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Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
Commission des Thons de l'Océan Indien



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**SOUTH WEST INDIAN OCEAN FISHERIES COMMISSION
& INDIAN OCEAN TUNA COMMISSION**

Weight of Evidence Workshop

Mombasa, Kenya, 24-28 March 2014

DESCRIPTION AND ANNOUNCEMENT

1- Background

Assessing the status of fish stocks and fisheries can be a difficult task. The methods used to monitor and assess stock and fisheries status vary, ranging from simple catch levels to complex stock assessments. In the SWIO region, the data available on most of the fisheries, and the capacity available to analyse them, are for most cases quite limited, precluding the regular use of data-intensive model-based stock and fisheries assessment methods used in other regions of the world to provide fisheries management advice.

Still, there is a growing need for fisheries management based on the best available information, to ensure the sustainable use of the fisheries resources in the region for the benefit of the local communities. Some recent work has led to the development of simple methods for providing robust management advice even without quantitative stock assessments. The Weight-of-Evidence Approach (WoEA) is one of the frameworks for achieving these results. This is achieved by systematically considering a range of biological and fisheries information. The approach provides a structured, scientific process for assembly and review of indicators of stock and fisheries status. Expert judgment plays an important role in stock status determination, with an emphasis on documenting the key evidence and rationale for the decision.

The use of these methods can provide an important contribution to the management of the fisheries in the SWIO region, by improving the advisory process using a rigorous assessment of the different available evidence, and training the scientists involved in the advisory process as well as the managers responsible for taking management decisions based on this advice should contribute to make this possible.

2- Objectives

The objectives of the workshop are two-fold. On the one hand, it aims to familiarize the participants with the concepts and methods used in the Weight-of-Evidence Approach, its advantages and limitations. On the other hand, it will review the process of providing advice to fisheries management in the SWIOFC and its member countries, and investigate the possibilities of using the WoE approach in this process.

3- Methodology

The workshop will be run using a combination of training activities and case study, hands-on work on actual fisheries from the SWIO region.

An extensive use will be made of group work using actual fisheries and plenary discussions of all results or problems found

4- Participants

This workshop is targeted at the scientists regularly involved in providing advice on fisheries management in the SWIOFC member countries, and at managers responsible for making management decisions based on these recommendations.

Participants are expected to bring with them all possible/available information or data from at least one or two of their most relevant fisheries, for discussion at the meeting.