

## **The Report of the 2<sup>nd</sup> PSC Meeting of ABNJ Deep Seas Project**

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The second Project Steering Committee meeting of FAO ABNJ Deep Seas Project took place from 7 to 9 February 2017 at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy. Twenty-six representatives from eighteen partner organizations participated in the meeting. Mr. Timothy Costelloe from Cook Island and Dr. Jianye Tang from China attended the meeting on behalf of SPRFMO.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> PSC meeting elected Jon Lansley, Executive Secretary of SIOFA, as chair of the meeting. In line the agenda adopted by the meeting, Chris O'Brien, coordinator of the project, firstly introduced the project, which was followed by Kathrin Hett and Tina Farmer from FAO briefing the progresses made in other two ABNJ projects, namely ABNJ tuna project and ABNJ capacity project.

Then, representatives from partner organizations updated the activities by their organizations relating to the projected. Under this item, Mr. Timothy Costelloe, representing SPRFMO, read the enclosed materials prepared by Dr. Jianye Tang.

The rest of the meeting almost dedicated to the review of the 2016 Annual Report and the discussion the 2017 work plan. The review and discussion covered all five components and has been conducted on basis of one component by one component. The PSC noted the satisfactory progress of the project to date and that there were no changes apparent to external conditions that might affect the implementation of the project. In accordance with the 2017 work plan, SPRFMO is anticipated to be engaged in the following two activities: (1) assessment of potential interactions between DSF and biodiversity in relation to targets 26 and 27; (2) use of EBSA information for enhancing conservation and management measures in pilot areas in relation to target 40.

Notwithstanding the 2017 work plan, the ABNJ Deep Seas project will start three research projects. They include 'traceability – review of catch documentation schemes and value chain analyses' by Gilles Hosch, 'rights based management' by Dale Squires, and 'Monitoring control and surveillance' by Sarah Lenel. During the meeting, Mr. Gilles Hosch has contacted with all potential RFMOs, planning his visits. While SPRFMO replied with no preparation to develop any CDS measures, the other two research activities could one way or other shed some light on the work of SPRFMO. Therefore, I suggest that SPRFMO pay some attention on them.

Considering the interaction between deep seas fisheries and the BBNJ process under the UN auspice, particularly the potential impact of the BBNJ process on fisheries, the meeting encouraged the project management unit (PMU) to produce both e-communications materials that highlight the major achievements of the project for partners to distribute through their network, and to convene, if feasible, a side event at the forthcoming BBNJ discussions and Ocean Conference to promote the project, the partnerships and major achievement. In addition, the

meeting urged relevant partners and their members to the greatest extent to attend the BBNJ discussion. In this regard, Executive Secretaries of NAFO and NEAFC have agreed to take part in the two-week BBNJ discussion from the late March to the early April 2017 in New York.

At the end, the meeting agreed to hold its third meeting from 6-8 February 2018 in UNEP-WCME, Cambridge, England. Given the experience of this meeting, I strongly suggest the secretariat of SPRFMO send its staff to the third meeting, if possible.

18 February 2017

**Enclosure:**

**The activities by SPRFMO relevant to the project**

1. Last year the Secretariat released a dataset on fishing effort for use in conducting a risk assessment against Porbeagle sharks in support of the Tuna part of ABNJ.
2. SPRFMO members are continuing work on assessing low-information deepwater stocks (both orange roughy and deepwater sharks).
3. New Zealand is progressing work on models to prediction of VMEs in the Western part of the SPRFMO Area.
4. New Zealand and Australia are working on tools to prioritise areas for protection and design candidate spatial management areas to protect VMEs
5. SPRFMO will be discussing the review of its bottom fishing measure in Adelaide.
6. One of the straddling stocks of orange roughy has recently achieved Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification for sustainable fishing practices.<sup>1</sup>

**The Report of the 4<sup>th</sup> SC 2016, para. 6.5**

The ABNJ Deep Seas Project Report (SC04-INF02) was presented by the Executive Secretary. Members discussed the recent FAO workshop of global experts on orange roughy held in June 2016. They covered historical aspects of the regional development of the fisheries, biology, stock assessment and key management issues. Recent developments in science and approaches to management were specifically highlighted with respect to the future for the sustainable management of the fisheries. Two participants of that workshop reported that, although the report was unavailable, one of the main recommendations was that CPUE indices should be avoided where possible when assessing deepwater stocks. They reported that the preferred methods involved fishery independent data, usually acoustic technology. New Zealand agreed with those preferences, but noted that the only currently available information for assessment of SPRFMO stocks was CPUE data. The SC:

- **agreed** that there would be value in collecting fisheries independent data for orange roughy assessments, and discussed ways to encourage fishery independent surveys and identify priorities areas for such surveys within the SPRFMO Area;
- **noted** that funding for the collection of fishery independent surveys using research vessels was unlikely to be available in the near future;
- **agreed** to support fishery independent data collection for orange roughy using either research

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<sup>1</sup> These six activities were provided with by Craig Loveridge, data manager of SPRFMO on 9 January 2017 upon Dr. Tang's request.

voyages or commercial fishing vessels from those nations having both interests and capacities

- **agreed** to support convening a workshop on survey design, best practice, and validation techniques to develop a SPRFMO standard to collect these types of data, based on existing AUS/NZ standards;
- **noted** that this type of data collection may apply to other deepwater species such as alfonsino, as well as pelagic species such as jack mackerel.

**The report of the 5<sup>th</sup> Commission 2017, at page 6**

CMM 4.03 (bottom fishing). New Zealand introduced the COMM5-Inf05 which reports on progress towards the development of a revised bottom fishing CMM. The Commission welcomed the initiative taken by New Zealand and Australia in this regard and encouraged the involvement of other interested Members and observers. DSCC noted the agreement of the SC that a more prescriptive bottom-fishing CMM for all Members may be easier to implement and control, more consistent, and more likely to work effectively. Australia offered to host a scientific workshop in 2017 to aid the development of a revised bottom fishing measure. It was recommended to exchange information with other RFMOs and projects addressing similar issues to develop a consistent approach for the assessment and management of demersal fisheries. The Commission agreed to extend the application of CMM 4.03 until the close of the Annual Meeting 2018 (ANNEX 8e).