



## SUPPORT TO THE INDIAN OCEAN TUNA COMMISSION

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission is an intergovernmental organization established under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution to manage tuna and tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean. Its main aim is the conservation and optimum utilization of fish stocks for long-term sustainability. In recent years, the Commission has expressed concern that some countries are unable to report fisheries statistics to the level and extent required. In particular, the Commission identified a need to improve data collection and reporting for artisanal and industrial fisheries in developing coastal states. The aim of the project was to support the IOTC to improve the quality and quantity of data available. This will lead to a better scientific knowledge of the ecosystems managed by the IOTC, in particular those related to tunas and tuna-like species, and ensure the appropriate management of all species impacted by IOTC fisheries.



### WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The project:

- improved stock assessments of IOTC and bycatch species by undertaking studies on abundance estimation, management strategies for swordfish, tag modelling for yellowfin tuna, developing albacore growth curves, and ecological risk assessments for sharks.
- reviewed size frequency data of species, supported the IOTC Regional Observer Scheme (ROS) through the establishment of an electronic monitoring system for small scales vessels in Sri Lanka, enabled the IOTC Secretariat to undertake data support missions to four member countries and funded the production of species identification cards in various languages.
- reviewed the effectiveness of the IOTC conservation and management measures relating to marine turtles.
- involved the development of a five-year Strategic Science Plan for the IOTC.

### KEY FACTS

**Latest Approved Budget**

USD 721 154

**Duration**

January 2018 – December 2021

**Resource Partner**

European Union

**Partners**

Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)

**Beneficiaries**

Fisheries sector in IOTC member countries

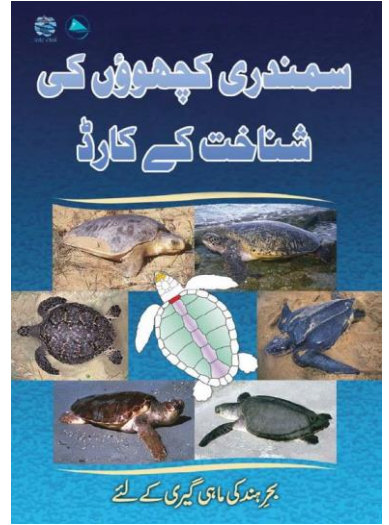
## IMPACT

The project outputs now form a permanent part of the IOTC's scientific knowledge base, directly contributing to the development of knowledge related to tuna fisheries and their associated ecosystems within the IOTC and in the broader international scientific community. Additional outputs providing guidance on key bycatch species such as sea turtles and sharks will reduce the ecosystem impacts on these species by tuna fisheries and lead to significant improvements in sustainability and environmental understanding and management.



## ACTIVITIES

- An independent abundance estimate produced.
- Management strategy evaluation developed for implementation by IOTC.
- Spatially explicit stock assessment model developed to evaluate potential bias in models using tagging data.
- Capacity to use most suitable data-poor methods for IOTC stocks increased.
- Regional growth estimates developed for use in stock assessment models.
- Formal sampling programme adopted for collection of albacore size data.
- Data from Indian Ocean shark populations gathered for updated assessment.
- System developed to determine catch levels for yellowfin tuna in future.
- Reliability of longline and purse seine data series validated.
- Support given to implementation of ROS.
- Information on the catches of coastal fleets improved.
- Data compliance missions conducted in seven IOTC member states.
- Identification guides produced and translated into languages of major fishing fleets in IOTC waters.
- Advice on sea turtle management updated.
- Strategic Science Plan (2020-2024) developed for the IOTC Scientific Committee.



### Project Code

FAO: GCP/INT/305/EC  
ID donor: SI2.768568

### Project Title

Support to the IOTC Scientific Committee Program of Work

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