

**International Consultations on the Establishment of the  
South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation**

**Proposed Process for Preparation and Evaluation of Benthic  
Assessments for Proposed Bottom Fishing Operations in the  
SPRFMO Area**

<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
SPRFMO SWG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree on key science representatives, or environmental sub-group, to be responsible for conducting inter-sessional evaluations of benthic assessments.</li> <li>• Agree on interim SPRFMO Benthic Assessment Framework to be implemented after 30 September.</li> </ul>	To be decided at SPRFMO4, Noumea, New Caledonia.
SPRFMO Secretariat (Assisted by the SWG and Flag States)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation of the SPRFMO geospatial VME, joint trawl footprint and bathymetric geo-spatial databases.</li> </ul>	Once the Secretariat has been established.
Flag States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation of benthic impact assessments for proposed bottom fishing operations in the SPRFMO Area, in accordance with the SPRFMO Benthic Assessment Framework (or the Benthic Assessment Standard, once adopted).</li> <li>• Submit benthic impact assessments to the SPRFMO Secretariat, for forwarding to the SWG.</li> </ul>	Required for any bottom fishing after 30 September 2007. To be prepared and submitted before fishing commences. (Fishing may the proceed in accordance with the management and mitigation measures proposed in the assessments while the assessments are evaluated by the SWG.)
SPRFMO Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessments submitted to the SWG for evaluation and comment.</li> <li>• Assessments also to be posted on the SPRFMO website for public comment</li> <li>• Receive, collate and provide public comments on benthic assessments back to the SWG</li> </ul>	Immediately upon receipt from Flag States. Public comment required within 30 days of posting.  Public comments received are to be provided to SWG immediately after 30 days commentary period.
SPRFMO SWG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate and prepare comments on submitted assessments.</li> <li>• Provide written comments back to flag states, through the Secretariat.</li> </ul>	Within 60 days of receiving Flag State assessments from the Secretariat.
SPRFMO Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide SWG comments back to the flag state, and inform other flag states, of the SWG comments on</li> </ul>	Immediately upon receipt of comments from the SWG.

	<p>each assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post SWG comments on assessments on the SPRFMO website.</li> </ul>	
Flag States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decide how to respond to comments or questions received from the SWG, and how to address any shortcomings identified.</li> </ul>	?
SPRFMO SWG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree on detailed SPRFMO Benthic Assessment Standard.</li> <li>• Periodically review and update the Benthic Assessment Standard and Process.</li> </ul>	<p>Once this has been drafted (about mid-2008). At annual SWG meetings.</p>
SPRFMO Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review performance of the SWG Benthic Assessment Standard and Process, and SWG assessment evaluations conducted.</li> <li>• Determine objectives for SWG to use in future evaluations of bottom fishing benthic assessments.</li> </ul>	Once SPRFMO Commission established.