

MINUTES 4th MEETING
IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE
OF THE
MAHE PLATEAU TRAP AND LINE FISHERY CO-MANAGEMENT PLAN

SFA Meeting Room, Fishing Port
Wednesday 15 May 2019
09:00 A.M.

Introduction

The fourth meeting of the Implementation Committee for the Co-Management Plan (ICCP) of the Mahe Plateau demersal trap and line fishery was held at the Meeting Room of the Seychelles Fishing Authority, Fishing Port, on the 15th May 2019.

1. Opening to the meeting

Mr. Calvin Gerry, Deputy CEO, SFA, opened the meeting and welcomed its participants. He informed that apologies had been received from the PS, MFAG who couldn't attend because of other pressing commitments.

There was an expression of disappointment from the members of the ICCP that the MFAG was not attending the 4th ICCP either as Chairperson or as a member of the Committee. They asked the SFA to convey their disappointment to the MFAG.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

The meeting was chaired by the Vice-Chairperson, Mr Keith Andre of the FBOA. Noting the presence of several new participants, Mr Andre requested a round of introductions. The agenda items were re-organised and adopted as presented in Appendix 1. The list of participants is presented in Appendix 2.

3. Timelines and progress in the revision of fisheries regulations.

The SFA Legal Adviser briefed the meeting on the fisheries regulations under revision in two phases. The first phase involved transposition of IOTC resolutions within the national legislation and started last year. The second due to start in July 2019 would involve the revision of artisanal and semi-industrial fishery regulations. This was due to last for six months and would be undertaken by a consultant (TORs had just been finalised). Thereafter, the revision would have to be cleared by the AGs Office, presented to Cabinet (1st Quarter 2020), and submitted to the National Assembly for approval.

In discussions that followed it was pointed out that there was a loophole in the legislation for exclusion of industrial purse-seiners and longliners on the Mahe Plateau (Exclusion of foreign vessels, Zone1). Currently the exclusion applies to foreign vessels only - Seychelles-flagged purse seiners and industrial longliners can legally fish on the Mahe Plateau. This would be redressed by the revision of the fisheries regulations, but in the meantime, it should be placed on the licence provisions of Seychelles-flagged industrial fishing vessels. There was need to act on the existing framework of regulations and licencing even if they may not be perfect rather than deferring action until a later date when these are all revised to perfection. The ICCP was assured that it would be consulted in due course during the revision of the artisanal fisheries regulations. Also, it was confirmed the use of spot fines and graded penalties would be incorporated in the revised regulations.

Action:

1. The Chairperson requested that the TORs of the consultant revising the artisanal and semi-industrial fisheries regulations be circulated.
2. The SFA MCS section to revise the conditions of the licences of Seychelles-flagged industrial vessels to prohibit fishing on the Mahe Plateau (Zone1).

4. Progress since the last meeting: Adoption and gazetting of the Co-management Plan and recruitment of a Liaison Officer

The SFA Secretariat informed the ICCP that since the last meeting, the reviewed Mahe final Plateau Co-management Plan document had been forwarded to MFAG for the Minister's approval and gazetting. The PS of MFAG had requested a Cabinet Memorandum be drawn up to seek the Cabinet's approval of the Co-management Plan. Some members questioned the need for further Cabinet approval since Cabinet had already approved the implementation of the plan in 2017. They proposed rather that Cabinet be provided an information Note on what had taken place and seek to have the Co-management Plan adopted by the Minister and gazetted by MFAG at the earliest.

The SWIOFish3 Coordinator informed the meeting that TORs of the Liaison Officer had been approved by the WB, and the process of advertisement and selection of the candidate was in progress. However, the WB had a reservation on the finalization of the procurement process in that the recruitment contract would not be approved until the Co-management Plan had been gazetted.

5. Consultations and work in progress towards the preparation of a Comprehensive Fisheries Action Plan.

In the absence of the MFAG, the CFO SFA provided some information on what was possibly going to be covered by the Comprehensive Plan. These included: addressing the abuse of the fuel incentive scheme; seeking to cap or reduce overcapacity; definition of fishing and what is a fisher; reclassification of fishing vessels; minimum fish sizes, bag limits; spot fines; sportfishing, fishing permits and control of sales of fish, and safety. In relation to the industrial fishery these included: selectivity of gears; mesh size for purse-seiners; attracting Seychelles-flagged longliners to land or tranship in Seychelles; and matters related to the renewal of protocol with the EU such as FADs and bycatch.

Discussions on the following matters ensued:

- SMSA will become an Authority (Bill for National Assembly approval, August 2019). All fishing vessels will have to pass an annual SMSA seaworthiness survey and have insurance. Survey activity will focus on safety initially but later include construction of fishing vessels. SMSA will also be registering fishing vessels in 3 to 5 years' time.
- SFA was establishing a national fishing vessel registry linked to a fishery licencing system with the support of the SWIOfish3 project (WB). In time, elements of this registry will be passed over to the SMSA. Proper fisheries licencing and regulation will advance the issue of fishing rights, increase the value of licences, improve the viability of fishing operations and encourage take up of insurance by fishers.
- Better clarity between the mandates of various entities such as the SMSA, Coastguard, and SFA etc. would be important when the MSP takes effect, and should a proposed Ocean Authority be established. The SMSA Bill has zones set out for which the need for further information was expressed.
- There was need for the Comprehensive Plan to also address the issue of a lack of market for the artisanal and semi-industrial fisheries. This was often raised during the Consultative meetings. SFA informed that this would be dealt with in the Comprehensive Plan.

- The Ministry of Tourism had an important role to play in marketing and could be invited to the ICCP meetings as a stakeholder.
- The Fisheries Export Marketing Committee (FEMC), formed early 2017, was still not operational even though its revival had been advocated under the Bycatch Policy of March 2018. An active FEMC could open markets for export and address the lack of markets for artisanal and semi-industrial fisheries.
- There was a lack of control of recreational fishing. Superyachts were particularly problematical. Sport/recreational fishers on these vessels sometimes even used spearguns. The vessels were often outside normal fisheries legal jurisdiction (e.g. had diplomatic status). Spearguns can also be considered as armed weapons. Seychelles laws on spearguns and other arms should be drawn to the attention of yachts even before they travelled to the Seychelles.
- SFA's responsibility in relation to enforcement was raised. It was struggling with lack of capacity to regulate fishing vessels let alone enforce some of the recreational rules.
- The catch of recreational and sports fisheries drew much discussion and conjecture. The number of fishing competitions needed to be regulated and better controlled (which was not in the Co-management plan currently). There was an absence of reliable information. Reference was made to a Clissa report upon which gross estimates of the total Seychelles catch was made, and by extension infer that the catch of the sports and recreational sector could be greater than that of the commercial sector. SFA has variously estimated artisanal fisheries commercial catch at 3500-4500 tonnes in recent years and reasoned that the sports/recreational catch would be less than the commercial catch. There was insufficient time for a proper discussion of the various estimates. However, it was generally agreed that in the current unregulated situation, sport and recreational fisheries were impacting upon the stocks of fish and disrupting the market for genuine commercial fishers.
- The unregulated sales of fish to hotels and other establishments was raised. This was not the case in the past¹. Currently there are several middlemen and other operators that are not using the proper refrigerated transport vehicles, even though such vehicles are available locally for purchase or hire. There is a lack of traceability of the fish from sea/vessel to plate (to be addressed in the revision of the fisheries legislation), poor handling and transport conditions, and inadequate documentation of sales of fish to outlets such as hotels and restaurants. SBS/FIQCUI is responsible only for fish destined for export. The responsibility for many of the matters raised rests with the Food Control Unit of the Ministry of Health.
- FBOA/University of Cape Town/SFA were involved in an ABALOB project to develop a mobile app for fishers which would include recording of fish catches, and better marketing through linking fishers directly to buyers. A separate module would provide catch data directly to the SFA. Two scoping missions have been undertaken, a concept note prepared, and a prototype developed that will be tested in June 2019.

Action:

1. The Chairperson to raise the matter of fish marketing with the Ministry of Tourism and encourage their involvement in such discussions of the ICCP.
2. The Secretariat to request an information note from the MFAG on the progress of the Comprehensive Plan to be circulated to the participants in view of their absence at the meeting.

¹ The remark was made that "Once upon a time in a land called Seychelles, fish was delivered to hotels in refrigerated vans and it came from a place where industrial sanitation and personal hygiene was practiced".

3. A letter to be sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Attorney General's Office and the Ministry of Home Affairs to raise attention to the issue of superyachts contravening fisheries regulation, seeking advice on what are the procedures that should be followed.
4. Secretariat/FIQCUC to draw attention of the Food Control Unit to some of matters raised in relation to the transport and distribution of fish.
5. Co-management Plan communication awareness strategy to include good fish handling practices.
6. Secretariat to follow up with MSP on its offer to help in providing information on global best practice in relation to visiting yachts and infringement of national regulations.
7. A subsequent ICCP meeting to include discussion on 1) SFA's and other estimates of the fish catch; 2) Licencing recommendations of the MRAG report.

6. Revision of the MCS protocol for the co-management Plan.

Mr Aubrey Harris, Consultant, informed the meeting of the work that was starting on the revision of the MCS protocol for the Mahe Plateau trap and line fishery Co-management Plan. The protocol, which had been prepared in 2015, provided a risk-based framework for surveillance, enforcement, monitoring, data collection, education and awareness that would underpin the Plan's proposed regulatory measures and co-management approach. Mr Johnny Louys, MCS Manager, informed of some of the initial consultations and team building planned.

The ICCP recognised the importance of the eventual adherence to the proposed regulations in the Plan but stressed the importance of this being done with the awareness, education, collaboration and cooperation of fishers and other primary stakeholders to encourage compliance and booster a sense of ownership.

7. Other matters

The Chair informed the meeting of a large proposed fisheries project by a Chinese company which may have implications on the sustainability of fish resources of the Mahe Plateau, and the Co-management Plan. Consistent with Seychelles interest in membership and hosting of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FITI), the Chair requested further information on this project be available to the ICCP at its next meeting.

The ICCP welcomed the representative of the Hire craft Association. It reviewed the attendance of meetings by the members and asked the Secretariat to inform the Roche Caiman Fishers Association, which had not attended three consecutive meetings to date, that it would be lose its membership if it did not attend the next meeting.

Participants were reminded that they should send their suggestions of possible representatives of recreational fishers to the SFA for onward forwarding to the MFAG. This would serve to assist the process of nomination of a Recreational Fisher representative and alternate by the Minister.

Action:

1. Secretariat to seek information on the fisheries project raised above
2. Secretariat to contact Roche Caiman Fishers Association in relation to its attendance of the ICCP
3. Members and participants to send suggestions of possible recreational fisher representatives

8. Date and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Implementation Committee will take place on Wednesday 26th June [moved from 19th June because of the IOTC session] at the SFA Meeting Room, Fishing Port.

Appendix 2

Agenda

1. Opening to the Meeting

Remarks by the ~~MFAg~~ and SFA

2. Adoption of the agenda

To be moved by the Chairperson ~~nominated by MFAg~~.

3. Timelines and progress in the revision of fisheries regulations.

The SFA Legal Officer will provide an update on the process of revision of the fisheries regulations, and of some of the matters that have relevance to the implementation of the regulations that are proposed within the co-management plan.

4. Progress since the last meeting: Adoption and gazetting of the Co-management Plan and recruitment of a Liaison Officer

The ~~MFAg~~ and SFA will provide an update on the status of adoption and gazetting of the co-management plan. The SWIOFish3 Coordinator will inform on the progress towards the recruitment of a Liaison Officer to support the co-management plan.

5. Consultations and work in progress towards the preparation of a Comprehensive Fisheries Action Plan.

The ~~MFAg~~ and SFA will provide an update on the national consultations that have been taking place in support of a Comprehensive Action Plan, and provide feedback on some of the major aspects proposed to be addressed by the Comprehensive Plan.

6. Revision of the MCS protocol for the co-management Plan.

The MCS Manager and the fisheries consultant will provide an update on the work in progress on the MCS protocol for the co-management Plan.

7. Other matters

8. Date and place of the next meeting

To be decided

Appendix 3

List of Participants

Members, other Stakeholders and Secretariat

Members	
Michel Commetant	Belombre Fishers Association
Philippe Michaud	Department of Blue Economy
Jean Claude Hoareau / Amanda Agricole	Fish Tech
Keith Andre	Fishers and Boat Owners Association
Wilna Accouche	Green Island Foundation
Sindu Parekh	Hire Boat Association
Kevin Moumou	Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change
Darrel Green	Praslin Fishers Association
Calvin Gerry	Seychelles Fishing Authority
Other Stakeholders	
Helena Sims	Marine Spatial Plan
Christopher Hoareau	Seychelles Bureau of Standards
Joachim Valmont	Seychelles Maritime Safety Association
Secretariat	
Vincent Lucas	Chief Fisheries Officer (SFA)
Aubrey Harris	Consultant (SFA)
Jan Robinson	Coordinator (SWIOFish3)
Joanne Lucas	Fisheries Officer (SFA)
Yannick Roucou	Legal Adviser (SFA)
Johnny Louys	Monitoring Control and Surveillance Manager (SFA)
Sonny Naiken	Principal Enforcement Officer (SFA)
Elisa Socrate	Principal Fisheries Officer (SFA)
Julie Bibi	Senior Monitoring Officer (SFA)

