

08 May 2020

IOTC CIRCULAR 2020-22

Dear Sir/Madam

CALL FOR COMMENTS ON THE TERMS OF REFERENCE TO OPERATIONALISE THE *FAO VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES ON THE MARKING OF FISHING GEAR*

In 2019, the Commission requested the Secretariat to initiate a process to develop draft guidelines on how IOTC might operationalize the *FAO voluntary guidelines on the marking of fishing gear*. This process was to utilize the expertise of IOTC technical bodies and review the guidelines by electronic means, before being made available to the Commission in 2020.

The 2020 meeting of the Working Party on the Implementation Conservation and Management Measures (WPICMM03) agreed to the IOTC Secretariat developing a Terms of Reference, without prejudging the recruitment of a consultant, to operationalise the *FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear (VGMFG)*. The WPICMM03 further agreed that the Terms of Reference should be circulated to CPCs prior to consideration by 2020 meetings of the Compliance Committee, Standing Committee on Administration and Finance and the Commission.

In the attachment, you will find the Terms of Reference that has been developed by the IOTC Secretariat in collaboration with the Fishing Operations and Technology Branch of the FAO which has had a leading role in the development of the *FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear* and associated pilot projects on gear markings.

I invite CPCs to review the attached Terms or Reference. Comments, if any, should be submitted to the IOTC Secretariat no later than 22 May 2020 using the following e-mail address, IOTC-Secretariat@fao.org, with "*FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear*" in the subject line.

Yours sincerely



Christopher O'Brien
Executive Secretary

Attachments:

- Terms of Reference to operationalise the *FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear*

Distribution

IOTC Contracting Parties: Australia, Bangladesh, China, Comoros, Eritrea, European Union, France (Territories), India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Rep of), Japan, Kenya, Rep. of Korea, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, United Rep. of Tanzania, Thailand, United Kingdom ("BIOT"), Yemen. **Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties:** Liberia, Senegal.

Intergovernmental Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations. Chairperson IOTC. Copy to: FAO Headquarters, FAO Representatives to CPCs.

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Terms of Reference for developing a scheme to operationalise the *FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear (VGMFG)*

For the purpose of this Terms of Reference, the term fishing gear shall include fish aggregating devices (FADs), both drifting and anchored.

The specific purpose of the Terms of Reference is to:

- 1) Identify, through risk assessments, fishing gears which are widely used in IOTC fisheries that can contribute to marine pollution through abandonment, becoming lost or are otherwise discarded. Such risk assessments methodology to be developed based on the guidelines provided in the Annex of the VGMFG.
- 2) Collate, for comparative purposes, the relevant IOTC regulations or administrative measures and international instruments/guidelines that pertain to the marking of fishing gears as identified for marking in the risk assessment that can contribute to marine pollution through abandonment, becoming lost or are otherwise discarded.
- 3) Assess existing IOTC measures to allow for the effective implementation, monitoring, control and enforcement of a fishing gear marking scheme in IOTC fisheries, including the removal and any other enforcement action related to unmarked fishing gear.
- 4) Consider how measures specified in para 3 may be improved and where a need is identified prepare drafts for proposals of new measures.
- 5) Review the purpose and the design of existing fishing gear markers relevant to IOTC gears identified for marking, particularly in the light of practicality for placement on fishing gear, impact on fishing efficiency (catchability), affordability, safety of use, environmental impact and technological developments.
- 6) Consideration given to the design of existing fishing gear markers and how they may be improved to better meet requirements identified in para 5.
- 7) Consider the relationship between marking for licensing/authorisation and marking for visibility, location, options for avoidance and identification of ownership.
- 8) Review the practicality of identifying and separating areas and fisheries:
 - a. territorial sea
 - b. exclusive economic zone
 - c. areas beyond national jurisdiction
 - d. artisanal fisheries
 - e. semi-industrial fisheries
 - f. industrial fisheries
- 9) Raise awareness of:
 - a. the detriment to the environment, the safety of navigation, and the risk to life at sea, associated with poorly marked or abandoned gear.



b. the benefits of the marking of fishing gear

- 10) Consider and determine capacity-building requirements for the attachment of markers to fishing gear.
- 11) Publish a report of its findings and conclusions for consideration by the IOTC Working Party on the Implementation of Conservation and Management Measures, Compliance Committee, Standing Committee on Administration and Finance, and the Commission.