

Background and opening of the meeting

1. On the occasion that the secretariats of seven of the eight regional deep seas management bodies were attending the 32nd meeting of the FAO Committee on Fisheries, the Coordinator of the ABNJ Deep Seas Project took the opportunity to call an informal meeting to discuss project matters. The meeting ran from 9 -11 am.
2. The agenda for the meeting is attached to this report (Appendix 1).

1. Update on the ABNJ Deep Seas Project

3. The Coordinator and Area-based Planning Specialist gave verbal progress reports on the ABNJ Deep Seas Project (Appendix 2).
4. SEAFO informed the meeting about two recent cases where SEAFO nominees to project events were unable to attend, at the last moment, due to administration and visa issues. He requested that, in the future, the PMU gives as much notification as possible when issuing invitations; and that some flexibility be given with respect to the choice of travellers; including some consideration of the likelihood that targeted individuals will be able to make it to the event location given their circumstances.
5. The meeting discussed the representation of regional organisations at project events, noting that it was often difficult for secretariat staff to find time to attend. CCAMLR informed the meeting that the chair of CCAMLR's scientific committee had represented the organisation at the recent world-wide review workshop which had the added benefit of enabling the project to interact directly with the members of the organisation. The meeting agreed that this was a good approach and that engagement of members can be facilitated through Secretariats.
6. SPRFMO informed the meeting that it had been contacted by Mr Sebastian Unga of the International Climate Initiative (IKI) regarding a review of deep sea fisheries. SEAFO had also been contacted. The Coordinator subsequently found the following information about IKI.
7. IKI's website <https://www.international-climate-initiative.com/en/> does not refer to review of deep seas fisheries. However, IKI has a €5 million project to support undertake a suite of activities designed to advance the practical application of EBSA data and to further strengthen the information supporting EBSA descriptions (in Costa Rica, Honduras, Seychelles, Sri Lanka). The proposal also provides for a further 5 years of funding to support the GOBI Secretariat operation.

2. Update from RFMO partners on project related activities

8. NAFO:
 - contributions to the VME database, including a staff member being trained to use the system
 - the NAFO Joint FC-SC Working Group on Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries (WG-EAFFM) will be held on 10-12 August 2016. This working group will examine VME areas outside the NAFO footprint and the refinement of VME boundaries; widening the scope of the NAFO coral and sponge identification guides; risk assessment of scientific trawl surveys impact on VME in closed areas and the effect of excluding surveys from these areas on stock assessments; developing a work plan to address potential impact of activities other than fishing on VMEs, in particular VME closed areas; identifying areas of significant concentrations of non-coral and sponge VME indicator species using all available information

- is developing a VME indicator guide for the seamounts in the north east Atlantic including corals, sponges and sea pens, with other species to follow
- participated in the world wide review workshop in May
- will participate in the August UNGA bottom fisheries review meeting in New York
- the annual meeting is to be held in Cuba 19-23 September, and the ABNJ Deep Seas Project is on the agenda to report progress to the organisation
- is developing a “roadmap” for the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach that will eventually include ecosystem productivity estimates, multi-species and single species stock assessments, and assessment of impacts on benthic habitats
- is beginning to engage the other sectors such as IMO, ISA and oil and gas.

9. GFCM:

- is working on the development of encounter protocols for VMEs in 2016, with a view to having them adopted in 2017
- is going to focus on deep seas fisheries more in the future, with development of a management plan and regulations on deep seas fisheries expected
- is involved in UN MAP
- adopted a three year strategy to support SDG14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development), especially on vulnerable species
- is collaborating with FAO to hold a VME workshop in July
- prohibits fishing deeper than 100m; this is about 47 % of the Mediterranean Sea.

10. NPFC:

- considerable work is being done to formulate the interim measures into CMMs
- responded to the UNGA bottom fishing inquiry
- held small scientific committee meetings on Pacific saury, north Pacific armourhead and vulnerable marine ecosystems in April; followed by the 1st Scientific Committee meeting
- indicated its interest in collaborative activities with the project, including a workshop for countries to pool their VME data and undertake combined analysis with a view to making the best use of available data in support of the technical advice on VME thresholds and encounter protocols; and an expert review of the biology and assessment of Pacific armourhead – leading to the production of a FAO Technical report, in the same vein as the alfonsino (just published) and orange roughy (in prep.) reports.

11. SEAFO:

- collaborated in the RV Dr Fridtjof Nansen survey in the South East Atlantic in 2015
- a coral garden was identified in one of the fishing areas and following scientific committee advice, the Commission closed the area
- has 13 areas closed for VME

- held two data analysis workshops in May and this resulted in two publications
- has NAD 80,000 (about USD5500) for support to project activities – this large largely been consumed with travel relating to the WWR in May, orange roughy workshop in June; and the CBD/RSO/RFMO workshop in September.

12. CCAMLR:

- has reported 11 new VME areas
- members indicated that there is insufficient information on the project available, so the Secretariat created an e-group for the project and posted this on the CCAMLR website. CCAMLR has 24 e-groups. The project e-group is not receiving a lot of attention to date and would probably benefit from increased promotion and outreach
- Scientific Committee is being held 17-21 October and the project is encouraged to present an update
- provided comments on the legal analysis and guidelines
- is working with the GEF on a capacity building in CCAMLR processes project (USD7 million over 4 years), involving five of the GEF-eligible CCAMLR Member states Namibia, South Africa, Ukraine, India and Chile. This project proposal will be reviewed by the GEF Council in October.

13. NEAFC

- there are no new changes to the VME database
- there have been changes to the extent of the high seas in the NEAFC region.
- three recent proposal for bottom fishing outside the existing fishing area were endorsed by the scientific process, but rejected by the Commission on the basis that the target species (crabs) were sedentary species.
- contributed to the World wide review workshop.
- the working group on deep seas species is mapping fishing effort and species composition in the catch
- is using new approaches to estimate TACs for around 60 data limited stocks
- held its second meeting with OSPAR. The Secretariats are discussing how to engage. Engagement with other sectors including IMO and ISA is beginning.

14. SPRFMO

- Stock assessment for orange roughy is being developed
- New Zealand is conducting exploratory fishing for toothfish.

3. Initiating RFMO activities is support of ABNJ Deep Seas project objectives

15. The Coordinator briefly discussed the 2016 project work plan and encouraged the organisations to identify developing countries that could benefit from project support. He also highlighted a proposed workshop on rights based management that will examine not only deep seas fisheries,

but also other sectors operating in the ABNJ in order to examine whether there are common approaches or essential components that need to be considered across the use of all ABNJ resources. The workshop is expected to involve three of the Common Oceans projects, namely the deep seas, tuna and offshore partnerships.

16. The Coordinator also noted that the development of the catch documentation review for deep seas fisheries is awaiting the final report being developed by ABNJ Tuna project for tuna fisheries.
17. The meeting agreed to form an informal Secretariat Contact Group comprising the 8 organisations to foster regular exchange of information (including, in the first instance, notices on relevant future meetings such as the various global process meetings (BBNJ and the UNGA bottom fisheries review), the outcomes of such meetings, and an indication of which organisations are attending. The Project would arrange to maintain the mailing list and the flow of information including summaries of key outcomes or relevance shortly after the conclusion of such meetings.

4. Reporting

18. The Coordinator informed the meeting that a six monthly report would be sent to partners; and information on financial contributions would be sought from partners in the middle of each calendar year.

5. Rights based management

19. See section 3 above.

6. Update on the BBNJ process and UNGA bottom fisheries review

20. The meeting expressed its concern about the mis-information and apparent lack of understanding on the advances in fisheries management practices and processes in recent years among many of the participants in the current global processes on BBNJ and bottom fisheries.
21. FAO informed the meeting that it was participating in these processes and was providing factual information on the activities of RFMOs. Several organisations indicated that they also intend to be involved.

7. Regional inter-sectoral dialogues

22. The Coordinator informed the meeting that there had been several recent 'multi-sectoral' meetings involving the secretariats from regional fisheries bodies, regional seas and other organisations and some countries. He noted that the *Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fisheries Bodies on Accelerating Progress Towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and relevant Sustainable Development Goals* meeting is being held in the Republic of Korea 26-29 September. This meeting is being led by CBD in collaboration with UNEP and FAO, and it is intended to strengthen dialogue and exchange between regional fisheries organisations and conservation bodies. CCAMLR indicated that the timing of the meeting was too close to commission meetings therefore CCAMLR was unlikely to participate. NAFO noted that the invitation did not arrive in time and the timing of the meeting was too close to its Annual Meeting for it to participate. SEAFO, NPFC and SPRFMO were planning to attend.

8. Any other business

23. None.

Appendix 1 Agenda

ABNJ Deep Seas Project – meeting with RFMOs AGENDA

Tuesday 12 July 2016. 9-11 am

1. Update on the project
2. Update from RFMO partners on project related activities
3. Initiating RFMO activities in support of ABNJ Deep Seas project objectives
4. Reporting
5. Rights Base Management workshop
5. Update on the BBNJ process and UNGA bottom fisheries review
6. Regional inter-sectoral dialogues / CBDs Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fisheries Bodies (Republic of Korea, September 2016)
7. Other matters

Appendix 2 Coordinators report

Report on the progress of the ABNJ Deep Seas Project.

1. Inception / PSC meetings were held in December 2015. A 2016 work plan was approved.

- Ruth Fletcher has taken over from Hannah Thomas as ABP Specialist at UNEP-WCMC

2. PMU led activities:

- Effort put into joining various Partner meetings (e.g. RFMOs, GOBI, CBD) meetings; scoping collaboration and integrating project into work plans
- Expert meeting on biology and assessment of orange roughy
- WWR in prep – engaging RFMOs
- Gender analysis of deep sea fishing industry
- Review of the project logframe, and development of a theory of change

3. Partner activities:

- CBD EBSA process review (and expert meeting) – GOBI and partners
- CBD EBSA Workshops in Black Sea / Caspian Sea?
- SIODFA (Industry) data collection and contributions to scientific processes, including biodiversity monitoring
- IUCN Seamounts analysis ?
- WCMC - Review of area-based planning (ABP) tools and their applicability to deep sea ABNJ
- WCMC institutional mapping
- FAO
 - VME workshop with GFCM
 - Maintenance and updating of the VME database and portal
 - Production of identification guides on deep seas sharks
 - Sponges identification guides in prep
 - Alfonsino report printed and available (www.fao.org/3/a-i5336e.pdf)
 - FAO collaboration in the SponGES project (<http://www.uib.no/en/news/93365/unique-marine-research-programme-funded>)

4. Project played a role in:

- The deep seas fisheries industry meeting – forum for free and frank discussions, and development of a statement to the UNGA bottom fisheries review
- Information used by FAO for its input into the UNGA bottom fisheries review and BBNJ Prepcom
- International Waters Conference (IWC 8)
- The ABNJ Capacity Project's workshop on Capacity Development to Improve the Management of Marine Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ): Needs, Experiences, Options, and Opportunities, held in Grenada
- COFI

5. Outputs:

- VME processes and practices technical report in press
- Draft report - Analysis and guide for the implementation of internal legal and policy instruments related to deep-sea fisheries and biodiversity conservation in ABNJ
- Draft Report - Institutional mapping for cross sectoral cooperation in WIO and SEP

6. Issues:

- Need to have some clarity and finality to the formats and logo specifications for project outputs (FAO recent policy changes and UNEP-WCMC discussions)

7. Supporting the ABNJ Programme:

- IWC8 / COFI
- Theory of Change deliberations
- Collaborations with Tuna and Capacity, including planning for a rights based management in the ABNJ workshop

Appendix 3 Meeting participants

List of participants	
CCAMLR	GFCM
Andrew Wright <i>Executive Secretary</i> andrew.wright@ccamlr.org	Miguel Bernal <i>Fisheries Resources Officer</i> Miguel.Bernal@fao.org
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