

MINUTES 7th MEETING
IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE
OF THE
MAHÉ PLATEAU TRAP AND LINE FISHERY CO-MANAGEMENT PLAN

SFA Conference Room, Fishing Port
Wednesday 12 August 2020
09:00 A.M.

Introduction

The seventh meeting of the Implementation Committee for the Co-Management Plan (ICCP) of the Mahé Plateau demersal trap and line fishery was held at the Conference Room of the Seychelles Fishing Authority, Fishing Port, on the 12th August 2020.

Opening to the meeting

Mr. Jude Talma, Principal Secretary (PS), Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture (MFAG) and Chairperson of the Committee opened the meeting, welcomed its participants, many of which not previously attended ICCP meetings, and asked them to introduce themselves. The meeting noted with much dissatisfaction that an FBOA representative or alternate, who also have the responsibility of Vice-Chairperson of the ICCP, did not attend this meeting.

Adoption of the Agenda

The meeting was chaired by Mr Jude Talma, PS, Fisheries Department MFAG. The Agenda (Appendix 1) was approved noting that items could be raised under Other matters. The list of participants is presented in Appendix 2.

Developments since the last meeting

The Chairperson outlined the developments that had happened since the last meeting (ICCP7/WD/2). Since the last meeting held 8 July 2020, work had continued on the fisheries regulations and these were presented by the SFA Legal Adviser. The current draft (ICCP7/ID/2) had incorporated comments from the last meeting as well as those of the MFAG. Revisions of the interpretation of 'commercial fishing vessel' and 'recreational fishing' had been incorporated. A new clause had been inserted to allow SFA to set out the requirement, terms and conditions of licences for other gear and species that can be fished on the Mahé Plateau, as may be required in due course. Also included was the prohibition of the sale of fish from competition sport fishing, a clause on the Minister's approval of the recommendations of the ICCP, and a schedule on guidelines for graded fines and penalties, as had been proposed at the previous ICCP meeting. Revision of regulations was now near technical completion. However, it remained to be presented to Cabinet, approved by the Minister, and submitted to the AG office for finalisation and gazetting.

Advertisements for the Liaison Officer and the Communication Strategy had closed on 24 July 2020. Only one expression of interest (EIO) had been received for the Liaison Officer position, and five EOIs for the Communication Strategy. SWIOFish3 (World Bank) procedures require a minimum of three EOIs, so the Liaison Officer position would be re-advertised and ICCP members were asked to encourage their contacts to apply. The Chairperson sought two meeting participants to sit on the evaluation panel of the Communication Strategy EOIs. The alternates from FishTech and the Glacis Fishers Association expressed their interest and would confirm later with the Secretariat, after they had consulted with their representative/association.

It was not possible for this ICCP meeting to incorporate mixed remote conferencing facilities. It will be organized for the next meeting. Budgeting and other operational details for a possible allowance for primary stakeholders, when attending ICCP meetings, will be worked out by SFA, subsequent to this meeting, and it

may require endorsement of the SFA Board. Mr Faizal Suleiman was welcomed to the meeting as the Representative of Recreational Fishers on the ICCP. The Representative of La Digue's Fishers Association was also welcomed to the meeting and informed that his current attendance maintained his membership. No response had been received from the Sports Fishers Association as to its lack of attendance of consecutive meetings. The Secretariat was asked to inform the Praslin Fishers Organisation that it would lose its membership if it did not attend the next ICCP meeting. Two Associations participating as observers at this meeting (the Glacis Fishers Association and the Praslin Fisher and Boat Owners Association) expressed their wish to become members of the ICCP. Mr Sindu Parekh had informed the Secretariat that he would be unable to continue as Representative of the hirecraft (fishing) stakeholders on the ICCP, and subsequently proposed some other possible representatives. The Secretariat followed up on these proposals and received a positive response from Ms Stephanie Bonnelame, Chez Yacht Consulting Services. Ms Bonnelame informed that she would attend the current meeting but sent her apologies during the current meeting. Roche Caiman Fisher Association was represented by Mr Therence Labrosse, who informed that the Association would soon hold a general meeting to elect its Officers. Bel Ombre, FBOA, La Digue, Praslin Fisher Associations were contacted and asked to provide the dates of their last and proposed next General Meeting. No responses had been received.

The meeting:

- Noted the good technical progress of the Fisheries Regulations but also that it was unlikely to be gazetted by the 28th September 2020, the date previously proposed for the coordinated launch of the Co-management Plan.
- Noted the delay that had arisen in recruiting a Fisheries Liaison Officer, and the need for it to be re-advertised.
- Noted the attendance of members to the ICCP meetings, the actions of the Secretariat, and the presence of stakeholders at this meeting who wished to become members of the ICCP.

It agreed:

- To postpone the launch of the Co-management Plan to a nominal date of 30th November 2020, to be further considered should the Regulations, Liaison Officer, and Communication Strategy be in place earlier.
- To follow the Rules of Procedure and terminate the membership of the Sports Fishers Association. The Sports Fishers Association may attend subsequent ICCP meetings, as can all stakeholders, but in an observer capacity.
- To decide on the new members of the ICCP at the next meeting based on the expressions of interest of stakeholders and non-attendance to meetings of the existing members.

The NPOA-IUU, the MCS Protocol and the IUU Strategy for the MPTLFCP

The ICCP meeting was briefed by the SFA Monitoring Control and Surveillance manager and by the consultant about three instruments to combat illegal fishing, firstly, at the national level and then in relation to the Co-management Plan.

A National Plan of Action (NPOA) to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing was first developed in 2007 to capture the extent and impact of IUU fishing in the Seychelles, at the time, and how to address it. In light of then existing policy, legal framework, working processes and enforcement actions and on the basis of principles and measures enunciated in the FAO's International Plan of Action (IPOA) on IUU fishing, the Plan proposed a host of measures necessary to further close gaps and loopholes, with the view to reducing to a minimum the incidence of IUU fishing in Seychelles. Many of these actions have been put in place, particularly in relation to the tuna fisheries, but there is now need to review the situation and set out a new NPOA-IUU. The plan will review and address, among other things, aspects such as: a) All State and Coastal State responsibilities, including on control over nationals, penalties and Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS); b) Flag State responsibilities, including on vessel registration and authorizations to fish beyond Seychelles waters; c) Port State measures and issues tied to transshipment and landing regimes; d) Trade related measures; e) Research; and f) RFMOs. Work on the NPOA-IUU has been

started but stalled because of other more pressing commitments. This is expected to resume with the support of a Technical Assistant.

A Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS) Protocol was produced in 2015 in support of the Mahé Plateau Demersal Trap and Line Fisheries Co-management Plan. It was revised and updated for consideration by the ICCP in October 2019 (ICCP7/ID/3). However, that was not possible as ICCP meetings had been adjourned awaiting the approval of the Co-management Plan. The Protocol provides a risk assessment and risk management approach based on stakeholder consultations. The most severe risks related to the use of prohibited fishing gear; the take of regulated fish; unlicensed/unauthorized fishing; and the sale of fish by recreational fishers. Specific surveillance measures and enforcement resources were recommended and budgeted for in advance of the launch of the Co-Management Plan and in the first year of its implementation. These included near shore/coastal patrols, offshore/outer Mahé Plateau patrols and land-based patrols on the islands of Mahé, Praslin and La Digue. Some of these were already being undertaken by SFA but additional resources were available from SWIOFish3 to further equip and ramp up SFA surveillance and enforcement directed at actions posing the highest risk to the fish resources and the Co-management Plan.

An IUU strategy, drafted by the consultant, provides an integrated approach to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing within the Mahé Plateau trap and line fishery co-management Plan (ICCP7/ID/4). The strategy is consistent with the relevant aspects of the draft NPOA-IUU in revision. IUU fishing negates proper fisheries management and would severely undermine the Co-management plan if it is not addressed. Its extent and impact in Seychelles are appraised as well as the inadequacy of local enforcement in the past. The strategy sets out the strategic principles and actions to: recognise and protect the access-rights of small-scale fishers; put co-management into practice; educate and sensitise stakeholders; strengthen SFA enforcement capacity in collaboration with other Agencies; promote a compliance culture; and improve cost-effectiveness (see Appendix 3).

In the discussions that followed, it was raised that the NPOA-IUU needs urgent completion and that there needs to be more enforcement actions undertaken. Members drew attention to the proliferation of recreational fishers (mainly non-Seychellois) fishing from rocks and reefs along the coast of Mahé and Praslin, and their negative impacts on nearshore and nursery areas. Some members raised that illegal fishing and contravention of regulations are reported but nothing gets done in response. There was need for more enforcement so as to have better compliance. SFA informed of sending out enforcement officers to investigate these reports whenever possible and that it was working on an information leaflet that would help address this situation. Some members raised that there be compensation to fishers for reporting illegal foreign fishing vessels on the Mahé Plateau.

The ICCP recommended:

- that the NPOA-IUU should be urgently completed as required under the Comprehensive Plan.
- that SFA (MCS section) engage with SWIOFish3 and use the set-up and other funding resources budgeted in the MCS protocol so that it is primed, very visible and in a position to effectively enforce the regulations upon the launch of the Co-management Plan.

Stock assessment to decide on subsequent appropriate measures to ensure sustainability of the fish resources.

The SFA Manager for Research briefed the ICCP on the assessment process that is required to inform on the status of the stocks, performance measures and the extent that these are being met in support of a Performance Measurement System concept (Annex 4). He explained some of the stock assessment concepts such as yield against effort, stock biomass, and the catch per unit effort (CPUE) and how these informed on whether the stock is overfished and/or overfishing is taking place. Using a trajectory of a population of fish over time, the presentation showed what would happen to a stock it is was re-built, in keeping with the objectives, performance indicators and agreed management actions. The importance of good supporting data from the Catch Assessment Survey (CAS) and biological sampling programmes was highlighted. A SWIOFish3 consultancy was in preparation that would update standardised CPUEs and the status of stocks including that

of bourzwa (using age-structured models) and derive reference points against which the effectiveness of the Co-management Plan's management measures could be gauged.

In the discussions that followed, the possibility of having a rotation of spatial closures where some parts of the fishing grounds would be closed to allow the recovery of fish stocks was raised. This was not practiced currently but could be a measure for future consideration. The excessive number of boats was raised and the importance that this is addressed within subsequent phases of the Co-management Plan. Some members considered that fishing for beche-de-mer had an impact on the bourgeois stocks especially now that beche-de-mer were taken as deep as 45 m by divers. According to fishers, the removal of beche-de-mer led to a deterioration of the habitat for schools of juvenile bourzwa, thus affecting their recruitment into the fishery. This is an area for future research particularly when good spatial data on the location and catch of divers and bourzwa fishers becomes available. Some recreational fishers and divers have information on bourzwa schools that would benefit from further dedicated research. Further information was sought on whether the assessments would be undertaken at a single species level or a group of species level – this would be done at both levels depending on the data available.

The ICCP decided:

- that the details of setting up a sub-committee of stakeholders to assist with the process of stock assessment should be considered at a subsequent ICCP meeting. In principle, all ICCP members should be involved.

Other matters

Information was sought on the preparation of management plans under the Marine Spatial Plan process as it was understood that there were terms of reference (TORs) being prepared for such. The Secretariat was asked to invite the MSP coordinator to the next meeting for further information on this.

Some participants raised the need for better commercialisation of other species such as kalkal and zob zonn. Also, of the problems of the marketing and obtaining fishing gear on Praslin, and the need to research new fishing methods.

The Chairman informed that a Unit would be set up in the Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture that would deal specifically on marketing including on value-adding of less marketed species. The Unit would actively engage processors, marketers, and other stakeholders.

SFA draw attention on a cartoon book it had prepared and that it would be preparing a similar cartoon book on fisheries management measures.

The meeting was informed of educational activities that some of the Glacis Fishers Association members were providing to Glacis primary schools including on sharing the knowledge and culture of lobster and octopus fishing.

The Secretariat reminded members that the ICCP had decided to go paperless at the last meeting. The Secretariat would become stricter in providing printouts only to members who advised the Secretariat of their need, at least a day in advance of the meeting,

8. Date and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Implementation Committee will take place within the next 3 months at a time where there has been significant progress on the recruitment of a Fishery Liaison Officer, and in the preparation of a Communication Strategy for the launch of the Co-management Plan.

Appendix 1

Agenda

1. Opening to the Meeting

Remarks by the Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture (MFAg)/Seychelles Fishing Authority (SFA)

2. Adoption of the agenda

To be moved by the Chairperson

3. Developments since the last meeting

The ICCP will be briefed on and discuss the developments since the 6th ICCP meeting (8 July 2020) including: progress and status of draft Fisheries (Mahé Plateau Trap and Line Fishery) regulations 2020; progress in selection and recruitment of a Fisheries Liaison Officer; progress in selection of a service provider for the Communication Strategy; consideration of the launch of the Co-management Plan date; actions of the Secretariat.

4. The NPOA-IUU, the MCS Protocol and the IUU Strategy of the MPTLFCP

A National Plan of Action to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; a monitoring, control and surveillance Protocol; and a Strategy to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing for the Mahé Plateau trap and line fishery Co-management Plan have been in process of development. These will be presented to the meeting for its information. The ICCP will proceed to discuss possible preparations that may be needed in advance of the launch of the Co-management Plan to strengthen enforcement of the regulations.

5. Stock assessment to decide on subsequent appropriate measures to ensure sustainability of the fish resources.

The ICCP will be briefed on a proposed stock assessment process that is required to inform on the status of the stocks, performance measures and the extent that these are being met. The ICCP will be requested to consider the possibility of setting up a sub-committee to assist in this process, and to decide on its membership.

6. Other matters

7. Date and place of the next meeting

Appendix 2

List of Participants

Members, other Stakeholders and Secretariat

Members	
Rodney Nicole	Bel Ombre Fishers Association
Philippe Michaud	Department of Blue Economy
Amanda Agricole	Fish Tech
Ray Payet	La Digue Fishers Association
Jude Talma	Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture
Faizal Suleman	Recreational Fisher
Therence Labrosse	Roche Caiman Fishers Association
Cyril Bonnelame / Vincent Lucas	Seychelles Fishing Authority
Other Stakeholders	
Gerard Ernesta / Jean-Claude Esparon	Glacis Fishers Association
Richard Bossy	Praslin Fishers and Boat Owners Association
Secretariat	
Aubrey Harris	Consultant (SFA)
Yannick Roucou	Legal Adviser (SFA)
Rodney Govinden	Manager for Research (SFA)
Johnny Louys	Monitoring Control and Surveillance Manager (SFA)
Elisa Socrate	Principal Fisheries Officer (SFA)

Appendix 3 Presentation on the IUU Strategy for the Co-management Plan

[The slides of this presentation will be included later when circulated to all members and stakeholders in PDF format]

Appendix 4 Presentation on the Stock Assessment Process

[The slides of this presentation will be included later when circulated to all members and stakeholders in PDF format]