

# IOTA PROGRAMME RULES

## A THE AWARDS

### A.1 ACHIEVEMENT CERTIFICATES

**A.1.1** Certificates are issued on presentation of satisfactory evidence of contact with, or, for SWLs, reception of, licensed amateur radio stations operating from numbered IOTA groups listed in the IOTA Directory. Currently, 22 separate certificates are available, graded as follows:

**IOTA 100 ISLANDS OF THE WORLD**  
**IOTA 200 ISLANDS OF THE WORLD**  
**IOTA 300 ISLANDS OF THE WORLD**  
**IOTA 400 ISLANDS OF THE WORLD**  
**IOTA 500 ISLANDS OF THE WORLD**  
**IOTA 600 ISLANDS OF THE WORLD**  
**IOTA 700 ISLANDS OF THE WORLD**  
**IOTA 800 ISLANDS OF THE WORLD**  
**IOTA 900 ISLANDS OF THE WORLD**  
**IOTA 1000 ISLANDS OF THE WORLD**  
**IOTA 1100 ISLANDS OF THE WORLD**  
**IOTA AFRICA**  
**IOTA ANTARCTICA**  
**IOTA ASIA**  
**IOTA EUROPE**  
**IOTA NORTH AMERICA**  
**IOTA OCEANIA**  
**IOTA SOUTH AMERICA**  
**IOTA ARCTIC ISLANDS**  
**IOTA BRITISH ISLES**  
**IOTA WEST INDIES**  
**IOTA WORLD DIPLOMA**

### A.2 IOTA 750 ISLANDS PLAQUE OF EXCELLENCE

**A.2.1** The IOTA Plaque of Excellence is available for contacting 750 IOTA groups. It takes the form of an attractively produced walnut wood shield, suitably engraved, with space for 10 metal mini-shields, each signifying a score increment of 25 groups, to upgrade.

### A.3 IOTA 1000 ISLANDS TROPHY

**A.3.1** The prestigious IOTA Trophy is available for contacting 1000 IOTA groups. It is a beautiful diamond glass feature resting on a highly polished wooden base fitted with a metal plate, suitably engraved. The space in this case is for 8 metal mini-plates to upgrade.

## B THE ISLAND LIST

### B.1 VALID IOTA ISLANDS

**B.1.1** Every island must meet certain basic criteria for acceptance within the IOTA Programme. Specifically, it must be located in the open sea, not a lake or river, must be natural, not man-made, must be demonstrably above water at high tide and must have a recognised island name! There is no minimum island size requirement but an island needs to be shown and named on either Google Earth or another officially recognised reference map. It must be separated from the mainland at low tide by a minimum 200 metres of sea measured at the narrowest point. Connection to the mainland by bridge does not invalidate an island so long as the minimum sea separation requirement is met under the bridge as well as elsewhere. (Sections E.6 to 8)

**B.1.2** All islands valid for IOTA are listed by name in the Directory, either in the IOTA group heading or in brackets following it. In most cases the entry in brackets starts with an '=' sign. This means that only the islands named currently count and that any other islands that appear to justify inclusion in the list should be referred to IOTA Management for decision. (Section E.3)

### B.2 LIST STRUCTURE

**B.2.1** The Directory lists island groups by continent – Africa (AF), Antarctica (AN), Asia (AS), Europe (EU), North America (NA), Oceania (OC) and South America (SA). Within these it highlights those IOTA groups which count for the three regional awards by prefacing the group entry with a distinguishing letter – 'A' for Arctic Islands, 'B' for British Isles and 'W' for West Indies. The geographical boundaries adopted are ones commonly recognised in amateur radio. However the definition of Antarctica is the area south of the Antarctic Convergence Line and that of the Arctic the area which lies north of the tree line, not the Arctic Circle.

**B.2.2** Each continental list is divided by country, that is 'country' in the commonly understood political sense. Overseas island territories (including self-governing), departments, dependencies or possessions are listed in the appropriate continent under the parent country. The official reference used for determining political status was The Times Comprehensive Atlas of the World, 2000 Millennium Edition, published by Times Books, London (ISBN 0 7230 0792 6). Where the atlas was unclear, the island was allocated to the country that was perceived to exercise main administrative control. One exception is the Spratly Islands which, in the absence of a central unitary control, is listed separately. Antarctica, where all territorial claims are in abeyance, is treated as a special case. Islands that are shared between countries are listed under a joint sovereignty heading. Nothing in the way that an island is listed should be taken to indicate IOTA Management's view as to the legal position on sovereignty.

**B.2.3** Depending on its size and geography a country may have several IOTA groups. Most of these groups may contain several, sometimes many, islands, all equally valid for that group. Groups consisting of a single island are relatively few and are mainly reserved for 'large islands' or 'remote islands.' IOTA's grouping policy (see next paragraph) applies not only to 'officially recognised island groups', for example an archipelago, where the practice is not to split, but also to the many 'unofficial island groups' created in the interests of completeness to cover a sector of sea. The main categories of islands that have influenced construction of the list – these include a special DXCC category – are detailed in Section E.5.

**B.2.4** IOTA relies on an island grouping policy to prevent the total number of IOTA groups becoming unmanageable both for those who wish to work island stations and those who have to administer the programme. IOTA Management has decided that the IOTA list shall not exceed 1200 groups and has acted to maintain the list within this limit. Consequently, it will not accept for consideration requests for new groups except in circumstances where there has been a DXCC entity change triggering action under paragraph E.5.5.

### B.3 IOTA REFERENCE NUMBERS

**B.3.1** Each listed IOTA group that has been activated since 15 November 1945 has been given an individual IOTA reference number, e.g. EU-001 for the Dodecanese, EU-005 for Great Britain and so on. Such numbers are now very much a feature of the amateur radio scene, frequently quoted on the air and printed on QSL cards.

**B.3.2** Each IOTA group with a known qualifying island that has yet to be activated is listed with a provisional number e.g. OC-288P. The number is confirmed as soon as a valid operation is judged to have taken place. (Section F)

**B.3.3** Each IOTA group that is included in the list with a partial number e.g. AF- is believed to have a qualifying island. Such groups, most of which are in Antarctica, will in due course be issued reference numbers or, if no qualifying islands can be found, will be deleted.

## **C AWARD REQUIREMENTS**

### **C.1 STANDARD CATEGORY OF APPLICATION**

**C.1.1** The applicant in this category should be a licensed radio amateur using an amateur radio callsign issued personally to him / her by the licensing authority and valid on the date of the contact(s) claimed. IOTA Management may ask to see proof of licence. For requirements governing the use of more than one callsign to feed a record, see Additional Note 1 below.

**C.1.2** If the applicant is an RSGB member, he / she is entitled to a 33.3% discount on administration and certificate fees on submission of proof of membership in the form of a recent address label from RadCom, the members' magazine, or a note of his / her membership number.

**C.1.3** The applicant **must** use the latest available information when preparing an application, i.e. the island listings detailed here in this Directory or on the RSGB IOTA website<sup>1</sup>. Please do not use as your reference an IOTA Directory earlier than IOTA Directory 2011 because of changes to the listings as well as to the rules since then.

### **C.2 THE NUMBER OF CONTACTS REQUIRED**

**C.2.1** The IOTA 100 Islands of the World is the basic award and the place to start. This requires proof of contact with at least 100 IOTA groups with different reference numbers in the Directory. At least one contact must be with each of the 7 continents. See Table of IOTA Awards on page 43.

**C.2.2** The IOTA 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700, 800, 900, 1000 and 1100 Islands awards are for that number of confirmed contacts.

**C.2.3** Each continental award is for contacting 75% of the confirmed numbered IOTA groups in that continent or, alternatively, 75 IOTA groups whichever is the less. This means that in the case of the IOTA Africa, Asia, Europe, North America and Oceania awards the requirement is 75 groups. If, for the other awards, the qualifying percentage figure works out as a fractional number, round the fraction down to the nearest whole number.

**C.2.4** The IOTA Arctic Islands, British Isles and West Indies awards are for contacting 75% of the confirmed numbered IOTA groups in those areas. This means that for the three awards the requirement is 75, 21 and 42 groups respectively. The groups that count for each award are marked by an 'A', 'B' or 'W' as appropriate on the continental pages.

**C.2.5** The IOTA World Diploma is for contacting, in each of the 7 continents, 50% of the confirmed numbered IOTA groups or, alternatively, 50 IOTA groups, whichever is the less. Round the fraction down if necessary (see paragraph C.2.3).

**C.2.6** The IOTA Plaque of Excellence is for contacting at least 750 numbered IOTA groups. Shields for attachment to the Plaque are available for contacting 775, 800, 825, 850, 875, 900, 925, 950 and 975 IOTA groups.

**C.2.7** The IOTA 1000 Islands Trophy is for contacting at least 1000 numbered IOTA groups. Mini-plates for attachment to the Trophy base are available for contacting 1025, 1050, 1075, 1100, 1125, 1150, 1175 and 1200 IOTA groups.

**C.2.8** Only one confirmed contact counts for credit for each IOTA group. QSL cards from different islands with the same reference number do not count separately.

**C.2.9** Some of the above provisions have been varied for the VHF / UHF category of application – see Section C.8.

### **C.3 CONTACT REQUIREMENTS**

**C.3.1** All contacts **must** be made personally by the applicant using an amateur radio callsign valid under C.1.1 above. Contacts made by another operator using this callsign in a contest or special event or generally on behalf of the applicant are not valid for this category of application.

**C.3.2** All contacts must be made from the same DXCC entity and from a land-based location. The location shall be defined as the location of the operator. Contacts made while operating land mobile are accepted. See Additional Note 2 below.

**C.3.3** All contacts must be made with other licensed amateur stations and in accordance with licence conditions.

**C.3.4** All contacts must have taken place since 15 November 1945.

**C.3.5** Contacts may be made on any amateur radio frequency band between 1.8 and 30MHz licensed to the applicant and his contact. IOTA Management may ask to see proof of licence.

**C.3.6** Subject to C.3.7 contacts with maritime mobile stations near islands, whether or not they operate with a /MM callsign, will not be accepted for credit. This applies also to stations on board boat in harbour or anchored close to shore. Contacts made using a radio or Internet link from a land- to a sea-based station or from a sea- to a land-based station to enhance signal transmission or reception will not count.

**C.3.7** Exceptionally, in a *force majeure* situation, occasioned by poor weather or sea conditions or personal injury sustained in attempting a landing or serious risk of one, contacts, valid for IOTA, may be made from a station on board a boat lying within 200 metres (219 yards) of the island if an essential part of the station, namely the transmitter, receiver, transceiver, antenna or power supply in use, is on shore and physically wire-linked to the boat. In such an eventuality proof will always be required from the operator before credit is allowed and must show that such operation was not determined by operator convenience or the need to circumvent national or local government constraints on landing or operating. Section F procedure applies.

**C.3.8** Contacts made by the applicant using a single remote receiving or transmitting site are accepted for credit if the remote site is land-based, contained within a 500 metre (547 yard) radius circle, not located more than 100 kilometres (62 statute miles) from the applicant's location and is nominated as being in use on the applicant's personal profile. It may be the applicant's home station if he / she is temporarily away from home. The applicant and the remote site must both be located within the same DXCC entity. Use of more than one remote site or a network using multiple sites is not permitted for credit. Contacts between fully automated remotes at both or either end of a path will similarly not receive credit. See Additional Note 3 below.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.rsgbiota.org>

**C.3.9** Contacts made with a station that is remotely operated will count for IOTA credit if the station operator and the remote receiving / transmitting station are both located on one or a maximum two qualifying islands for the same IOTA group (i.e. neither is on the mainland) and the set-up of the remote station complies with the requirements of C.3.8 above.

**C.3.10** In this category of application only one IOTA record is maintained per applicant for operations in the same DXCC entity. This applies even if the callsign changes.

**C.3.11** Credit will be given for contacts made entirely on a single mode of transmission or on a combination of modes (but not cross-mode). Certificate endorsements for single mode transmission may be made on the submission of cards clearly confirming the mode, but the request should be made at the time of the first submission and of each subsequent one. If the applicant chooses a particular mode, updates will only be accepted on the same basis. However the applicant can choose to move to All Modes.

**C.3.12** Credit will not be given for cross-mode, cross-band or repeater- or satellite-aided contacts. Earth-Moon-Earth contacts will be accepted for credit.

**C.3.13** Some of the above provisions have been varied for the Club and VHF / UHF categories of application – see Sections C.7 and C.8.

#### **C.4 THE QSL CARDS**

**C.4.1** QSL cards submitted **must** confirm two-way radio contact and specify the date, time, band and mode used.

**C.4.2** QSL cards submitted **must** have printed on them both the operation callsign and the name of the island from which the operation took place. The latter **must** be an island mentioned as qualifying for the claimed IOTA group in the island listings in the latest IOTA Directory or on the RSGB IOTA web-site. The IOTA group name and IOTA reference number are not acceptable alternatives although it is desirable that they also appear on the card, nor are geographic co-ordinates, a grid locator square or a lighthouse or castle name. The name of the island should not have been handwritten, nor should it have been added in a way that makes ambiguous the location of the station at the time of contact.

**Note 1:** A card mentioning the name of an 'officially recognised island group', for example the Balearics, but not the name of the exact island from which the operation took place, will be accepted but only if all islands in the group are known to meet the IOTA qualification requirements and there is only one possible reference number for which the group can qualify.

**Note 2:** A card mentioning an unlisted small island, islet or rock which is a satellite of a larger listed island will be accepted for credit if it meets IOTA qualification requirements in its own right and the name of the parent island is also mentioned prominently on the card. Card recipients should enter the parent island name on the on-line submission. The term 'satellite' is to be construed as a small island lying within 200 metres (219 yards) of a larger listed island.

**Note 3:** A card mentioning an island with an unofficial or obviously fabricated name will not be accepted for credit unless its exact location is clear from other information on the card and the island belongs to an 'officially recognised island group', all islands of which are known to meet the IOTA qualification requirements and there is only one possible reference number for which the group

can qualify. Card recipients should enter the island group name on the on-line submission.

A note on the reasoning behind the requirement that the island name must be printed on the QSL card is given at Additional Note 4 below.

#### **C.4.3 QSL cards for operations prior to 1 January 2001:**

Checkpoints have some discretion to accept cards for operations prior to 1 January 2001 that fall short of meeting the requirements of paragraph C.4.2 above where the operation is known to them. This discretion extends, for example, to accepting a card with a handwritten island name or one that mentions, instead of the island, the name of a town or city on the island or, in the case of Antarctica, the name of a recognised research base. It does **not** extend to accepting a card that mentions an unlisted island or just a reference number. Card recipients may need to research a map to establish the correct island name for entering on the on-line submission.

**C.4.4** Wherever possible, submit QSL cards that are likely to cause least problems for your Checkpoint. Cards from recent operations are more easily processed than old cards from several decades ago. Clean cards, with the island name and IOTA reference number prominently displayed in large print, are likely to be the most welcome while cards that are 'messy' or very likely not to meet the requirements are the least welcome – in fact the latter should not be submitted at all. Checkpoints do the job voluntarily, so they do deserve your consideration.

**C.4.5** Photocopies of QSL cards and electronic cards (eQSLs) are not acceptable for credit.

**C.4.6** A warning note, do not amend a QSL card in any way, however justified you believe your action to be to rectify an omission or error made by the writer. This could lead to rejection of a card which otherwise might have been accepted, or, where deception is suspected, to your disqualification from the programme.

**C.4.7** Applicants should realise that on occasions Checkpoints will have no option but to reject a card pending the receipt of more information about the operation concerned. In such a case a letter from the island operator may provide the only acceptable solution – it will normally be for the applicant to obtain this. On other occasions also Checkpoints may need to withhold credit on instructions from IOTA Management for reasons that will be explained. Applicants' cooperation and understanding are requested at all times.

#### **C.5 HOW TO APPLY FOR YOUR FIRST AWARD**

**C.5.1** There are now several ways of applying on-line: by Manual Entry from the Keyboard (type in your QSOs with contact details taken from the cards), by uploading an ADIF Log to obtain a list of potential IOTA QSOs for your selection (cards are required) or by uploading a Cabrillo Format Log of IOTA Contest QSOs to identify matches with contest logs on the IOTA database (cards are not required). A fourth way, by uploading your log to Club Log, also to secure QSO matches (cards are again not required), is coming shortly. All can be combined into one application made on-line on the Central IOTA Database.

**C.5.2** First, go to the RSGB IOTA web-site and register to obtain a password. Then, following the instructions given, generate a personal profile. This enables you to open up the 'My Credits' module to create a record and, when you are ready, an application, using a web-form provided. The on-line system will calculate the fee payable. See Annex C for a detailed step by step guide.

- C.5.3** Start with the basic IOTA 100 Islands of the World certificate. It is best to send a claim for a minimum 110 credits in case any are rejected. There is no upper limit – the extras will be credited to the score on your on-line record. Include at least one QSL from all 7 continents.
- C.5.4 Manual Entry using the Keyboard:** If you are sending cards, arrange them numerically by IOTA reference number and by continent in the following order: AF–AN–AS–EU–NA–OC–SA. This is the order in which they appear on-line.
- C.5.5** Enter all callsigns in exactly the form shown on the QSL card – include /A, /P or /xxx as appropriate, and do not change the callsign in any way unless instructed to do so by the system.
- C.5.6** Check your application before despatch for callsign, island name and other data errors. It may be subject to a higher administration charge if it contains more than 10% careless errors that involve Checkpoints or IOTA Management in corrective work. In a worst case scenario the application will be rejected.
- C.5.7** Do not include 'doubtful' cards where you, yourself, are unsure what group they belong to as this can delay processing of your application. Please try to find out the answers yourself by checking a good atlas or map or by searching Google or Google Earth.
- C.5.8** When ready, press the key submitting your application electronically. At the same time print off a copy of it and send it by post to your Checkpoint together with QSL cards and appropriate fees, not forgetting return postage for the cards. See Annex B for a schedule of charges.
- C.5.9 Entry by the ADIF Log Upload Route:** This option enables you to submit an ADIF log and receive back a listing of potential IOTA contacts identified from data on the Central IOTA Database. Select and mark contacts on the list that can be supported by QSL cards and these will be added to your application. Use of this facility offers a saving in real time in constructing an entry and is occasionally used as the first step. When you are ready to submit, follow the procedure in C.5.8.
- C.5.10 IOTA Contest QSO Matches:** A matching option allows you to obtain credit, **without the need to submit cards**, for island contacts made in an IOTA Contest from 2004 onwards provided that QSO details match with IOTA Contest log information on the Central IOTA Database. Manually enter the QSO details on the input form or upload a Cabrillo format log and the system will indicate if there is a match and a credit can be given. This facility should become available in late November, a few weeks after the year's contest has been adjudicated. When you are ready to submit, follow the procedure in C.5.8.
- C.5.11 Club Log QSO Matches:** The current IT project to develop IOTA, due to be launched in mid-2017, will provide for the matching of QSOs in an applicant's log with logs on Club Log. Where both logs are available, successful QSO matching will remove the necessity to obtain cards for IOTA credit. Keep watch for progress announcements on the IOTA website.
- C.5.12 Awards:** On receipt of an email notifying that your application has been processed, you will be able to download your basic 100 Islands of the World certificate electronically. Normal practice now is for awards to be issued electronically. However, exceptionally, if an applicant has problems and requires one by post, arrangements will be made for this to be sent but there will be an additional charge.
- C.5.13** You will be able to access your record on the Central IOTA Database on-line at any time.
- C.6 HOW TO UPDATE**
- C.6.1** You are encouraged to grow your IOTA score. The IOTA Programme offers an exciting operating challenge, combined with opportunities to obtain a range of attractive certificates and to enjoy, if you wish, a degree of friendly competition with fellow island chasers.
- C.6.2** You may update your record whenever you wish – there is no limit on the number of times per year. However, the system will not allow you to update at a time when a previous application or update is still being processed. Once you have pressed the key sending the submission, it's closed. Do not attempt to get your Checkpoint to add in manually late cards just received.
- C.6.3** You should prepare your update in the same way as when applying for the IOTA 100 Islands certificate. You may claim as many or as few credits as you wish but bear in mind that there is a minimum update charge.
- C.6.4** When submitting your application, let your Checkpoint know of any awards requested as well as any mode endorsements – these are not provided automatically – and enclose the correct fees and return postage with your cards (if applicable).
- C.7 CLUB CATEGORY OF APPLICATION**
- C.7.1** The club category of application caters for the growing interest in the IOTA Programme by clubs, DX teams and multi-operator groups. The annual IOTA Contest with its huge success has done much to introduce hundreds of contesters to IOTA and with the ever-increasing number of IOTA team operations the time was right to respond to this enthusiasm by making the full range of IOTA awards available on a non-personal basis.
- C.7.2** Applicants should regard general IOTA rules as applying but with the following variation:
- The applicant need not be a licensed radio amateur but should be able to provide evidence of authority to represent the club / group, for example by holding the position of secretary, awards manager or team leader. (C.1.1)
  - Contacts need not be made by the applicant. They should however be made by licensed amateurs who are members of the club / group at the time. (C.3.1)
  - The callsign used should be one issued to the club / group. All IOTA contacts made with that callsign will normally be allowed to accrue for credit. (C.3.1)
  - Where a club / group wishes to grow an IOTA score from a combination of callsigns, it must provide evidence that each callsign was clearly issued to it – copies of licences should be submitted on the first occasion. (C.3.1)
  - A callsign issued personally to a club / group member may be used to feed a score in the Club Category in circumstances where the applicant would not, or would no longer, be eligible to apply under the Standard Category of Application. (C.3.1)
- Note that all contacts need to be made from the same DXCC entity.**
- C.7.3** Clubs / groups are asked to keep their compliance with these provisions as transparent as possible. Checkpoints will not be able to engage in detailed correspondence.

## **C.8 VHF / UHF CATEGORY OF APPLICATION**

**C.8.1** IOTA Management decided in early 2000 to respond to popular demand and open up the IOTA Programme to VHF / UHF enthusiasts by making available the full range of certificates, albeit with lower qualification levels, for VHF / UHF only contacts.

**C.8.2** Applicants should regard general IOTA rules as applying but with the following variation:

- All contacts must be made on the 50MHz and / or higher frequency bands. (C.3.5)
- IOTA Management will need to be satisfied that contacts were made with stations properly licensed at the time and may withhold credit if in doubt. (C.3.3)
- For the 100 Islands certificate at least one contact should be made with each of 5 continents. (C.2.1)
- Each continental award is for contacting 50% of the confirmed numbered IOTA groups in that continent or, alternatively, 50 IOTA groups whichever is the less. (C.2.3)
- The IOTA Arctic Islands, British Isles and West Indies awards are for contacting 50% of the confirmed numbered IOTA groups in those areas. (C.2.4)
- The Plaque of Excellence is for contacting at least 300 numbered IOTA groups. Shields for attachment to the Plaque are available for contacting 325, 350, 375 etc IOTA groups. (C.2.6)
- Given that the VHF / UHF community is less aware of IOTA rules about printed island names on QSL cards, the discretion on acceptance given Checkpoints in C.4.3 will be extended to VHF / UHF cards without any restriction as to date of contact. Location indicators such as geographic co-ordinates and grid locators will be factors taken into account. This decision will be reviewed at regular intervals.

Attention is drawn to the fact that credit will not be given for contacts made with the aid of a repeater or satellite. (C.3.12)

**C.8.3** A participant may run one entry in each of the Standard and VHF / UHF categories. Each has its own separate award numbering system.

## **C.9 SWL CATEGORY OF APPLICATION**

**C.9.1** Applicants should regard general IOTA rules as applying but with the following variation:

- The applicant should be an SWL holding a standard SWL number from a national or international amateur radio society which he / she uses when sending an SWL report. If the applicant is, or subsequently becomes, a licensed radio amateur, he / she should as a general rule submit cards made out to the SWL number, and not to the amateur radio callsign. (C.1.1)
- The term 'two-way radio contact' should be read as 'two-way radio contacts heard personally'. (C.4.1)
- Each outgoing SWL report should list at least two and preferably three QSOs heard.
- QSL cards submitted for credit should list the callsign and contact details of at least one and preferably two

QSOs. Island stations are asked to note these requirements when replying to SWL reports. If an SWL submits a card that fails to give the callsign of the station reported in QSO, he / she should provide a separate note of this information to the Checkpoint.

**C.9.2** IOTA Management regards maintenance of the overall integrity of the IOTA Programme as being of paramount importance. It reserves the right to deny credit for a card submitted where it is known from well-equipped amateurs in the area that the IOTA station concerned was not being received with intelligible signals at the time. It will not hesitate to take similar action if a Checkpoint reports over-frequent mention on cards of one particular callsign or that a search on DX Packet-Cluster™ or other Internet sources reveals a high degree of matching details suggesting irregular practice.

## **D PERFORMANCE LISTINGS**

### **D.1 THE HONOUR ROLL**

**D.1.1** The Honour Roll is a list of the callsigns of stations with a checked score equalling or exceeding 50% of the total of numbered IOTA groups, excluding those with provisional numbers, at the time of preparation. It is published each spring on the official RSGB IOTA web-site.

### **D.2 THE ANNUAL LISTING**

**D.2.1** The Annual Listing is a list of the callsigns of stations with a checked score of 100 or more IOTA groups but less than the qualifying threshold for entry into the Honour Roll.

### **D.3 THE CLUB LISTING**

**D.3.1** The Club Listing is a list of the callsigns of club or multi-operator stations with a checked score of 100 or more IOTA groups.

### **D.4 THE VHF / UHF LISTING**

**D.4.1** The VHF / UHF Listing is a list of the callsigns of stations with a checked score of 100 or more IOTA groups on the VHF / UHF bands.

### **D.5 THE SWL LISTING**

**D.5.1** The SWL Listing is a list of SWLs with a checked score of 100 or more IOTA groups.

### **D.6 GENERAL CONDITIONS**

**D.6.1** Except as follows, the same callsign may not feature in more than one listing or more than once in the same listing. In the case of applicants for VHF / UHF awards an additional entry in that listing is allowed.

**D.6.2** Callsigns will not be annotated with mode, band or power endorsements. This includes other prefixes or suffixes that are not authorised by the licensing authorities.

**D.6.3** Where a station has not updated for 5 years or more, his / her score will not be published in the annual performance listings.

**D.6.4** The listings are intended to be statements of personal performance. IOTA Management wishes it to be known that it will transfer a callsign from the Honour Roll or Annual Listing to the Club Listing if it is satisfied that the licensee has breached this intent by allowing other operators to make contacts on his / her behalf to count for IOTA. This applies even where the licence conditions allow such operation.

## **D.7 PROCEDURE FOR INCLUSION**

- D.7.1** Your score on the Central IOTA Database will be included automatically in the appropriate listing unless you have asked for it to be excluded.
- D.7.2** The last date for submitting an update electronically to your Checkpoint to influence your score in the current year's listing is 31 January. This is also the last date for mailing cards and printouts of on-line submissions. Those postmarked after that date will be processed in the normal way in due course but the scores will be held over to the following year's listing.
- D.7.3** If you remain active in IOTA, you are encouraged to update at least once every three years. This gives the listings greater relevance and helps to maintain the interest of other participants in their comparative positions. However, your record is maintained on the computer system and will remain there for updating whenever you choose to make a further submission.

## **E MORE ABOUT THE ISLAND LIST**

### **E.1 REQUESTS FOR THE ADDITION OF A NEW GROUP TO THE DIRECTORY LIST**

- E.1.1** The Directory list has been capped at 1200 IOTA groups. IOTA Management will not consider further additions outside its scheduled reviews (see E.1.2), with the rare exception of the occasional new island DXCC entity group that might qualify under the rules for separate listing (E.5.5). Requests for new groups to be added will invariably be turned down. The reasons for the cap are given at Additional Note 5 below.
- E.1.2** IOTA Management has decided, as part of its strategic planning, to review the island list every five years. The last such occasion was in 2014 to coincide with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of IOTA's launch. The next occasion will be in 2019. It is expected that any changes made will be very small.

### **E.2 REQUESTS FOR CONFIRMATION OF A REFERENCE NUMBER LISTED AS PROVISIONAL**

- E.2.1** IOTA Management will consider at any time a request for confirmation of an IOTA reference number listed as provisional for a group that has been activated. This request usually comes from the DXpeditioner responsible for the operation. Before agreeing Management will need to be satisfied that the island qualifies under the rules for island qualification (see Sections E.6 and E.7) and that the operation has met the requirement of a minimum number of contacts (see paragraph E.2.3) and has properly validated (see Section F).
- E.2.2** IOTA Management may have no option but to delay confirmation of a provisional reference number if the operation is one about which it has received insufficient information and validation. To ensure a full understanding of programme requirements, particularly on validation, island activators are advised to alert IOTA Management well in advance of the operation, giving full information on the island to be activated, dates, operators and means of transportation. And, of course, most importantly, if the island is by chance not listed in the current Directory, this is the time to check that it will qualify for the specified group. Do not leave it too late. Note that, in the case of islands lying less than one kilometre from the mainland, Management may need to see a detailed marine map before giving a decision – a scan should usually be sufficient. Scans will also be required of any special call-

sign licence and of landing and operating permissions that might be needed.

- E.2.3** IOTA Management requires a first-time operation to make a minimum 1000 contacts with different stations in five continents before it can consider confirming a provisional reference number. Activators are asked to remember to include this information in the validation provided. A note on the reasoning behind this requirement is given at Additional Note 6 below.
- E.2.4** IOTA Management may decide to withhold confirmation of a provisional number where an operator by his / her behaviour has created doubts about the seriousness of attitude to the making of contacts, log-keeping, the provision of validation or QSLing. In particular, poor or erratic QSLing of a previous operation will be regarded as adequate justification for such action as will selective or discriminatory QSLing or a QSLing policy involving unacceptable financial terms, or the threat of one or more of these. Such action would be taken sparingly and only on the decision of the full IOTA Management Team after the operator had been given an opportunity to state his / her case.
- E.2.5** Regular status reports on recently confirmed reference numbers are given on the RSGB IOTA web-site.
- E.2.6** DXpeditioners planning activity from any IOTA group that is included in the list with a partial number e.g. AF-, should at an early stage contact IOTA Management with details of the island to be visited to establish IOTA status.
- E.3 REQUESTS FOR CONFIRMATION THAT AN ISLAND QUALIFIES FOR A NUMBERED GROUP**
- E.3.1** The current Directory includes a comprehensive list of qualifying islands for most IOTA groups. The occasions when it will be necessary to seek confirmation from IOTA Management that an island qualifies for a numbered group should be very few. However, such action will still be required from time to time, particularly in the case of groups that are not shown in the Directory with a full list of qualifying islands. IOTA Management remains ready to consider such cases but see E.3.3 below.
- E.3.2** A request may come from a DXpeditioner or a resident amateur or an island chaser either before or after an operation. In order to be able to reply IOTA Management will need to be satisfied on the basis of evidence provided or available to it that the island qualifies under the rules for island qualification (see Sections E.6 and E.7). As a first step go to Google Earth<sup>2</sup>, identify the island and note its exact co-ordinates and then email this information to IOTA Management<sup>3</sup>. If Google Earth does not mention the island by name, you will need to send evidence to confirm the name as well. In the case of islands lying less than one kilometre from the mainland, IOTA Management will need to check qualification against detailed mapping sources before giving a decision. Checking in advance of an operation that an island will qualify will remove doubts and possibly prevent disappointment.
- E.3.3.** As all islands listed as qualifying for an IOTA group count the same for the purposes of the IOTA Programme, there is no special advantage for the IOTA chaser in a DXpeditioner's activating one island rather than another. The

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<sup>2</sup> <https://earth.google.co.uk>

<sup>3</sup> [lota.manager@rsgb.org.uk](mailto:lota.manager@rsgb.org.uk)

Directory lists more than 15,000 islands and most groups have ample qualifying islands. The processing of every request for an addition to the list takes valuable time, and this is becoming increasingly difficult to justify in cases where the IOTA group already has numerous qualifying islands. IOTA Management will continue to process deserving cases but will now require strong justification to accompany a request for the addition of islands to groups that already have more than 30 qualifying islands. Justification based on the need for an activation of an unlisted island for another award programme or for a holiday or contest or special activity event would not normally be sufficient. See Additional Note 7 below.

made up the original core list of the IOTA Directory. Although most such groups of any size are separately listed, many tiny ones have been included in wider groupings in the interests of keeping the IOTA group 'total' within bounds.

#### **E.4 REFERENCE SOURCES**

**E.4.1** The main work on the construction of the island list was carried out in 1990 / 91. The reference atlases used were the National Geographic Atlas of the World (Fifth & Sixth Editions) and The Times Atlas of the World (Eighth Edition). In addition, considerable help was obtained from Lee S Motteler's excellent book *Pacific Island Names*, published by the Bishop Museum Press, Honolulu, 1986, as well as from a selection of maps made available by friends.

**E.4.2** The 1999 / 2000 review included a root and branch examination of the island list. The IOTA Programme had moved on since 1990. A more precise definition of IOTA group boundaries and a fuller listing of qualifying islands were both required. Also, with the passage of time, IOTA group names and coverage needed to be updated and adjusted to reflect latest geographical and political information. The reference atlas used for the latter task was *The Times Comprehensive Atlas of the World, 2000 Millennium Edition*, published by Times Books, London (ISBN 0 7230 0792 6).

**E.4.3** The main source of reference for compiling the lists of qualifying islands was the Cambridge University Library, the holder of one of the two most comprehensive collections of maps in England open to the public. The material used included British Admiralty Charts and Pilots, recognised World Series 1:1,000,000 maps, ONC 1:1,000,000 and TPC 1:500,000, US 'Quad' Series 1:24,000, NOAA 1:40,000, Canadian Department of Mines and Resources Map Series 1:1,000,000, 1:250,000 & 1:50,000, Russian World Series 1:200,000, Swedish Hydrographic Department WGS-84 1:50,000, Finnish Merenkulkulaitos Sjöfartsverket WSOY 1:50,000, Croatian Hydrographic Institute 1:100,000, French IGN, Cartographie Caraïbe (F.W.I) and an extensive assortment of national maps. Use was also made of sources of mapping information available on the Internet, including Google Earth.

#### **E.5 THE MAIN CATEGORIES OF GROUP RECOGNISED**

**E.5.1** The Directory lists the IOTA groups by continent and country. For further information, see List Structure at Section B.2. The main categories of island / group recognised in the construction of the list are detailed below. IOTA Management makes it known that it will not consider, except in the case of new DXCC entity changes triggering action under paragraph E.5.5, requests for new groups or changes in group coverage justified in the terms of these defined categories (E.1.1).

**E.5.2** 'Officially recognised island group' – defined as a group shown and named as the '..... Isles' or 'Islands' in English or the local language in one of the reference atlases. This category, together with large islands (E.5.6),

**E.5.3** 'Remote island group' – defined as a group of one or more islands named in the reference atlas which lie more than 150 kilometres (94 statute miles) at low tide from the nearest island in the 'officially recognised island group' to which they belong.

**E.5.4** 'Unofficial island group' – defined as a grouping of islands which do not belong to an officially recognised island group but nevertheless exist and are listed in the Directory with an unofficial name. This category applies particularly to islands in a sector of coast that have been grouped for political or administrative reasons or for reasons of convenience – such islands can be at a considerable distance from each other (E.5.3 does not apply). It also applies to small islands that are close to a named larger island and do not justify a separate listing in their own right.

**E.5.5** 'Island DXCC entity group' – defined as a DXCC entity on the 'current' list which contains one or more islands. This category applies to a number of IOTA groups which owe their separate status to the fact that their islands belong to a separate DXCC counter. On each occasion that a new mainland DXCC entity is created, any islands off its coast may be allocated a new IOTA reference number. However, this will not happen if all the islands in the existing IOTA group are affected. When this happens the islands will retain their IOTA number (but the group title may be changed) and participants' score credits will remain unaffected. An island that qualifies for separate listing only because it is a DXCC entity will have a start and / or deletion date for credit in line with DXCC decisions. In the event of an island DXCC entity group being deleted, the IOTA group number will normally be archived and score credits moved on request to the IOTA group to which the island or islands are transferred. However there may be other options.

**E.5.6** 'Large island' – defined as an island with a size of 65,000 square kilometres (25,000 square miles) or more. The Directory lists some 28 such islands, and almost all have separate coastal island groups, the largest having several.

**E.5.7** 'Split sovereignty island' – defined as an island that is split between two or more DXCC entities. The Directory lists some 13 of these, for example Borneo (Brunei / East Malaysia / Indonesia), Great Britain (England / Scotland / Wales) and Hispaniola (Haiti / Dominican Republic). Each split sovereignty island counts for one credit only. However the coastal islands of almost all of them count separately (for one or more IOTA groups) on the grounds that they are not 'split sovereignty' like the main island.

**E.5.8** 'Other single island' – defined as a single island which cannot be grouped easily with other islands.

#### **E.6 ISLAND QUALIFICATION CRITERIA**

**E.6.1** The common definition of an island is a piece of land, whether earth, sand, stone or rock, which at some point of the day is surrounded by water, either fresh or sea. At its widest this could include sand-bars, mud-flats, shingle or rocks submerged for all but a few hours of the day, land separated from the mainland by a skip and a jump (just a few metres of water), land joined to the mainland

for part or most of the day and land located in rivers, lakes, inland seas, gulfs and largely enclosed bays. IOTA Management has taken the view that an award programme for island contacts based on such a wide definition of what constitutes an island would be impossible to manage and that a narrower definition should be adopted.

**E.6.2** In an attempt to find a generally accepted standard IOTA Management has considered making qualification dependent on the inclusion of 'island' (in whatever language) in the island name as shown on a map. This unfortunately has proved an unsatisfactory solution because of inconsistencies between different atlases and maps – too often a small island is called an 'island' on one map and 'islet', 'atoll', 'cay', 'rocks', 'reef' or 'The .....' on a second. Furthermore in some countries the practice is to use the term 'island' to describe any land surrounded by water irrespective of size while in others a variety of different terms are used indicating something less than an island. In the circumstances Management has decided to set its own qualification criteria. It considers that these are fair and reasonable in a difficult situation and are more likely to enhance the integrity of the programme.

**E.6.3** The first requirement for an island (atoll, cay, etc) is that it has an official name. It will then qualify for an existing numbered group if it meets **two** basic rules – the so-called 'Identification rule' and the '200 metres rule' – and does not fall into one of the categories of islands specified as not qualifying at Section E.7 below. Where reference is made to 'low tide', this is defined as 'mean low tide'. If, in the absence of a suitable marine map showing mean low tide, a map showing mean lowest low tide or similar datum is available, this will normally be sufficient to decide qualification.

**E.6.4 FIRST RULE** – The island **must** be shown and named on either Google Earth or another officially recognised reference map. See Additional Note 8 below.

**E.6.5** If the island is mentioned by name in the Directory, it may usually be assumed to meet this rule and no action is required. In all other cases IOTA Management will need to see evidence of compliance. Google Earth or any national or international map, but not a local tourist or special interest map, may be used to confirm this

requirement. As a first step go to Google Earth, identify the island, preferably adding a place-mark, note its exact co-ordinates and then email a scan of this information to IOTA Management.

**E.6.6** If no map can be found to show the island, it may still count if evidence is produced to indicate that:

- it consists of a single unbroken piece of land longer than 1 kilometre (0.62 statute miles) measured by straight line at high tide, or
- it is within an 'officially recognised island group', defined in E.5.2 above, or
- it is separated from the nearest part of the mainland by an island which qualifies, or
- it is closer to an island which qualifies than to the mainland.

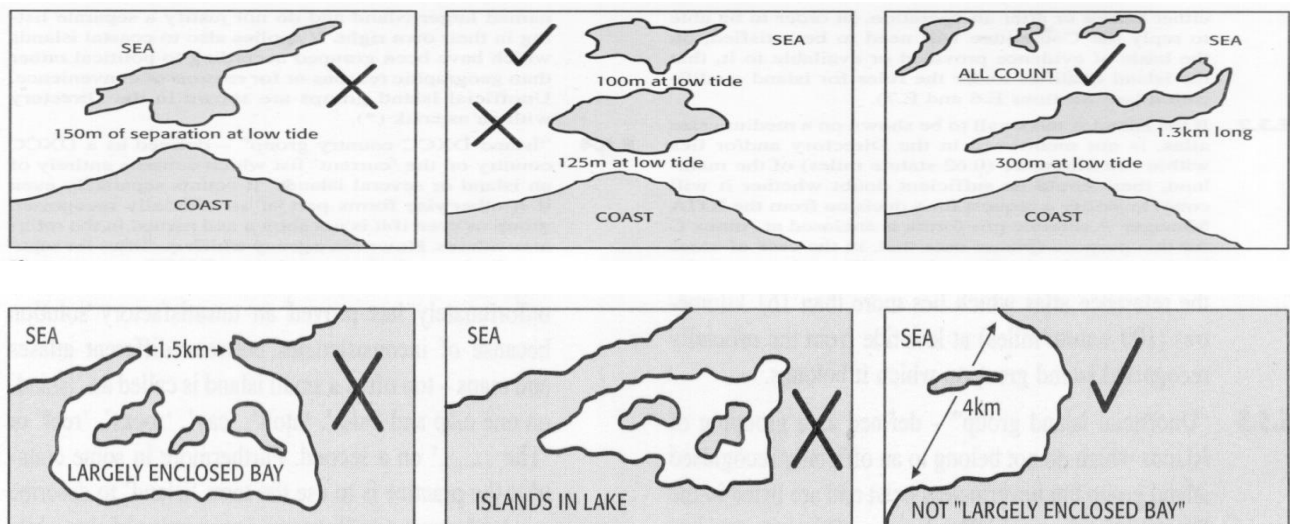
**E.6.7 SECOND RULE** — The island **must** be separated from the mainland at all points by a minimum 200 metres (219 yards) of sea at low tide. This may consist of one stretch of 200 metres or of up to three smaller stretches added together. The islands and the stretches need not be in a straight line. **See Fig 1.**

**E.6.8** If the island is mentioned by name in the Directory, it may normally be assumed to meet this rule and no action is required. However, maps available to IOTA Management might have been wrong and, if the operator realises this to have been the case, the onus is on him / her to report the true position to IOTA Management immediately on return. This could prevent disappointment for others visiting the island.

**E.6.9** An island that lies more than 1 kilometre (0.62 statute miles) from the mainland but fails to meet the 200 metre requirement because it is linked or nearly linked to the mainland at low tide, but not at high tide, by a sand-bar, stretch of shingle, rocks or mud-flats, **may** still count. Intervening islands could adversely affect the decision.

**E.6.10** An island that is separated from the mainland by a minimum 200 metres (219 yards) of sea at low tide except for an area lying more than 1 kilometre (0.62 statute miles) from the mainland that is linked or nearly linked to it at low tide, but not at high tide, by a sand-bar,

**Figures 1 & 2**





stretch of shingle, rocks or mud-flats, **may** still count. Intervening islands could adversely affect the decision.

In all cases IOTA Management will require to see a large-scale marine map (e.g. 1:50,000) as evidence. If you send a scan, make sure that the scale is visible.

## **E.7 ISLANDS THAT DO NOT QUALIFY**

### **E.7.1** The following types of island do not qualify:

- Islands that fail to meet the qualification criteria under Sections E.6 above and E.8 below,
- Islands totally submerged by water for part of a day – IOTA Management may exercise discretion not to add a new island to the list where its height above sea level makes for a total flooding risk in bad weather,
- Islands that are entirely man-made or are islands only by reason of a man-made canal,
- Islands located in and surrounded on all sides by a permanent ice shelf, and
- Islands located in rivers, lakes or inland seas that are totally enclosed.

**E.7.2** In addition, islands do not count that are located in gulfs and largely enclosed bays, where the distance between the two mainland shores at any point between the island and the open sea measures less than 5 kilometres (3.1 statute miles). IOTA Management will take a view on the extent to which the coastline indentation made by a bay can be described as largely enclosed. **See Fig 2.**

**E.7.3** Fortunately, it is only on very few occasions that islands disappear or lose qualification status, but when they do and particularly if it leaves a group with no qualifying islands, IOTA Management is faced with the need to act. See Additional Note 9 below.

## **E.8 EFFECT OF DEVELOPMENT ON ISLAND QUALIFICATION**

**E.8.1 Bridges** – an island linked to the mainland by bridge will qualify so long as it meets the qualification criteria at Section E.6 above (the minimum sea separation requirement must be met under the bridge as well as elsewhere).

**E.8.2 Man-made Causeways** – there are two types of man-made causeway island which qualify. With both, the island in question must meet the Identification rule (see paragraphs E.6.4 to E.6.6 above) **and** have a name which indicates that it is historically recognised as an island.

- An island separated from the mainland by more than 1 kilometre (0.62 statute miles) but linked by a man-made causeway, whether or not above water at high tide, **may** qualify.
- An island separated from the mainland by more than 0.5 kilometres (0.31 statute miles) but less than 1 kilometre (0.62 statute miles) and linked by a man-made causeway and bridge through which water flows at all times, **may** qualify.

All requests, accompanied by a detailed marine map, should be referred to IOTA Management. The latter is unlikely to approve a request where the width of the causeway exceeds the bare minimum required for a road / motorway and / or railway.

**E.8.3 Lighthouses, Lights, Forts, etc** – an 'island' consisting entirely of a lighthouse, light, fort or similar man-made structure **may** qualify if it meets the qualification criteria at

Section E.6 above **and** evidence, photographic or otherwise, is produced to IOTA Management to show that some part of the original natural island remains above water at high tide.

**E.8.4 Other Development** – if an island has been reshaped, for example enlarged, by act of man, it **may** qualify subject to the development not affecting the island's qualification status under the criteria at Section E.6 above. All requests, accompanied by a detailed marine map, should be referred to IOTA Management.

**E.8.5** Reshaping the mainland opposite an island can, in just the same way as reshaping the island itself, adversely affect the qualification status of the island. See Additional Note 9 below.

## **F VALIDATION OF OPERATIONS**

### **F.1 REASON FOR DOING IT**

**F.1.1** The rise in popularity of the IOTA Programme over recent years has led more and more operators to activate islands. Many of these islands have had regular previous operations and are easy to reach and activate. Quite a few other islands, however, are remote, difficult and expensive to reach and present many operating challenges. This is particularly true of the listed IOTA groups that have not yet been activated as well as most of those groups that head the Most Wanted IOTA Groups list at Annex H.

**F.1.2** The IOTA Programme, along with other major DX programmes, is based on integrity, honesty and fair play. It is essential that the programme should maintain these values if it is to continue to command support among the amateur radio community world-wide.

**F.1.3** IOTA Management spent two years discussing with the IOTA community a proposal to introduce a requirement that island operators should be prepared to provide on request evidence to substantiate their operations. Views expressed were almost universally favourable, with some of the most active and well-known island activators giving strongest support. Following this, Management decided to introduce the procedure and request validations for operations from all new groups and some rare and difficult to access groups. This has run smoothly without problems.

**F.1.4** IOTA Management realises that this procedure can work satisfactorily only if the IOTA community is prepared to give its full support and co-operation. It wishes to reassure participants that it is not guided by negative perceptions but rather by a wish to be seen to be serious in its administration of a programme which, in giving so much enjoyment, has to take so much on trust.

### **F.2 REQUIREMENTS FOR THE FIRST OPERATION FROM A PROVISIONALLY NUMBERED GROUP**

**F.2.1** Within two months of the completion of an operation from a provisionally numbered group the operator, without waiting to be asked, should provide evidence in support of his operation under the three sections below.

#### **Physical Presence**

The following is acceptable as evidence of physical presence:

- A dated invoice and receipt from a facility on the island, for example a hotel, rented accommodation owner, campsite manager or shop, in all cases showing the name and address of the company and the name of the DXpeditioner, or

- A signed statement from an official on the island, for example a lighthouse keeper or harbour-master, giving the dates that the DXpeditioner was there – this must include the official's name, address and position, or
- A signed statement from the operator of the boat or plane used for transportation to the island, giving the dates and times on which the DXpeditioner was landed and collected – this must include the name of the boat / plane operator and his / her address. In cases where public transportation is available to the island, a copy of the ticket will be acceptable in place of the statement if and only if the ticket shows the island destination and dates of travel.
- specified rare IOTA groups, defined as those which the listing of Most Wanted IOTA Groups in Part 1 of Annex H shows are needed by 80% of stations on the Central IOTA Database, and
- difficult IOTA groups, defined as those additional IOTA groups which are known to have restrictions on landing or operating an amateur radio station.

Any statement provided should be in English where possible or accompanied by an English translation – a statement in the local language is acceptable but may result in considerable delay in completing the validation procedure.

A photograph of the operator taken against an identifiable feature on the island, for example a name-plaque, is highly desirable and may be critical in any cases where the transportation statement is challenged and cannot subsequently be easily verified. This applies particularly to small yachts where photographs showing that the operation was land-based should always be provided as a matter of routine.

#### **Licence**

A photocopy of the operator's licence will be required, except where the operator is using his / her normal call-sign for the island operation or is otherwise operating under the terms of his / her licence (for example CEPT).

#### **Landing and / or Operating Permits**

IOTA Management needs to see copies of landing and / or operating permits for islands where it is known that they are required. For example, it is aware that permits are required for the majority of islands off the coasts of Australia, Mexico, New Zealand and West Coast USA. It advises DXpeditioners, in planning their island operations, to pay attention to the possible need for permits and, if their investigations show that they are required, to make a point of obtaining them. Otherwise, well-founded protests after the event could lead to disqualification of their activity from IOTA credit and withdrawal of confirmation of the reference number. Evidence for or against the need for permits may take the form of copies of relevant correspondence or notes of reported conversations with named government / agency officials.

- F.2.2** DXpeditioners should understand that an operation from a provisionally numbered group falls into a 'provisionally accepted' category until satisfactory validation is provided that enables it to be upgraded to the 'accepted' category and the provisional group number to be confirmed. If such evidence is not forthcoming within a period of four months of the end of the operation, IOTA Management may decide to downgrade the operation to a 'long term pending' category. Checkpoints are not authorised to accept for credit QSL cards submitted for operations falling into the 'provisionally accepted' and 'long term pending' categories.

#### **F.3 REQUIREMENTS FOR OPERATIONS FROM RARE OR DIFFICULT NUMBERED GROUPS**

- F.3.1** The above procedure will also be applied to operations from:

- F.3.2** IOTA Management reserves the right to operate this procedure also in cases of operations from islands which are exceptionally difficult to reach or present far greater than average political or licensing problems.

- F.3.3** IOTA Management will endeavour to inform an island DXpedition either before or during an operation that it falls within the scope of paragraph F.3.1 or F.3.2 and requires satisfactory evidence of validation to be provided within a period of four months of the end of the operation. DXpeditioners should understand that an operation that triggers this request falls into a 'provisionally accepted' category until satisfactory evidence of validation is provided that enables it to be upgraded to the 'accepted' category. If such evidence is not forthcoming within a period of four months of the end of the operation, IOTA Management may decide to downgrade the operation to a 'long term pending' category as in paragraph F.2.2 above.

#### **F.4 REQUIREMENTS FOR OPERATIONS BY YACHTSMEN WITH AN ON-BOARD AMATEUR RADIO STATION**

- F.4.1** The above procedure will also be applied to operations by yachtsmen on extended cruises or otherwise where the boat has or might be considered as having an on-board operational amateur radio station and the island operation is from a group shown as needed in the listing of Most Wanted IOTA Groups in Part 1 of Annex H. Evidence of a land-based operation will be required.

#### **F.5 OTHER CASES**

- F.5.1** IOTA Management may extend this procedure to other operations where there is concern.

#### **F.6 GENERAL**

- F.6.1** A listing of operations that submit satisfactory validation is posted on the RSGB IOTA and IOTA Manager's web-sites.
- F.6.2** From time to time IOTA Management is required to take action over a past operation which is found not to qualify for IOTA or is known or suspected not to have taken place as claimed or has failed to reach acceptable standards of on air and / or QSLing performance. It reserves the right to withdraw credit for contacts made with such operations. Where appropriate, the operation will be downgraded into the 'long term pending' category and the operator concerned may find past and future operations classified as ineligible for IOTA credit.

### **G MANAGEMENT OF IOTA**

#### **G.1 IOTA MANAGEMENT**

- G.1.1** Since early 2016 the IOTA Programme has been managed by a company in partnership with the RSGB. More information on this change will be published by summer 2016. IOTA Management, as we have called it in this Directory, is responsible for the strategic development of IOTA, its financing, promotion, marketing and IT as well as the day to day running of the programme. The company consists of a small management team members of which will be announced in due course.

**G.1.2** Decisions of IOTA Management are publicised on the official IOTA web-site.

**G.1.3** The IOTA Programme is managed on a non-profit-making basis. Administration costs are met from within the programme, principally from card-checking and certificate fees. See Additional Note 10 below.

## **G.2 CHECKPOINTS AND OVERSEAS REPRESENTATION**

**G.2.1** In managing the programme IOTA Management has been fortunate in being able to call on the assistance and goodwill of a large number of friends world-wide. They help in innumerable ways. As Checkpoints they carry out a valuable service with dedication and conscientiousness. IOTA Management looks to them to act as its local representatives and to provide to their customers such assistance as is required to participate fully in the programme. Management is grateful to them and to the many other helpers for their support and encouragement which have done much to promote IOTA as a credible international programme.

## **H MISCELLANEOUS**

### **H.1 IN RECOGNITION OF EFFORT**

**H.1.1** Going on your own island DXpedition? If so, please remember to provide good advance publicity for your operation through the RSGB IOTA web-site and the DX bulletins. Give details of call signs, dates, frequencies and the route for QSL cards.

**H.1.2** When, after the event, you next update, you may apply to have your Honour Roll or Annual Listing score credited with the call sign used on the operation **for the IOTA group in question**. You do not need to use your own call sign but the printed expedition QSL card must confirm that you were a member and needs to be submitted, showing the date and time of the first contact. To take advantage of this concession a single-operator station should have made a minimum 100 QSOs and a multi-operator station a minimum 200 QSOs although at the discretion of IOTA Management allowance may be made for a modest shortfall in achieving this by polar stations on HF applying for an HF credit and stations on VHF (with all VHF contacts) applying for a VHF credit who experience blackout or otherwise adverse propagation during a short island operation. Sorry, this does not allow you to claim credit for your home score for island contacts made on your expedition unless you were using a call sign issued personally to you and were yourself operating at the time and from the same DXCC entity as your home station.

### **H.2 LIABILITY OF RSGB AND IOTA MANAGEMENT**

**H.2.1** Neither the RSGB nor Island Radio Awards Ltd nor IOTA Management nor any member of these, acting as a corporate body or in a personal capacity, can accept any

responsibility for any accident or financial or other loss resulting from action taken by island activators or programme participants on the basis of any provision within this Directory or any communication from them or resulting from action taken by them in the management of the IOTA Programme.

**H.2.2** The above-mentioned maintain that they do not partner, sponsor or exhort the mounting of any physical activity by participants in pursuance of their participation in the IOTA Programme. They urge all to take the greatest care in activities undertaken, mindful of risks to personal safety and property at all times.

### **H.3 EXTENT OF IOTA MANAGEMENT'S DISCRETION**

**H.3.1** From time to time IOTA Management will review the Central IOTA Database of island credits and may find it necessary to delete a very small number of them. This will generally be where a checking error has been made, where serious doubt has been cast on the location of a particular station, or where a printing error on the card has come to light. Management will endeavour to inform programme participants of any change to their record.

**H.3.2** IOTA Management attaches importance to the maintenance of fair play as far as is practicable. From time to time a set of circumstances occurs where official intervention is considered justified. One such case is where there is seen to be unfair, even discriminatory, treatment of one or more people, for non-licensing reasons, in the making of contacts or issue of QSL cards. All participants are asked to pay attention to see that this does not happen.

**H.3.3** IOTA is a programme designed to increase activity on the air. Members of the Management Team and Checkpoints are volunteers. They put in countless hours of effort, particularly in the checking of QSL cards and handling of certificate claims. Painstaking care is taken at all times, not least to resolve any cases of doubt. The credibility of the award programme is largely due to their efforts. From time to time the checking process leads IOTA Management to question the validity of a QSL. When this occurs, it will seek further information, including on occasion copies of logs or log extracts, from the card-holder himself or the island operator. It considers that, since it manages the IOTA Programme, it has the right to require such information. All participants in the programme are expected to co-operate with Management in providing on request such information as is judged to be within their control. When non-co-operation occurs and, more so, when award rules are broken, the overall integrity of the programme is judged of primary importance and continued participation in IOTA by the participant concerned may no longer be possible.

**H.3.4 The decision of IOTA Management is final.**

## **ADDITIONAL NOTES**

### **PRINCIPLES**

The IOTA Programme was devised in 1964 by Geoff Watts, a leading English short wave listener. When in 1985 RSGB took it over at his request, the Society decided that any changes it considered necessary to introduce would not go against certain key principles that underpinned the programme that Geoff had created. It remains IOTA Management's view that this is the right approach. These key principles are:

- the programme is essentially one of personal achievement and this means that all contacts should be made personally by the applicant;
- contacts are valid only if made between the applicant and an operator land-based on an island that is accepted as qualifying;

- the need for a level playing-field requires the applicant to make all contacts from the same DXCC entity and in a way that is not considered as giving unfair advantage in the performance listings; and
- managing the programme is based largely on trust and any faking of island locations, contacts or cards could lead to disqualification from further participation in IOTA.

It is often argued that amateur radio has moved on technologically since 1964 and that the IOTA programme should reflect this. IOTA Management would respond that it has done so to a significant extent with the adoption of a trailblazing (at the time) on-line system of application, recognition of digital contacts, limited acceptance of remote station operation and credit given, without the need for cards, for contacts made in the IOTA Contest and that it is committed to introducing a wider system of 'paperless QSLing' in 2017. However, it does not accept that the basic rule structure of IOTA has to undergo regular alteration to encompass all technological advances whatever these might be. It recognises that participants sign up to a set of prescribed rules and it would not be fair on them to alter those rules in a way that might be perceived as disadvantaging them competitively in a key way.

### NOTE 1 (C.1.1 & C.3.1)

*"All contacts **must** be made personally by the applicant, using an amateur radio callsign valid under C.1.1 above."*

The first principle mentioned above applies. Any contacts made on your behalf by another operator, whether using your equipment or not, are **not valid** for credit in any category of application.

If you wish to submit cards for credit that bear a different callsign – in the same DXCC entity – from the one with which you have registered on the Central IOTA Database, the following rules apply.

**C.3.1.1** Credit for contacts for the standard category of application may be given:

- if the callsign in question was previously issued to you personally but has now been relinquished or is no longer in use – this is conditional on confirmation in QRZ.com, HamCall.net or similar evidence;
- if your registered callsign has required a change following a temporary or permanent move to a different region of the DXCC entity;
- if your registered callsign has been temporarily changed following a general dispensation from the licensing authority to commemorate a special event (King or Queen's Birthday, National or Independence Day, Olympics etc); or
- if an additional current callsign was issued to you personally on a permanent basis with the same licensing conditions as your registered callsign – this is conditional on:
  - your providing a copy of your licence to your Checkpoint showing this to be the case (with English translation),
  - the call being confirmed as yours in QRZ.com or HamCall.net or similar evidence,
  - all contacts with the callsign being made by you personally,
  - this being the only additional current callsign used for claiming credits for your registered callsign, and
  - the circumstances in C.3.1.2 below not applying.

**C.3.1.2** Credit for contacts for the standard category of application will not be given:

- if the additional callsign has been issued to you on behalf of a club, organisation, team, or other similar body, i.e. not restricted to you for private use;
- if the additional callsign bears a club callsign prefix or suffix;
- if the additional callsign has been issued for a limited-period special event, contest or DXpedition, including where there has been, or is authorised by the licence to be, multi-operator mode operation; or
- if, despite the terms of C.3.1.1 above, the credit or credits claimed were at a time when evidence shows that you were using your registered or additional current callsign to participate as a multi-operator station in a contest.

**C.3.1.3** Holders of an additional current callsign in the same DXCC entity may not open a second record in the Standard Category of Application on the Central IOTA Database.

### NOTE 2 (C.3.2)

*"All contacts must be made from the same DXCC entity and from a land-based location."*

The third principle mentioned above applies.

From time to time there has been a request for the 'same DXCC entity' requirement to be dropped on the grounds that an increasing number of people engage in IOTA operations overseas and that, at the same time as they are giving out IOTA contacts, to deny them the chance of feeding their home station score with a contact with a 'needed' IOTA made from their overseas location is unfair. Similarly there are those who experience a change of employment or retirement location which takes them abroad for longer periods and to ask them to start their IOTA score afresh is harsh. To yield to this request would not only breach Geoff's wishes but would risk disadvantaging the vast majority of participants who play according to the current rules. In most cases a change of DXCC entity, however temporary or permanent, is a life-style choice rather than a decision forced upon the person concerned. It is not unreasonable to expect those contemplating an overseas visit to consider the impact of such a decision on their participation in IOTA and, in the case of a short visit, to arrange their dates to best effect.

The only way of meeting this request would be to create a new category of application but there is no possibility of finding resources to do so in the foreseeable future.

### NOTE 3 (C.3.8)

*"Contacts made by the applicant using a single remote receiving or transmitting site are accepted for credit if the remote site is land-based, contained within a 500 metre (547 yard) radius circle, not located more than 100 kilometres (62 statute miles) from the applicant's location and is nominated as being in use on the applicant's personal profile. It may be the applicant's home station if he / she is temporarily away from home. The applicant and the remote site must both be located within the same DXCC entity. Use of more than one remote site or a network using multiple sites is not permitted for credit. Contacts between fully automated remotes at both or either end of a path will similarly not receive credit."*

In 2011 IOTA Management introduced a slightly different version of this rule. It has now amended it in two important respects. It has removed the restriction on the control system that required a radio link since most equipment now available on the market relies on an Internet link. It has also expanded the distance allowed from the applicant's location to the remote station from 50 kilometres to 100 kilometres.

IOTA Management is aware of the social needs in society and that, for some people, continued engagement in amateur radio through access to a remote station can make all the difference. In particular, some participants want to make IOTA contacts from their place of work or while on the move, using their home station as the remote. Also residents of retirement homes, folk who have downsized their homes and those who are space- and / or equipment-challenged can all benefit. The increase to 100 kilometres provides significantly more leeway for the siting and / or use of a remote station.

Propagation at the two ends of a 100 kilometre path is seldom likely to be sufficiently different as to affect the chances of an IOTA contact on the main HF / LF bands. The proposal occasionally made that there should be no restriction on remote operation so long as it remains within licence conditions cannot be accepted as this would be 'pushing the envelope' and regularly disadvantaging other participants. Unrestricted use of multiple remote sites or a network using multiple sites means effectively multiple location / station use rather than the single location / station use envisaged by Geoff Watts and the practice of using a remote station at distances of thousands of kilometres, perhaps even in a different DXCC entity, would remove all semblance of a level playing-field in fairly obvious ways. In all such cases it breaches the third principle above. The argument that it uses technology to make contacts that would not otherwise be possible may be true but this is not IOTA in the sense that most participants wish it to be. The further argument that such a rule is largely unenforceable is probably also true but Geoff's fourth principle about trust and the consequences of faking contacts applies here.

#### NOTE 4 (C.4.2)

*"QSL cards submitted **must** have printed on them both the operation callsign and the name of the island from which the operation took place. The latter **must** be an island mentioned as qualifying for the claimed IOTA group in the island listings in the latest IOTA Directory or on the RSGB IOTA web-site."*

It is not widely known that in the months leading up to his handing over IOTA to the RSGB Geoff Watts introduced the following rule to apply to operations from 1985: *"The name of the island or group (or other identification) must appear on the QSL. Cards with hand-written / type-written / rubber-stamped 'island' will not be accepted."* For reasons of difficulty in getting an acceptable level of compliance IOTA Management delayed full implementation of this rule change (even then 'rubber-stamped' was excepted) until late 2000 and then applied it only to operations taking place from 1 January 2001. The reason given was that, with the increased card volumes experienced, quicker throughput was required and this meant card-checking without the need for Checkpoints to refer to atlases, maps and other data or to IOTA Management for a decision. Hence our insistence on cards having printed on them the name of the island from which the operation took place and that this must be an island listed in the latest IOTA Directory.

The decision not to accept cards that had the island name handwritten stemmed from the practical difficulties of operating a decentralised system of card-checking where decisions could vary according to individual people's judgement on the accuracy or origin of such annotations and from IOTA Management's view in principle that neither Checkpoints nor it should be put in a position of having to make such judgements. Island operators are regularly advised of the alternatives to getting cards specially printed (the preferred solution) – they can have existing cards overprinted or rubber-stamped individually with the island name and additional wording to remove ambiguity, or they can print the island name on their computerised QSL labels.

#### NOTE 5 (E.1.1)

*"The Directory list has been capped at 1200 IOTA groups. IOTA Management will not consider further additions outside its scheduled reviews (see E.1.2), with the rare exception of the occasional new island DXCC entity group that might qualify under the rules for separate listing (E.5.5). Requests for new groups to be added will invariably be turned down."*

Long ago IOTA Management set a limit of 1200 on the number of groups on the IOTA list. The reason for this was to prevent a real risk developing of the IOTA 'total' becoming an unmanageable figure if no cap existed. It took the view that an 'open-ended' programme would not be popular with the majority of island chasers, primarily for reasons of time and expense. From Management's viewpoint QSL cards have to be submitted for each credit claimed and there has to be a limit on the work that we ask Checkpoints to undertake.

For every island that seems to be a good candidate for a separate IOTA group, there are hundreds of other similar candidates elsewhere, each with its own ardent champion! A detailed set of criteria have been used to establish the present list and, while we don't claim that different groupings might not have been equally feasible, we believe that the present list is fair, provides a useful mix of easy and difficult groups to work and at the same time reflects decisions taken at earlier stages of IOTA Programme development.

IOTA Management is however committed to reviewing the list every five years, the last such occasion being in 2014. Between reviews, with the rare exception of the occasional new island DXCC entity group that might qualify under the rules for separate listing or of a previously declared 'barren' IOTA group found to possess a valid island, it is unlikely that new groups will be added. As for the five yearly reviews, we can say only that, while we do not wish to bind the hands of IOTA Management in the future, we do not currently expect any changes made to be more than minimal.

For the reasons given we do not encourage requests for new IOTA groups.

#### NOTE 6 (E.2.3)

*"IOTA Management requires a first-time operation to make a minimum 1000 contacts with different stations in five continents before it can consider confirming a provisional reference number."*

In 2011 IOTA Management took the decision to increase the minimum number of contacts to be made by a first time operation from 200 contacts to 1000 before it would confirm a provisional number on receipt of validation. This was by way of recognition that, such had been the geographical coverage of IOTA operations over the past 25 years, almost all of the now un-activated or seldom activated IOTA groups were so remote that they presented some risk to personal safety unless extraordinary care were taken. In its view this warranted larger and more exhaustively prepared operations than might otherwise have been considered – with several experienced operators rather than a single operator, a visibly safe means of transportation rather than a cheaper and potentially less reliable one, adequate life support for the planned duration and any forced extension of stay and a Plan B in case of emergency. Most operations to remote DXCC counters attended to these requirements in great detail, often insisting on a doctor participating as a team member, and there was no valid reason to support the view that an IOTA operation to an equally remote location would be intrinsically safer. Unfortunately it has to be agreed that with greater safety provision comes greater expense.

There were a number of additional reasons for the change. The original 200 QSO requirement had been set in 2000 when the number of island chasers was far fewer. Now however, the size of pile-ups on new and rare IOTAs was so heavy that a minimum 200 QSO requirement was no longer sensible. Demand was such that any first-time operation making less than a sizable number of QSOs risked creating much disappointment which would reflect badly on IOTA for 'allowing' what would be seen as a short mini-operation.

Not perhaps a decisive consideration but new IOTA groups added to the list could affect the threshold figure for the Antarctica award if they took place in that area. Two or three mini-operations there could make that award almost unobtainable.

It has been argued that raising the requirement figure risks an operator staying longer to reach the QSO target in the face of weather conditions advising immediate departure, thereby putting him at risk. In some areas of the world changes in weather can be almost instantaneous and, where this happens, one has to rely on an operator's common sense and his Plan B.

We have given the following clarifications:

- subject to Management being given a satisfactory explanation, it may allow a small shortfall in reaching the 1000 QSO requirement (much depends on the circumstances);
- if a first time operation falls short of reaching the contact target, the number of QSOs made will be added to those made by the second operation, assuming they make up the shortfall, to secure confirmation of the reference number; and
- once the reference number has been confirmed, there is no minimum QSO target for subsequent operations.

### **NOTE 7 (E.3.3)**

*"As all islands listed as qualifying for an IOTA group count the same for the purposes of the IOTA Programme, there is no special advantage for the IOTA chaser in a DXpeditioner's activating one island rather than another. The Directory lists more than 15,000 islands and most groups have ample qualifying islands. The processing of every request for an addition to the list takes valuable time, and this is becoming increasingly difficult to justify in cases where the IOTA group already has numerous qualifying islands. IOTA Management will continue to process deserving cases but will now require strong justification to accompany a request for the addition of islands to groups that already have more than 30 qualifying islands. Justification based on the need for an activation of an unlisted island for another award programme or for a holiday or contest or special activity event would not normally be sufficient."*

It means what it says! The removal of the previous key requirement of an island being shown on a 1:1,000,000 scale map (for reasons see Note 8 below) means that almost every island shown on Google Earth or any other officially recognised

reference map has become a candidate for inclusion in the list of qualifying islands. Given the number of islands world-wide (250,000 and upwards) we have to prevent the chore of validating islands taking over too large a proportion of management time. This justifies a policy of turning down requests that have less value-added purpose for IOTA than for another award programme. Rather than allow IOTA to be seen as the world's store-room of islands, we have to accept that thousands of islands that could count for IOTA will never do so. That is realism.

We will of course give priority to unlisted islands in IOTA groups that have few 'counters', particularly if they are rare and have a DXpedition planned. This may sound 'discriminatory' but it is not since one cannot discriminate against something that is inanimate! We need to encourage folk to look at the IOTA list before progressing their plans too far rather than make arrangements only to find that their island is not listed.

### **NOTE 8 (E.6.4)**

*"FIRST RULE – The island **must** be shown and named on either Google Earth or another officially recognised reference map."*

The key requirement that an island be shown on a 1:1,000,000 scale map has been dropped because better maps have become available with the arrival of Google Earth and the new generation of digital maps and mapping tools. The map series had its weaknesses as it gave a very patchy picture in many areas of the world and was invariably out of date but it was the best tool we had at the time (2000) to separate out islands for listing. See consequences under Note 7 above.

### **NOTE 9 (E.7.3 & E.8.5)**

*"Fortunately, it is only on very few occasions that islands disappear or lose qualification status, but when they do and particularly if it leaves a group with no qualifying islands, IOTA Management is faced with the need to act."*

The only firm guidance that can be given concerning the action that IOTA Management will take in the face of any particular set of circumstances is that it will act in what it believes are the best interests of the programme. Each case will be treated on its merits. In the case of islands that disappear or lose their IOTA status through natural or human intervention, e.g. earthquake, storm action, harbour development, land reclamation, or Island DXCC entity group status withdrawal, IOTA Management will look at the options. Where no valid islands remain in a group, there may be no alternative to withdrawing the IOTA reference number.

### **NOTE 10 (G.1.3)**

*"The IOTA Programme is managed on a non-profit-making basis. Administration costs are met from within the programme, principally from card-checking and certificate fees."*

The change in management control will not alter the non-profit-making nature of the programme. In fact the new company will be seeking funding from the IOTA Community to help finance the project to rewrite the IOTA software. See page 16.