
7TH MEETING OF THE COMMISSION

The Hague, The Netherlands, 23 to 27 January 2019

COMM7 - Doc10 SPRFMO-ABNJ Participation *Secretariat*

1. Background

1.1. About ABNJ

In December 2013 (Ref:0151-2013) SPRFMO confirmed its participation in the FAO-GEF¹ Project “Sustainable fisheries management and biodiversity conservation of deep-sea living marine resources and ecosystems in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ)”.

Decisions on the nature and extent of SPRFMO’s participation in the various parts of the project were made on a case-by-case basis where SPRFMO in-kind contribution over the period 2014-2018 was then estimated at USD 200 000. SPRFMO has been regularly participating in the annual ABNJ Steering Committee Meetings where has been confirmed satisfactory progress of the project implementation to date.

Latest project developments show that some project activities were removed or merged with others to ensure timely completion of the project by the anticipated end-date (31 December 2019). The newsletters and further information on the ABNJ Programme and the ABNJ Deep-seas Project can be found at: <http://www.commonoceans.org/>.

The ABNJ project is highly relevant to the Deep Sea RFMOs. Project results are also relevant to the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) process, to which the ABNJ Project has made important contributions.

1.2. SPRFMO Scientific Committee (SC) Recommendation

At the third meeting of the SPRFMO Scientific Committee (SC3) held in Port Vila, Vanuatu 28 September - 3 October 2015, the SC reviewed the FAO-ABNJ Deep Seas Project information paper (SC-03-INF-03), stating in the SC meeting report “*The SC reaffirms earlier recommendations that the Commission:*

- *remains aware of EBSAs within the Convention Area and of the factors that led to their definition; and*
- *addresses any conservation needs for EBSAs through the normal process of developing Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) for the fisheries.”*

This year, considering that SPRFMO participation in the ABNJ project finished at the end of 2018, the Secretariat invited the the SC to consider (SC6-Doc33)² whether it would like to recommend that SPRFMO continues its participation in the ABNJ Project and the scope of such participation. The SC6 report states³ “*With regards to ABNJ, the SC was cautious about cost⁴, but in favour of participating”*.

2. Final consideration

- The Commission is invited to consider whether, following the SC recommendation, SPRFMO continues its participation in the ABNJ Project.

¹ FAO is a partner agency of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), a partnership of 18 agencies and 183 countries to address the world’s most challenging environmental issues related to biodiversity, climate change, land degradation, chemicals, and international waters.

² <http://www.sprfmo.int/assets/2018-SC6/Meeting-Documents/SC6-Doc33-Should-SPRFMO-continue-participating-in-ABNJ.pdf>

³ <http://www.sprfmo.int/assets/2018-SC6/SPRFMO-SC6-Report.pdf>

⁴ Participating in the next ABNJ Steering Committee is budgeted at NZD 11 000, See FAC 6 – Doc08.2 “Secretariat Travel Plan for Financial Year 2019-2020”.