

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

SPRFMO IV REPORT – ANNEX D

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

Category	Task	Timeframe	Responsibility
Preparatory Phase	1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree that key science representatives from each flag state are to be responsible for conducting inter-sessional evaluations of benthic assessments. • Agree on interim SPRFMO Benthic Assessment Framework to be implemented after 30 September. 	Done at the SPRFMO4 meeting, Noumea, New Caledonia.	SPRFMO SWG
	2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of the SPRFMO geospatial VME, joint trawl footprint, bathymetric and EEZ boundary geospatial database. 	Immediately after SPRFMO4 meeting.	SPRFMO Interim Secretariat (Assisted by the SWG and Flag States)
Annual Assessment and Review Process	3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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). • Submit benthic impact assessments to the SPRFMO Secretariat, for forwarding to the SWG. 	Required for any bottom fishing after 30 September 2007. To be prepared and submitted before fishing commences. (Fishing may proceed in accordance with the management and mitigation measures proposed in the assessments while the assessments are evaluated by the SWG)	Flag States
	4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessments submitted to the nominated SWG key 	Immediately upon receipt from	SPRFMO (Interim)

		<p>scientific representatives for evaluation and comment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessments also to be posted on the SPRFMO website for public comment, and notification of each posting to be sent to other SPRFMO flag states. • Receive, collate and provide public comments on benthic assessments back to the SWG key scientific representatives. 	<p>Flag States. Public comment required within 30 days of posting.</p> <p>Public comments received are to be provided to SWG key representatives immediately after 30 days commentary period.</p>	Secretariat
	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate and prepare comments on submitted assessments. • Provide written comments back to flag states, through the Secretariat. 	Within 60 days of receiving Flag State assessments from the Secretariat.	SPRFMO SWG
	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide SWG comments back to the flag state, and notify other flag states of the SWG comments on each assessment. • Post SWG comments on assessments on the SPRFMO website. 	Immediately upon receipt of comments from the SWG.	SPRFMO (Interim) Secretariat
Flag State Response	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to comments or questions received from the SWG. 	?	Flag States
Ongoing Improvement and Review Process	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree on detailed SPRFMO Benthic Assessment Standard. • Periodically review and update the Benthic Assessment Standard and Process. 	<p>Once this has been drafted (about mid-2008). At annual SWG meetings.</p>	SPRFMO SWG
	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review performance of the SWG Benthic Assessment Standard and Process, and SWG assessment evaluations conducted. • Determine objectives for SWG to use in future evaluations of bottom fishing benthic assessments. 	Once SPRFMO Commission established.	SPRFMO Commission