data from Excel into Access. The DO also reviewed data files received from industry and observers at the Ministry, provided additional support to the laboratory officer regarding water analysis data.

Participation Budget

In accordance with Financial Regulation 3.4, SIOFA's draft budget includes a provision to allocate funds towards financial assistance for the purposes outlined in Article 13.4, specifically to support developing States bordering the SIOFA Area, in particular the least developed among them and SIDS.

Capacity building for non-CCP developing States

No formal capacity-building framework currently exists for non-CCP developing States bordering the Agreement Area. SIOFA's current approach is as follows:

- All adjacent coastal States are invited to attend SIOFA meetings as observers, and financial assistance is available to facilitate their participation.
- The Secretariat contacts neighbouring coastal States annually to encourage accession to the Agreement and provides support throughout that process.

EU Sustainable Western Indian Ocean Programme (SWIOP)

The EU Sustainable Western Indian Ocean Programme (SWIOP), implemented by Expertise France, is anticipated to commence in the second quarter of 2026, with the Memorandum of Understanding still under negotiation. The programme supports SIOFA's capacity building objectives for eligible CCPs, including Mauritius, Seychelles, and Comoros.

Results of the Second Round of Consultation

In accordance with the tasking from MoP12 (paragraph 368, MoP12 Report), the Secretariat initiated, on 22 July 2025, a second round of consultations with CCP developing States on their preferred capacity-building options. Seven CCPs were consulted: China, Cook Islands, Comoros, India, Mauritius, Seychelles, and Thailand. Each CCP was invited to prioritise its capacity-building needs, select from the options proposed in document MoP-12-25-Rev2, and indicate its preferred implementation modality.

Results are presented in the four tables below, organised by theme: General Capacity (Table 1), Compliance (Table 2), Data Management (Table 3), and Science (Table 4).

Tables legend:

	Shared need (2+ CCPs)
	Training delivered

Mauritius informed the Secretariat of a priority scale going from 1 being the highest priority, to 6 (being the lowest priority). The Secretariat associated number 1-2 to High priority, 3 and 4 to Medium priority and 5-6 Low priority.

Table 1: General Capacity

CCP	ID	Capacity-Building Need	Selected Option(s)	Implementation – Practical method	Priority	Estimated Budget
IND	28	Strengthening exchanges & cooperation	Option proposed by the CCP: Virtual experience-sharing meetings + study visits.		Low	TBD
IND	29	Resource conservation	Option proposed by the CCP: Policy workshops in India with international case studies.		Medium	TBD
IND	30	Identifying needs & addressing mandatory requirements	Option proposed by the CCP: Annual review meetings (virtual) + targeted physical workshops.		Medium	TBD

Table 2: Compliance

CCP	ID#	Need	Option	Implementation	Priority	Estimated Budget
SYC	13	Advanced surveillance operations, data collection & analysis	Option 2; IFacilitate workshops by a key expert on advanced surveillance operations, data collection, and analysis, including risk assessment in fisheries surveillance.	In-person workshop by key expert using real case studies	High	TBD
SYC	15	Support for acquiring/maintaining satellite & electronic monitoring systems	Option 1: Facilitate workshops by a key expert in the various satellite technologies used to monitor fisheries activities, including data analysis techniques for fisheries monitoring. Option 2; Facilitate engagement with potential service providers of such systems.	In-person workshop by key expert followed by virtual sessions with suppliers	High	TBD
SYC	14	Specialized training for enforcement officers	Option 1: Undertake in-country missions to conduct training in the SIOFA Port Inspection Scheme. Option 2 Facilitate workshops by a key expert on species identification of key SIOFA Species	In-person training in Seychelles with port-side practical sessions and facilitated workshop by Species ID expert	High	TBD

CCP	ID#	Need	Option	Implementation	Priority	Estimated Budget
			Option 3 could be considered if there are demands from many Members³			
IND	14		Option proposed by the CCP: Develop and distribute India-specific illustrated guides + hybrid training.		Medium	TBD
IND	27	Advanced surveillance and monitoring systems	Option proposed by the CCP: In-person regional workshops on satellite/VMS/EMS use, plus online modules for continuous learning.		High	TBD
SYC	16	Strengthening regional cooperation for information sharing & joint surveillance	Option 1: Proactively support ongoing regional initiatives aimed at sharing information regionally and undertaking joint surveillance (HSBI) in our capacity as an RFMO.	Regional in-person coordination meetings + virtual HSBI planning	Medium	TBD
SYC	17	Developing/participating in regional MCS networks	Option 1: Proactively support ongoing regional initiatives aimed at sharing information regionally and undertaking joint surveillance (HSBI) in our capacity as an RFMO.	In-person at regional MCS meetings	Medium	TBD
IND	26	Regional cooperation & joint surveillance for regional MCS Networks	Option proposed by the CCP: Table-top exercises virtually + one physical joint patrol planning meeting.		Medium	TBD
MUS	12	Strengthening of port state measures in connection with the implementation of SIOFA CMMs	Option 1: Undertake in-country missions to conduct training in the SIOFA Port Inspection Scheme. Option 3: Support for integration of SIOFA Port Inspection Scheme into domestic port inspection procedures	In-person training sessions in Mauritius	Low	TBD

³ This option has been deleted has no other CCP raised this need.

CCP	ID#	Need	Option	Implementation	Priority	Estimated Budget
IND	12	Strengthening of port state measures in connection with the implementation of SIOFA CMMs	Option proposed by the CCP: Onsite port inspector training at major Indian ports (e.g., Kochi, Chennai).		High	TBD
CHN	2	Improve compliance knowledge and language skills to effectively fulfill SIOFA obligations.	Option proposed by the CP during the 2nd consultation: Compliance training and language skills improvement	Online workshop	Medium	TBD
COM	25	Improve inspection techniques in ports and vessels				TBD

Table 3: Data management

CCP	ID #	Need	Selected Option(s)	Implementation Method	Priority	Estimated Budget
SYC	21	Data management & processing to meet SIOFA reporting obligations	Option 1: Gap analysis and in-country support workshop in the CCP Fisheries data collection and management centre. Identification of CMM requirements and relevant data available in CCP systems. Option 3; Support to establish or enhance CCP fisheries information database, and assistance in building standardized queries or reports that would generate appropriate datasets ready for submission according to SIOFA CMM and templates.	In-person technical workshop in Seychelles; remote data management support	High	TBD
IND	21	Data management & processing to meet SIOFA reporting obligations	Option proposed by the CCP: Onsite gap analysis workshop in Mumbai, Kochi or Chennai, followed by virtual dashboard-based reporting training.	Onsite gap analysis workshop+ virtual dashboard-based reporting training	High	TBD

COK	21.a	Training on MS Access database	Proposed option by the CCP	Requesting Data Officer, to train our data Manager how to develop and use a Microsoft Access database. Training may also include how to: - Input e-logs into the database - Input observer data - Extract data and create reports - Smart PDF links (more details when starting) - Create rules for data quality checks - ...Etc Host Data Officer in COK or send COK data manager to RUN.	Completed Only need for COK	SIOFA Data Officer provided training in 2025⁴
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⁴ See p.2 of this paper.

The Options in Table 4 were provided either by the CCP (if indicated), if not the options were proposed by the Secretariat (Science Officer) during consultation with the Secretary.

Table 4 – Science

CCP	ID#	Need	Options	Implementation – Practical option	Priority	Estimated Budget
SYC	18	Training on CPUE standardization processes	Option 1: Provide training on different CPUE calculation methods and how to standardize them across regions and fleets, including addressing biases and ensuring consistency in data. Option 2: Offer hands-on workshops on using statistical software (e.g., R, SAS) to standardize CPUE data and analyse catch trends across different fleet types and fishing locations.	In-person workshop in Seychelles, delivered by external CPUE/data experts; follow-up virtual peer review sessions	High	TBD
IND	18		Option proposed by the CCP: Virtual R-software training followed by collaborative data-cleaning exercises		Medium	TBD
SYC	19	Development & implementation of Harvest Control Rules (HCR) and Management Strategy Evaluations (MSE)	Option 1: Offer workshops focused on the theory and application of HCRs and MSE, emphasizing their role in ensuring sustainable fishery management and adapting to uncertainty. Option 2: Facilitate hands-on simulation exercises where participants develop HCRs and evaluate them through MSE models, helping them understand trade-offs and best management practices.	In-person regional workshop with hands-on simulation exercises, complemented by virtual follow-up	High	TBD
IND	19		Option proposed by the CCP: Simulation-based workshops (India/Norway model) + remote mentoring from experts.		Low	TBD

CCP	ID#	Need	Options	Implementation – Practical option	Priority	Estimated Budget
MUS	9	Undertaking stock assessment studies for deepwater demersal species	Option 1: Provide training on stock assessment methodologies, focusing on deep-water demersal species, including surplus production models, biomass estimation, and age-based assessments. Note that SC10 noted that other institutions (e.g. SPC, ICES) are providing stock assessment training that SIOFA CCP developing States might be able to participate in. Option 2; Organize workshops on the use of stock assessment software (e.g., Stock Synthesis, VPA, CASAL, JABBA, or biomass models) tailored to deep-water species.	In-person workshops dispensed by expert and organized by bodies or institutions where Mauritius and other participants could attend.	High (2)	TBD
IND	9		Option proposed by the CCP: In-person modelling workshops using Indian datasets + follow-up online clinics.		High	TBD
MUS	10 , 23	Preparation of a BFIA report, impact and risk assessment methods to incorporate in BFIA	Option 2: Conduct workshops on the preparation of BFIA reports, with a focus on data collection, impact pathways, and the relationship between fishing practices and ecosystem health	In-person regional workshop by expert in the field.	High (1)	TBD
COM	10, 23			Complementary training in an English-speaking State	High	TBD
THA	10, 23		Option 1: Offer training on various risk assessment frameworks (e.g., qualitative and quantitative risk models) and tools, with a focus on identifying the potential risks		High	TBD

CCP	ID#	Need	Options	Implementation – Practical option	Priority	Estimated Budget
			associated with bottom fishing on benthic habitats. <u>Option 1 – Training on risk assessment frameworks and tools, including qualitative and quantitative approaches, to support the assessment of potential impacts of bottom fishing on benthic habitats.</u>			
IND	10, 23		Option proposed by the CCP: Virtual introductory courses + case-study workshops in Kochi or Chennai with SIOFA/ICES experts.		High	TBD
MUS	11	Collection and analysis of biological samples, such as gonads and otoliths, of deep-water demersal species	Option 1: Organize laboratory training sessions on the extraction and analysis of gonads and otoliths from deep-water species, including aging techniques and reproductive analysis	In-person workshop in Mauritius	Medium (3)	TBD
IND	11		Option proposed by the CCP: Onboard hands-on training with Indian research vessels, supplemented with virtual microscopy sessions.		Medium	TBD
THA	8, 22	Identification of VMEs	Option 3: Collaboration with Marine Taxonomists		<u>Medium</u>	TBD
MUS	8, 22	Identification of VMEs [indicator taxa]	Option 1: Offer targeted training on recognizing VME indicator species, such as certain corals, sponges, and other benthic organisms. Provide visual aids and interactive sessions with specimen samples, photos, and video footage of these taxa in situ.	Virtual workshop for identification methodologies, updating identification guides, translation of the SIOFA	Medium (4)	TBD

CCP	ID#	Need	Options	Implementation – Practical option	Priority	Estimated Budget
				VMEs identification guide to local languages		
IND	8,22		Option proposed by the CCP: Field-based training on Indian research vessels with virtual refresher sessions			TBD
MUS	7	Identification of deep-water sharks	Option 3: Organize workshops focusing on the morphological characteristics and identification of deep-water sharks using field guides and expert-led sessions	Species Identification virtual workshops	Low (6)	TBD
IND	7		Option proposed by the CCP: Theoretical modules on DNA barcoding and lab workshops in India with FAO or SIOFA experts.	Hybrid approach: online and in-person	High	TBD
CHN	4	Strengthening its capacity in drafting and submitting BFIA documents, to ensure timely and accurate reporting in line with SIOFA requirements.	Option proposed by the CCP: Conduct a step-by-step training session under the Science Committee framework for developing States, covering the entire process of preparing a BFIA.	Conduct a step-by-step training session under the Science Committee framework	High	TBD
THA	24	Improve onboard data collection in trawl fishery	Option 3: Data Quality Control and Analysis Workshops	Conduct workshops focused on quality control procedures for onboard data, including strategies for minimizing errors in data entry and how to flag outliers or anomalies during data collection.	Medium	TBD

CCP	ID#	Need	Options	Implementation – Practical option	Priority	Estimated Budget
IND	24		Option proposed by the CCP: Combination of onboard practical training in Indian waters and online QA/QC sessions.		Low	TBD

Conclusion

The second round of consultations has confirmed that developing CCPs continue to face technical and operational challenges in implementing their obligations under the Agreement, and CMMs established thereunder. The prioritisation exercise has identified areas where regional or multi-stakeholder approaches could enhance efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Key cross-cutting needs include practical, hands-on training, in-person workshops to strengthen scientific, compliance, data management and general capacity.

It is suggested to put in place a Capacity Building Action Plan that could establish a sequenced calendar of priority actions from January 2027, identify necessary budgetary allocations, and facilitate coordination with relevant partners and experts. The Capacity-Building Action Plan could be developed by a consultant financed through budget line 9.3 (Consultant/Expert/Service Outsourced) or by the Reserve Funds.

The consultant's scope of work could include the following tasks:

1. Define transparent criteria and vulnerability indices to determine eligibility for capacity building assistance;
2. Determine the budget required for in-person workshops and other priority activities;
3. Consult with relevant stakeholders, including CCPs, SIOFA subsidiary bodies, and potential partners, to organise training and workshops in the most appropriate format (in-person or virtual).

To ensure coherent and structured implementation, the MoP may wish to consider initiating the development of a Capacity-Building Action Plan through the recruitment of an expert consultant.