

SOUTHWEST INDIAN OCEAN FISHERIES COMMISSION (SWIOFC)

Tenth Session

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COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE SWIOFC AND THE SIOFA

The SWIOFC and the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) are two adjacent Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs) in the Southwest Indian Ocean. The SWIOFC area of competence includes waters within the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of its 12 Members States while SIOFA mandate covers Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) excluding tuna species but extending also to the Southeast Indian Ocean (area covered by the SIOFA is shown in Figure 1). SIOFA has regulatory powers to adopt conservation and management measures that are binding on Contracting Parties



Figure 1. Map of the SIOFA Area

The Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) was signed in Rome the 7th July 2006 and entered into force in June 2012. To date, SIOFA has nine Contracting Parties: Australia, Cook Islands, European Union, France on behalf of its Indian Ocean Territories, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mauritius, Seychelles and Thailand, one Participating fishing entity: Chinese Taipei; and one cooperating non-Contracting Party: Comoros. Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique and New Zealand are also signatories to the Agreement but have not ratified it.

Collaboration between SWIOFC and SIOFA was discussed at recent meetings of both organizations. A Concept Note for a possible common project was presented at the 5th SIOFA Meeting of the Parties (MoP5), Thailand, 25-29 June 2018. At the 9th SWIOFC Session, South Africa, 9-12 October 2018, the SIOFA Executive Secretary proposed the following three main areas for a SWIOFC and SIOFA possible collaboration:

1. Research on the transboundary demersal fishery resources of the Saya de Malha bank fisheries;
2. Activities aimed at fighting IUU fishing activities;
3. Projects to promote the application of SIOFA Conservation and Management Measures.

Following the request of the 9th SWIOFC, the SWIOFC Secretary attended the 6th SIOFA Meeting of the Parties (MoP6), Mauritius, 1-5 July 2019, where he delivered a presentation elaborating on the three main areas of possible collaboration. For the Saya de Malha bank, a formal request should be put forward by the two Member Countries involved; for the fight against IUU, SWIOFC would support a possible participation of SIOFA in the SADC MCSCC Centre that is going to be established; and SWIOFC could promote application of SIOFA's CMM if a specific proposal on how this should be done is received.

The presentation by the SWIOFC Secretary was well received but the SIOFA MoP6 did not address the details of how the collaboration between SWIOFC and SIOFA should be implemented. It should be noted that SIOFA was in a transitional phase as the new Executive Secretary was expected to be elected at the meeting.

Members are invited to suggest if the SWIOFC Secretariat should continue to seek collaboration with SIOFA and in what forms.