



## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO IORA FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION AND COORDINATION OF IORA ACTION PLAN ON FISHERIES, AQUACULTURE AND MARINE ENVIRONMENT**

### **Concept Note: Organisation and coordination of the Blue Economy Workshop in La Reunion on IUU fishing, 23-24 March 2022**

#### **Topic: « Moving toward the development and adoption of IORA Guidelines to prevent entry of IUU fisheries products within IORA MS's supply chains »**

##### **A. Background Information**

Illegal unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, foreign and national, undermines the sustainable management and exploitation of the world's fisheries resources. The impacts of IUU fishing are first environmental driving the depletion of fish stocks, and secondly social and economic, affecting those working in the fisheries sector, and communities depending primarily on these resources.

The objective of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14, is to 'conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources'. A key target associated to SDG 14 – to eliminate IUU fishing by 2020 – has not been achieved and combating IUU fishing remains a momentous challenge at the global level, including for Members of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).

IUU fishing constitutes a persistent and pressing problem estimated to account for up to USD23 billion annually in regions of the Eastern Indian Ocean alone (FAO/CSIRO/APFIC 2021). The effects of IUU fishing can be severe, particularly for small-island and coastal developing states heavily dependent on fisheries, and include adverse impacts on peoples' livelihoods, food security, national economies and the environment. Countries unable to fulfil international obligations for fisheries management and governance risk incurring trade sanctions on their fisheries exports, a growing issue as export markets tighten their controls. Furthermore, IUU fishing is increasingly associated with national and transnational organized criminal activities, although the evidence remains mixed.

The importance of this issue is reflected in the objective of the IORA Working Group on the Blue Economy (WGBE)'s Work Plan (2020-2023) "to combat IUU fishing in IORA region" which plans as expected results "Port State measures among IORA MS harmonised" and "Reduction of IUU fishing activities in the Region".

France joined the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) in 2001 as Dialogue Partner and became Member State in December 2019. The IORA and France through the Agence Française de Développement (French Development Agency) (AFD) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the 9th of March 2020 for 'Strengthening the Capacities of IORA in Promoting the Blue Economy and Fisheries Management'.

The partnership supports the implementation of the IORA Action Plan (2017-2021) with an allocation of EUR1 million over three years. It offers expertise, training, networking and material resources to decision makers, officials and experts working to promote regional cooperation in blue economy and fisheries management issues.

The support is constituted of a main resident expert who provides continuous technical assistance to the IORA Secretariat in implementing the Work Plan of the Working Group on the Blue Economy (WGBE) and IORA Core Group on Fisheries Management (CGFM) Work Plan. The AFD support also includes a dedicated envelope (“Study fund”) to recruit additional specialised experts and/or conduct technical activities requiring specific experience and knowledge.

This concept note describes the planned workshop to be hosted by France on 23-24 March 2022 in La Reunion on IUU fishing and focusing on “Moving toward the development and adoption of IORA Guidelines to prevent entry of IUU fisheries products within IORA MS’s supply chains”.

## **B. Regional Context**

Among several maritime security threats in the Indian Ocean, Illegal, Unregulated, and Unreported (IUU) fishing is considered one of the most significant. IUU fishing has significant negative impacts on the sustainable management of fisheries resources leading to losses of government revenue, employment, fisheries value-chains and decreases in food security.

A range of organizations and initiatives support activities to combat IUU fishing in the Indian Ocean among them the Regional Plan of Action to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices including IUU fishing (RPOA-IUU) and the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC). Significant progress has been achieved in combating IUU fishing in the industrial fishery thanks to the efforts deployed by Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) such as the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and recent initiatives such as the SMARTFISH project and the SWIOFISH Programme. These achievements should not overlook the magnitude of IUU fishing in the small-scale marine and inland fisheries, which is backwashing the efforts made in fisheries management so far. There is a necessity to reinforce capacities in the legal and judiciary mechanisms so that natural and legal persons supporting or engaged in IUU fishing activities could be sanctioned. For these measures to be effective, it would also be imperative to ensure transparency and exchange of information on IUU vessels through regional cooperation.

The problem of IUU fishing is also severe in the north-west Indian Ocean region. Maritime security has largely been restored with an efficient and deterring control of the piracy. However, such a situation has become favourable to increased IUU fishing activities. In this context, the Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS) systems in place to deter piracy and IUU fishing should complement each other and develop synergies.

## **C. Proposal**

ASEAN has developed in 2015 guidelines preventing entry of IUU fish products into its members supply chain. The IORA Secretariat has been positive about the desirability and possibility of IORA MS to develop and adopt similar guidelines. This workshop will mark the start of a process of considering such guidelines and these will be drafted and adopted in 2022.

The aim of this workshop is to endorse a roadmap establishing the need for such guidelines and providing thoughts on what thematic domains these guidelines are to cover, and what progress will need to occur to take us to the next meeting and the draft guidelines. In line with the European Union, France, together with lead countries on fisheries within the CGFM, will coordinate the process to facilitate the work with regards to these guidelines. The roadmap will be prepared prior to the workshop by the fisheries management expert and MCS/IUU expert mobilised under the AFD Study Fund and will then be submitted by France to the IORA Secretariat for prior validation/comment.

Through the AFD Technical Assistance, France provides since May 2020 support to the achievement of the objective of the WGBE's Work Plan (2020-2023) "to combat IUU fishing in IORA region" and related activities as planned in the Work Plan. In this context, the AFD Technical Assistance to IORA organised a webinar on 16 September 2021 on "Combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and especially through PSMA application in the IORA region". The general objective of this webinar was to present recent developments, measures and tools to combat IUU fishing in the IORA region with particular emphasis on Port State Measures. As part of this webinar was discussed the importance for IORA Member States (MS) to ratify and comply with the FAO PSMA but also to foster the exchange of information on IUU in the region. The AFD Technical Assistance also conducted an assessment of the capacity needs required (human and institutional) and the current level of implementation of Port State Measures in the IORA region and undertook an analysis of measures to combat IUU fishing in the IORA region. The results of these studies which were circulated to IORA Member States were presented during the webinar.

In view of the high importance of the issue and to continue the efforts deployed to combat IUU fishing in the region but also to achieve the current WGBE Work Plan, France in consultation with the IORA Secretariat proposed to host a workshop on IUU fishing in La Reunion on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> March 2022. This workshop will have a hybrid format and will be partially held physically and virtually.

#### **D. Objectives of the workshop**

The main objective of the workshop is to draw the attention of the IORA MS on the issue of IUU fishing in the IORA region and how the development and adoption of regional Guidelines to prevent entry of IUU fisheries products within IORA MS's supply chains can be key to contribute to sustainable management of marine fisheries resources

The specific objectives of the workshop are the following:

- Present the main results of the activities completed by IORA/TA on the issue of IUU (illegal, unreported and unregulated) fishing in IORA region;
- Discuss the key thematic areas and the process towards the development and adoption of Guidelines for preventing the entry of fish and fish products from IUU fishing activities into IORA MS's supply chains;
- Present some of the lessons learnt and progresses made by some IORA MS and build on regional experiences which adopted similar guidelines;
- Provide context, by showcasing some innovative initiatives, services and tools that have recently been deployed in the combat of IUU fishing across IORA MS;
- Reach an agreement among the IORA MS on the roadmap for the adoption of Guidelines to prevent entry of IUU fisheries products within IORA MS's supply chains.

## **E. Envisioned Outcomes of the workshop**

The main outcome of the workshop will be an endorsed roadmap for development and adoption of Guidelines to prevent entry of IUU fisheries products within IORA MS's supply chains.

## **F. Benefits to Member Countries**

The development and adoption of regional Guidelines to prevent entry of IUU fisheries products within IORA MS's supply chains will contribute to sustainable management of marine fisheries resources. The fundamental principle of the development and adoption of the IORA Guidelines is to provide the essential tools for IORA MS to guarantee that fish and fishery products from the region entering the global market supply chain do not originate from IUU fishing activities. These guidelines are therefore meant to reinforce the role of the IORA region in the trade/marketing of fish and fishery products free from IUU stains. This will also help keeping the ocean healthy and ensuring sustainable fisheries, and food and economic security in line with the SDG14.

## **G. Host**

France will organise and host the workshop scheduled on 23-24 March 2022 in La Reunion. The exact location of the workshop is yet to be defined. The Workshop will be in a hybrid format. The AFD funded Technical Assistance will support the technical preparation and organization of the workshop (i.e. preparing the draft roadmap, the agenda, coordinating the interventions of the various speakers, drafting the workshop report, communication, etc.).

## **H. Implementation**

The workshop will take place over a two-day programme. It is proposed to structure the workshop around 5 sessions starting with an opening session followed by a presentation of the workshop objectives and agenda. The next presentations will focus on key areas to be potentially covered by the Guidelines such as Coastal State, Flag State, Port State, Market State and processing states measures involving speakers from IORA MS, International Organisations (FAO, IOTC, SIOFA, CCSBT, ASEAN and the European Union), from French companies (CLS) and institutions (CROSS) but also NGOs involved in Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) activities and sustainable fisheries management in the Indian Ocean (Global Fishing Watch and TMT).

The presentations should highlight important MCS aspects and issues in the IORA region leading to proposals for actions and measures which could be combined and reflected in the Guidelines. The ASEAN will also be invited to make a presentation of their Guidelines on preventing the entry of fish and fishery products from IUU fishing activities into the supply chain adopted in 2015 and lesson learnt from their implementation.

The second day will then be dedicated to sharing of relevant experiences relating to MCS guidelines and their implementation and to the presentation of the roadmap for development and adoption of the Guidelines. The synthesis of the discussions taking place during the two days will take place and should aim at defining the main axis of the IORA Guidelines and way forward. This last session should be highly interactive.

## **Participation:**

- Member States are encouraged to request the participation of senior technical experts or officials from the Government departments dealing with IUU fishing, MCS, Port State Measures and coastal surveillance, market related measures so as to help in deepening discussions. Dialogue partners will also be invited to attend.
- Physical participation: All Member States and Dialogue Partners will be invited to attend the workshop. However, full hospitality (including accommodation and air tickets) will only be provided to the LDCs, (Bangladesh, Comoros, Madagascar, Mozambique, Tanzania, Somalia and Yemen) and country representatives invited to present at the workshop. Other Member States are welcomed to attend at their own expenses or they can join the workshop virtually.
- Due to the COVID 19 context, other speakers will mainly present virtually at the workshop.
- It is planned that a total of 60 to 70 participants will attend the workshop physically or remotely.

## **Format and Programme:**

The following format is proposed for the workshop:

- The workshop will take place in La Reunion (location still to be defined);
- A detailed agenda will be provided prior to the workshop according to the following tentative agenda (see annex 1 for a more detailed provisional agenda):
  - Opening session
  - Session 1 – Previous work, Agenda and Objectives of the workshop
  - Session 2 - Key areas to be covered by the Guidelines
  - Session 3 - Sharing of relevant experiences relating to MCS guidelines and their implementation
  - Session 4 - Presentation of the roadmap for development and adoption of the guidelines
  - Session 5 - Synthesis of discussions and finalization of the roadmap for development and adoption of the guidelines (interactive/brainstorm groups)
- Group exercises will be done during the workshop in order to gather inputs from the participants on the Guidelines content;
- It will last 2 days.

## **Speakers**

The speakers at the workshop will include IORA MS representatives, international organisation representatives (e.g. ASEAN, FAO, IOTC, CCSBT, European Union, etc.), NGOs representatives (e.g. Global Fishing Watch and TMT), private sector representatives specialised in MCS (CLS) and MCS and fisheries management experts.

## **I. Funding**

The workshop will be organised and financed by France partially through the AFD Technical Assistance to IORA Study Fund through the issuance of two purchase orders:

- One for the Mobilisation of a team of four short term experts to prepare and coordinate the technical content of the workshop including the roadmap development:
  - A moderator
  - A fisheries management expert
  - An MCS/IUU expert
  - A communication expert.

- One to cover the costs to offer full hospitality to the eligible IORA Member States to attend physically the workshop and to two IORA Secretariat representatives.

**Annex 1: tentative workshop schedule**

<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Day 2</b>
<p><b>Opening session:</b> IORA Secretariat/ France + potentially another IORA member (India or Indonesia) / Cluster Group on Fisheries Management Chair – protocol will have to be like other IORA technical meetings and advised by the Secretariat</p>	<p><b>Session 3 - Sharing of relevant experiences relating to MCS guidelines and their implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o FAO: Presentation of the relevant international agreements and instruments and core obligations to underpin the Guidelines</li> <li>o ASEAN: Presentation of ASEAN guidelines</li> <li>o Cross cutting approach to combat IUU fishing: Presentation of few IORA MS to present its IPOA-IUU</li> </ul>
<p><b>Session 1 - Presentation of workshop objectives</b></p>	<p><b>Session 4 - Presentation of the roadmap for development and adoption of the guidelines</b></p>
<p><b>Session 2 - Key areas to be covered by the Guidelines (tentative):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o <u>Coastal States and fisheries management</u> (EEZ and ABNJ): (CROSS, CLS)</li> <li>o <u>Flag State control:</u> (TMT, Global Fishing Watch)</li> <li>o <u>Port State controls and the PSMA:</u> results of AFD TA technical report on PSM + Stop Illegal Fishing+ IOTC (insisting on e-PSM)</li> <li>o <u>Market State options and measures:</u> UE+ TA expert + CCSBT (or CCAMLR)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Session 5 - Synthesis of discussions and finalization of the roadmap for development and adoption of the guidelines</b> With group exercises</p> <p><b>Conclusion session:</b> IORA Secretariat/ France/Cluster Group on Fisheries Management Chair</p>