

9th MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Held virtually, 27 September to 2 October 2021

SC9-Doc13

ABNJ Update

Secretariat

1. Introduction

The [SC8-Report](#) notes that William Emerson (FAO) presented SC8-Obs04 with an update on the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction Deep Sea Fisheries Project (ABNJ DSF). The second phase of the ABNJ Deep Sea Fisheries Project will support the implementation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries, with a focus on data-poor stocks, significant adverse impacts on VMEs, and deepwater sharks. SPRFMO's expertise in these matters is expected to make a strong contribution to the DSF Project. Expertise from other regions will also be brought to SPRFMO, allowing for the global development of these research areas. The DSF Project will also contribute to an understanding of the application of international instruments by RFMOs and fishing nations, including the implications of the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) negotiations, to position the fisheries sector as key players in ocean governance.

The SC8 meeting requested that the SPRFMO Secretariat assist and coordinate activities relevant to supporting the work of the SC during the planning phase of the DSF Project. This would include aspects relating to data-poor stocks, significant adverse impacts on VMEs, and deepwater sharks, and coordination with relevant experts from Members to ensure that the best guidance is provided to the DSF Project. This would be an in-kind contribution at this stage.

The SC8 meeting also agreed that an assessment of how ID guides could be developed should be added to the work plan and if funds are needed, they could come from the SC budget. The SC also requested that the Secretariat investigate if this type of work could be coordinated through the ABNJ project.

The ABNJ Project Development Coordinator (Mr William Emerson – FAO) has asked for identification of co-financing, that is, ways in which SPRFMO Members or Secretariat will show their commitment to the ABNJ project by being involved in identified projects. This paper seeks to provide an update on the development of the FAO ABNJ Deep-Sea Fisheries (DSF) Project and to identify activities that are already planned by SPRFMO that could be considered an in-kind contribution.

- SC9 is requested to note the list of planned SPRFMO activities contained in this paper and recommend that they be considered an in-kind contribution to the FAO ABNJ Deep-Sea Fisheries (DSF) Project.



2. Background and information for the ABNJ project

The DSF Project receives funding from the [Global Environment Facility](#) (GEF) under the GEF-7 program to execute the project. This funding is designed to build on [partner](#) in-kind contributions. In summary, the GEF funding is used to fund activities, share results among the ABNJ regions and globalise the partner's achievements so all regions benefit. The partner's in-kind co-financing contributions comprise of the work undertaken by each partner in their own region.

An anticipated 5 million USD in funding will be provided by GEF and these projects require co-financing in a 7:1 ratio between partners and GEF. This would require a total of 35 million USD from the project partners, which could be provided in cash or through in-kind contribution.

GEF require the Partner's co-financing to be assigned to each project component. As shown in Section 3, FAO has suggested a contribution of 1.5 million USD (in kind, over five years) by SPRFMO.

A summary of the project's activities, as provided in the Concept Note and Theory of Change and FAO identified related SPRFMO activities, and the source of the contributions is shown in Section 4.

3. SPRFMO In-kind Co-financing contribution

The suggested co-financing amount for SPRFMO is USD 1,500,000 over five years, with the following split by component:

Component	USD Amount	Type of Co-financing
Component 1:	--	grant
Governance - strengthening and implementing regulatory frameworks	225,000	in-kind
Component 2:	--	grant
Strengthening effective management of deep sea fisheries	975,000	in-kind
Component 3:	--	grant
Improving understanding and management of cross-sectoral impacts on deep sea fisheries	225,000	in-kind
Component 4:	--	grant
Knowledge Management, Communication and Monitoring and Evaluation	75,000	in-kind



4. Project activities, regional partner activities, and sources of co-financing contribution

Component 1: Governance -strengthening and implementing regulatory frameworks

Outcome 1.1 – Wider adoption, enforcement and compliance of international obligations relating to sustainable fisheries (stocks and impacts)

Project Outputs	Project Activity	SPRFMO Partner Activity (in kind)
<p>1.1.1 - Gaps in regional obligations to (i) manage fish stocks and (ii) reduce fisheries impacts on biodiversity identified (updated) and corrective measures proposed.</p>	<p>Scoping study on international obligations (under UNCLOS, UNFSA, and other instruments¹) in managing fish stocks and reducing impacts in ABNJ, including reference to data-limited and bycatch species.</p> <p>Workshop and report developed under participatory process.</p> <p>Run by project consultant</p>	<p>Take part in scoping study workshop to identify international obligations.</p> <p><i>(Note that RFMO obligations may be a subset of state obligations, particularly relevant to cross-sectoral impacts and biodiversity conservation)</i></p> <p>Compliance and Commission meetings and reports</p> <p>SPRFMO CMMs and national legislation</p> <p>In-kind support from Secretariat to support project consultant</p>
<p>1.1.2 - Measures to address RFMO and national legal and regulatory gaps in international obligations related to fisheries management.</p>	<p>Development of fisheries management self-assessment tools for RFMOs and their member states based on the step-wise guide² and unpublished assessments undertaken during GEF-5 based on the DeepFlip Questionnaire³.</p> <p>This includes uptake of obligations identified under 1.1.1.</p> <p>Workshop and report developed under participatory process.</p> <p>E-learning tool developed by FAO⁴.</p> <p>Run by project consultant</p>	<p>Assist in the development of self-assessment tools for RFMOs and Members based on requirements in binding and voluntary international instruments.</p> <p>Attendance at one workshop (online or in person) to develop self-assessment tools.</p> <p>Act as advisor, if relevant, to the development of the e-learning tool.</p> <p>In-kind support from Secretariat staff (Executive Secretary, Compliance manager) to support project consultant</p>



Project Outputs	Project Activity	SPRFMO Partner Activity (in kind)
1.1.3 - Gaps in existing capacity to strengthen compliance and enforcement identified and filled.	Focus on GEF-eligible countries following on from GEF-5 project Observer training (compliance and scientific) Port inspection training Deepwater shark catch monitoring and bycatch reduction (support to output 2.3.1) VMS and mapping of DSF by gear type (support to output 2.3.2) Run by project consultant	No anticipated contribution from RFMOs.

¹ Harrison, J., Lobach, T., Morgera, E. and P. Manoa. 2017. Review and analysis of international legal and policy instruments related to deep-sea fisheries and biodiversity conservation in areas beyond national jurisdiction. FAO, Rome. 94 pp. [Produced by GEF-5 Deep-Sea project]

² Harrison, J., Lobach, T., Morgera, E., Diz, D., Kuemlangan, B., Manoa, P. and Hamley, G. 2019. Step-wise guide for the implementation of international legal and policy instruments related to deep-sea fisheries and biodiversity conservation in the areas beyond national jurisdiction. Rome, FAO. [Produced by GEF-5 Deep-Sea project]

³ Deep sea fisheries legislation reviews based on questionnaires of nine participating states. [Produced by GEF-5 Deep-Sea project]

⁴ [FAO elearning Academy](#)



Component 2: Strengthening effective management of DSF

Outcome 2.1 – Effective decision making strengthened to increase sustainability and reduce impacts

Project Outputs	Project Activity	SPRFMO Partner Activity (in kind)
2.1.1 - Frameworks to improve science-management interface and exchange strengthened following an ecosystem and precautionary approach	<p>Desk top study on how deep sea RFMO (dsRFMO) committees communicate internally (eg by requests for advice, joint groups, etc) and to trail new ways if appropriate.</p> <p>Further development of PA and EAF frameworks by dsRFMOs.</p> <p>Run by Project consultant</p>	<p>Topics of interest include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for adopted references points to provide stock advice. • Impacts on ETP spp. Under EAF. • Sharing VMS information for science. • Collaboration between compliance and science <p>Take part in project workshop on PA and EAF frameworks (including the social and economic pillars of EAF, data-poor stocks, deepwater sharks and VMEs).</p>
2.1.2 - Frameworks to improve industry contributions to sustainable DSF	<p>Desk top study on how industry works with dsRFMOs and to trail new ways if appropriate applicable to the management, compliance, and scientific committees. Including better identification of communication and data sharing strategies. Conclusions discussed at workshop and frameworks developed as appropriate.</p> <p>Run by Project consultant</p>	<p>Scoping study and workshop to examine options for a more cooperative partnership between RFMOs and industry.</p> <p>Sharing of information frameworks among industry and dsRFMOs (including via delegations) and discussions with Secretariats and industry.</p> <p>Take part in project workshop on industry – dsRFMO cooperation.</p> <p>Follow-up as required.</p>
2.1.3 – Uptake of new and innovative approaches and technologies for improved monitoring,	Development of web-area (under Common Oceans Programme?) for sharing information from	Topics of interest include:



Project Outputs	Project Activity	SPRFMO Partner Activity (in kind)
reporting and information sharing piloted and introduced	researchers and developers with a wider audience (such as dsRFMOs) of new and innovation technologies that support sustainable fisheries. Run by Project consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piloting new technologies. • On-line implementation of the Port State Measures agreement • Technologies to support or replace observers. <p>RFMO Secretariats to help identify “needs and constraints” that could be solved through the application of technology.</p>

2.2 - Improved advice supporting science-based fisheries management

Project Outputs	Project Activity	SPRFMO Partner Activity (in kind)
2.2.1 - Stock productivity models developed, and advice generated and tested (including demersal and small pelagic species and climate change effects)	Organise symposium on Application to fisheries management of ecosystem and stock productivity models under changing conditions – short, medium and long term implications”. Promote relevant work undertaken by dsRFMOs, including CC work. Draft publication on current work and its use in sustainable fisheries. Run by Project consultant	Ecosystem status overviews at seasonal to decadal scales (e.g. possibly via SPRFMO Habitat Monitoring WG) Sharing of relevant work by RFMO management and science committees Support of the project symposium on ecosystem and stock productivity models
2.2.2 - Low-yield and data-limited stocks assessed and managed	Focus fisheries are alfonsino and armourhead: Review and support appropriate and coordinated data-collection programmes.	Alfonsino data collection and assessment work Alfonsino (various areas), and orange roughy for information/comparison purposes.



Project Outputs	Project Activity	SPRFMO Partner Activity (in kind)
	<p>Identify and support current RFMO assessment methods.</p> <p>As appropriate, coordinate training workshops, possibly with ICES.</p> <p>Assist in evaluation of stock status for data limited stocks.</p> <p>Run by Project consultant</p>	<p>Sharing data-collection and assessment methodologies through RFMO reports and access to stock experts.</p> <p>If appropriate, have stock assessments reviewed in an open forum with other RFMOs (focus fisheries are alfonsino and armourhead)</p>
<p>2.2. 3 – Socio-economic considerations of DSF assessed and information disseminated</p>	<p>Undertake value chain analysis of 1-4 fisheries that supports the sustainable management of deep-sea fisheries and EAF.</p> <p>Perform gender and decent employment analyses as part of the value chain work.</p> <p>Examine relevance of value chains to work of RFMOs.</p> <p>Run by Project consultant.</p>	<p>Sharing of relevant work</p> <p>SPRFMO has previously discussed the socio-economic and cultural importance of ABNJ. (see e.g. 2020 COMM8-Report, paras 29, 144 and 147).</p> <p>Decent work – e.g. security and welfare of observers according to international standards or guidelines (CMM 16-2021, Annex 1)</p> <p>Inclusion of social and economic aspects in the EAF Framework (if appropriate).</p> <p>Selected value chain data collection.</p> <p>Gender work throughout entire fisheries chain (including management, science and MCS).</p>



2.3 - DSF impacts on biodiversity quantified, assessed and managed

Project Outputs	Project Activity	SPRFMO Partner Activity (in kind)
<p>2.3.1 - Impacts of DSF on deepwater sharks assessed and mitigated</p>	<p>Collate and assess data collection programmes and data collected among dsRFMOs. Providing support, training and testing of future data collection programs including new technologies to aid identification.</p> <p>Promotion of risk assessment methodologies involving shark distribution, fishing effort distribution (by gear), and catch susceptibility.</p> <p>Reviews of impact assessment methodologies and comparison of results from high seas regions through workshop or symposium as appropriate.</p> <p>Methods to review effectiveness of mitigation options.</p> <p>Run by Project consultant.</p>	<p>Risk assessments using PSA and SAFE methods.</p> <p>Collaboration with project to support this output, including sharing of work undertaken for RFMO meetings.</p> <p>Consistent with obligations and current work of RFMOs, undertaken deepwater shark stock and impact assessments with RFMOs.</p> <p>Working jointly with the project, review effectiveness of any mitigation measures to protect deepwater shark species.</p>
<p>2.3.2 – Knowledge of impacts of fishing activities on VMEs improved and mitigation measures developed and adopted</p>	<p>Review of current methods used to identify VMEs in ABNJ, including those used in exploratory fisheries, and produce publication entitled “VME identification methodology”.</p> <p>Review implementation of FAO DSF Guidelines (follow-up of Busan meeting in 2010)</p> <p>Methods to monitor the health of VMEs in closed areas to see if they are changing, either negatively through non-fisheries impacts or positively through recovery.</p>	<p>SRFMO collaboration, mainly through the provision of meeting reports and working documents, but sometimes by expert in-kind contributions, to advance work on VMEs, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat modelling and cross-collaboration (SC8 para 203) • Pursue operational definitions of SAI (spatial scales), ideally with FAO as part of an across-RFMO initiative. • Innovative bottom fishing footprint and 3-tier VME protection/fishing



Project Outputs	Project Activity	SPRFMO Partner Activity (in kind)
	<p>Improved monitoring and analysis of fishing effort by gear type (essential fundamental requirement to monitoring of fisheries and impacts).</p> <p>Run by Project consultant.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• VME ID Guides and data collection• Better use of VMS and other supporting methods (COMM8, para 53)• BTFI in exploratory fisheries – methods to determine (COMM8, para 190-194) <p>Representation by RFMOs at various workshops to develop and conclude work of this output.</p> <p>Some joint work with Compliance Committees and Scientific Committees on how to improve the monitoring and mapping of fishing effort, whilst respecting confidentiality requirements and restricted access rules.</p>



Component 3. Improving understanding and management of cross-sectoral impacts on DSF

Outcome 3.1 - Improved integration of cross-sector activities to maintain biodiversity and resource sustainability

Project Outputs	Project Activity	SPRFMO Partner Activity (in kind)
3.1.1 - Interactions between fisheries and other sectors operating in the deep seas identified and information made available.	<p>Scoping study to identify possible interactions with DSF (including overlap with current spatial extent of fishing by stock and gear).</p> <p>Methodologies identified to identify significance of threats (including where identified in similar cases for EEZ fisheries).</p> <p>Guidance developed on consequences of threats (fisheries production, ecological, social, economic).</p> <p>Run by Project consultant.</p>	<p>General interest in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EBSAs, marine pollution and climate change (SC report 2019, 11.2-11.3). Impacts on DSF from other sectors <p>Information in RFMO reports and working papers</p> <p>Consultations with SRFMO Secretariat staff, scientific committees, and members as appropriate.</p> <p>In-kind contributions to workshops and project publications</p>
3.1.2 - Mechanisms to better mitigate and manage cross-sector impacts on DSF developed.	<p>Project consultant to draft report on current and planned multi-sectoral marine use (to include all spatial aspects of fisheries including distribution of fishing effort and biodiversity protection measures).</p> <p>To inform RFMOs on developments in international instruments affecting the use of the ABNJ.</p> <p>As appropriate, any follow-up work necessary to mitigate the negative effects of interactions with DSF.</p> <p>Run by Project consultant.</p>	<p>Assigning responsibilities for assessing impacts to fish and biodiversity (in part, contributing to the BBNJ process).</p> <p>Improved understanding of the spatial extent of the fished areas and oil and gas work.</p> <p>Development of the VME Database, if desired, to include other spatial management measures and other sectors to facilitate integrated ecosystem assessments</p> <p>Provision of SRFMO meeting reports and working papers</p>



Component 4. Knowledge management, communication and M&E

Outcome 4.1 Knowledge generated and shared to raise awareness of project objectives, activities and achievements among stakeholders and target audiences

Project Outputs	Project Activity	SPRFMO Partner Activity (in kind)
4.1.1: Key successes in achieving the project objective's focal areas identified and messaging disseminated (inc. IW:Learn at 1%).	Review and support to RFMO websites with an emphasis on sharing information with a wider multi-sectoral audience to better display the remit of RFMOs and the work they undertake with fisheries and environmental monitoring. Run by Project consultant.	In-kind discussions between Secretariat and project's communications experts on current website design and possibilities for improvement in messaging.
	Programme level messaging via Global Coordination Project	No inputs envisioned
4.1.2: An operational project M&E system implemented	Project monitoring and evaluation undertaken by Project Management Unit	SRFMO Secretariat to provide annual updates to DSF project on their contributions to the project as specified in a co-financing letter.