

MINUTES 24th MEETING

IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE OF THE MAHÉ PLATEAU TRAP AND LINE FISHERY CO-MANAGEMENT PLAN

Seychelles Defense Forces Headquarters Conference Room
Perseverance Mahe
Thursday 18th July 2024

Introduction

The 24th meeting of the Implementation Committee for the Co-Management Plan (ICCP) of the Mahé Plateau demersal trap and line fishery was held at the Seychelles Defence Forces Headquarters Conference Room in Perseverance 1, Seychelles, on the 18th of July 2024.

Opening to the meeting

Mr. Roy Clarisse, Principal Secretary (PS) of the Department of Fisheries at the Ministry of Fisheries and the Blue Economy (MoFBE), opened the meeting by welcoming the participants and apologizing for the venue setting which was not U style shaped as preference. He requested for a round of introduction. A special welcome was given to Ms. Barbara Hoareau the newly recruited Liaison officer.

Adoption of the Agenda

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Roy Clarisse from the Department of Fisheries, MoFBE. The chair requested a change of order in the agenda, exchanging agenda items 5 and 6. The amended agenda was adopted.

Apologies were received from the representative of Seychelles Boat Owners and Fishermen Association (SFBOA), Seychelles Sports Fishing Club (SSFC), the Green Island Foundation (GIF). The agenda as presented in Appendix 1 was approved, with an agreed change in the order of items on the agenda. Item 6 on the agenda was discussed as item 5. The objective was to consider the recommendation of the stock assessment subcommittee (SAS) before evaluating the mid-term review of the co-management plan so that the plan could move into phase two. The minutes reflect the order of the meeting. The list of documents circulated in advance of the meeting is detailed in Appendix 2.

There were 23 participants in the meeting, including nine (9) ICCP members and three (3) other stakeholders or observers. Participants were free to use any of the three national languages. The list of participants is included in Appendix 3.

DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE LAST MEETING

Elisa Socrate (SFA) presented the progress documented in the working paper ICCP24/WD/2.

Liaison officer

Barbara Hoareau, appointed as the Seychelles Fishing Authority Liaison Officer, has been actively involved in stakeholder engagement and events.

Communication

The Fisheries Resource Management Department has ventured in partnering with Cat Cocos Marketing to promote videos and documentaries on the inter-island ferry service and also other selling point having media advertising screens to maximize the campaign's outreach.

Release Ruler Certification

The Seychelles Bureau of Standards has certified the measurement standards, and the MCS Department has been requested to oversee the calibration of the release rulers using the 10 received standards from SBS.

Legislation Update

The fisheries bill is being revised and is expected to be resubmitted to the National Assembly in Q4 2024.

MCS Update

The MCS department provided updates on patrol and enforcement actions from April to July 2024, including efforts to register traps and conduct maritime and land patrols.

Socio-economic Impact Assessment

Dr. Jude Bijoux had submitted three reports as part of a project's Terms of Reference.

Fisheries Research

The Two-spot Red Snapper, Brownspotted Grouper, and White-blotched Grouper were studied at a stakeholder validation workshop in June, funded by SeyCCAT, SFA, and EU sectoral support funds. The reports are being finalized.

Marketing opportunities for finfish Products of the Mahe Plateau Trap and Line Fishery Co-management plan

A working group will assess the report and explore feasible government-endorsed options.

SFA 40th anniversary activities

The SFA's 40th anniversary activities include a fishing festival and exhibition.

Opening of Anse Aux Pins Facility new fisheries facility

The Anse Aux Pins Fisheries Facility was inaugurated with EU financing.

Handover of FAO Donated equipment to Associations and SPGA

On July 4, 2024, FAO donated safety equipment and iceboxes to the Glacis and Bel Ombre Fishermen's Associations and the Seychelles Parks and Gardens Authority (SPGA) as part of the FAO Coral Reef Fish Project. The project aims to improve coral reef fisheries, restore ecosystems, and assist local communities. The award ceremony was attended by the Principal Secretary for Agriculture, SFA staff, Fisheries Association members, and media representatives.

Discussion and Recommendations:

Mr. Phillippe Michaud, a consultant from MOFBE, praised the recent release of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative report on fisheries and requested that it be distributed to the ICCP Secretariat.

Clarification was sought on the certification of the ten calibration standards received from the Seychelles Bureau of Standards (SBS), in which an explanation was given that the certified calibration standards, which had received an approval certificate, will be issued by SFA to check the decal and PVC rulers, as part of SFA's internal quality control before issuing them. The distribution of the rulers will be later discussed in future meeting.

Clarification was sought on whether the Fisheries Management Committee of the SFA will be the one overseeing the marketing opportunities for finfish Products of the Mahe Plateau Trap and Line Fishery Co—management plan. Explanation was given that a request had been sent to place the matter on the agenda of the upcoming FMC meeting, with the Chair's approval.

Clarification was sought about whether the SEIA report was final and whether commentaries could be given about the document. Ms. Radegonde, representing the Secretariat, clarified that feedback was still encouraged, noting that while the consultant had completed his work, he remained available to address any concerns.

MCS MONITORING AND VOLUNTARY COMPLIANCE TO THE FISHERIES REGULATIONS 2021

The Seychelles Fishing Authority's (SFA) 24th meeting report highlights several key recommendations, complaints, and updates on enforcement actions from January to June 2024, focusing on the implementation of the 2021 Fisheries Regulations. It also includes feedback from the 23rd ICCP meeting held on May 2, 2024.

Recommendations:

- Resource Shortages: The 24th ICCP meeting emphasized the need for improved financial and human resources to address these shortages effectively.
- Mahe Plateau Management: Fishers should be more involved in decision-making to enhance compliance with management measures for various fisheries, including artisanal, and semi-industrial.
- MCS (Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance) Approaches: There is a call for integrated, cost-effective MCS solutions (vessel registers, observer programs, VMS, patrol vessels) for semi-industrial fisheries, which are easier to manage than artisanal and recreational fisheries.
- Targeted MCS: Intelligence-driven enforcement or adaptive operations should be adopted to focus on routine offenders rather than occasional offenders to improve efficiency.

Complaints:

- Mahe Plateau Hotline: There have been no specific complaints related to the Mahe Plateau, despite resources for reporting infractions being available.

- Enforcement Issues: Undersized red snappers have been a major issue during market inspections, leading to legal actions.

Report Highlights:

- MCS Activities: Patrols were conducted in coastal and exclusive economic zones with the Seychelles Coast Guard. A new patrol vessel was received under the SWIOFish3 project.

- Enforcement Summary (2023-2024): Activities focused on recreational and sport fishing, with targeted vessels being monitored for future interceptions.

- MCS Challenges: Managing artisanal, recreational, and sports fisheries is more complex due to the large number of unregistered fishers, mixed gears, and multiple landing sites.

- MCS Organizational Structure: The MCS Department is divided into three main sections: the Enforcement Section, the Monitoring Section, and the Post-Harvest Inspections Unit, with a total of 12 personnel spread across several units.

In conclusion, while enforcement and MCS activities are ongoing, the SFA faces resource challenges and a lack of reported infractions from the Mahe Plateau hotline. Recommendations include greater fisher involvement and more targeted, intelligence-driven enforcement.

MID-TERM PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE CO-MANAGEMENT PLAN.

The Midyear Progress Report on Implementing the Co-management Plan for the Mahe Plateau Trap and Line Fishery (MPTLF) in 2024 provides updates and recommendations for ensuring sustainable fishing practices.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Ecological Indicators:

- The Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) for Bourgeois and Zob Gris stocks has been stable, meeting the target reference.

- Length at 50% Maturity (LM50) for Bourgeois: 93.74% of the catch exceeded the 40 cm LM50, but more sampling is recommended.

- Address fluctuations in overall catch, as the target of less than 20% change was not met, highlighting the need for further data analysis from 2020-2021 data.

2. Governance Indicators:

- Strengthen communication, education, and awareness programs for the fishing community.

- Introduce more attainable performance indicators to assist the Seychelles Fishing Authority (SFA) in more accurate analyses.

3. Social Indicators:

- Continue compiling and analysing social indicators, with ongoing work led by Dr. Bijoux.

4. Compliance and Enforcement:

- Increased reports of infractions in areas like La Retraite.
- Issues with fish species misidentification and inspector harassment need addressing.
- Stronger police support is recommended during inspections to improve enforcement.

5. Next Steps:

- The ICCP will review the midyear progress and discuss potential adjustments to the Co-management Plan for the next phase.
- A comprehensive data analysis is needed, especially for the years 2022 and 2023, to better assess the impact of the regulations on fish stocks.

Conclusion:

Positive progress has been made towards sustainability, but further improvements are needed in data processing, enforcement, and community engagement. Future ICCP and SAS meetings will be key to addressing these challenges.

Recommendations of the SAS for ICCP consideration

The Stock Assessment Sub-committee (SAS) provides the following recommendations for the Implementation Committee for the Co-management Plan (ICCP) to consider, based on the performance of the Mahe Plateau Trap and Line Fishery (MPTLF) Co-management Plan's first phase:

Key Recommendations for ICCP Consideration:

1. Performance Indicators Met:

- CPUE for Bourgeois and Zob Gris has remained stable, meeting target reference points.
- The reduction in juvenile fish catches for Kordonnyen Blan in the trap fishery was successful, with less than 10% of the catch below LM50.

2. Performance Indicators Not Met:

- The target to limit year-over-year catch fluctuations to 20% was not met, with significant volatility observed in several vessel categories (whalers, schooners, and outboards).
- For Zob Gris, only 25.22% of landings were above LM50 (62 cm), showing a need for clarification and standardization of LM50 measurements for this species.

3. Data Processing:

- There is a backlog in processing 2022 data, and potentially 2023, which needs to be addressed for more accurate fishery assessments.

4. Governance and Social Indicators:

- Ongoing education and awareness programs should be maintained and improved.
- The need for a transparent and equitable incentive scheme to support the artisanal fishing sector.

5. Next Steps and proposed Actions:

- Reduce fishing mortality on Bourgeois by enforcing the LM50 of 32 cm.
- Develop a framework for capacity building to empower fishers and make them more professional.
- Collaborate with fishers for accurate LM50 determination for various species.

Recommendations for the Second Phase of the Co-management Plan:

1. Develop a Fishery Licensing Framework:

- Clear guidelines for licensing should be implemented to ensure sustainable fishing practices.

2. Revised Incentive Scheme:

- Create a transparent incentive scheme that supports sustainability and compliance.

3. Capacity Building and Empowerment:

- Develop programs that enhance the capacity of commercial fishers, making the industry more professional.

4. Offset Provisions:

- Introduce measures to compensate for ecosystem impacts on fishers, ensuring a balance between conservation and livelihoods.

5. Implement Minimum Size Limits (MSLs):

- Introduce MSLs for Bourgeois, Zob Gris, and other critical species based on LM50 to protect juvenile fish and support stock rebuilding.

Conclusion:

- While there have been notable achievements in Phase 1, areas for improvement remain. The SAS recommends that the ICCP proceed cautiously into Phase 2, ensuring that necessary frameworks and measures are in place to support sustainable and equitable fisheries management on the Mahe Plateau.
- **Next Meeting**

The 25th ICCP meeting will be held on Thursday, October 19, 2024, at the STC Conference Room, Latanier Road, Victoria.

Appendix 1

Agenda

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

24th IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE (ICCP) OF THE MAHE PLATEAU TRAP AND LINE FISHERY CO-MANAGEMENT PLAN (MPTLFCP)

Seychelles Defense Forces Headquarters
Conference Room
Perseverance Mahe

Thursday 18 July 2024: 1000-1400 Hrs

1. Opening to the Meeting

Remarks by the Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy (MFBE)/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 the developments since the 23rd ICCP meeting (2 May 2024) including continuing fisher communications and other relevant matters from SFA and from the Secretariat.

4. MCS monitoring and compliance to the Fisheries Regulations 2021.

The SFA MCS Section will update the meeting on the results of patrols and enforcement actions undertaken since its last report to the 23rd ICCP.

5. Mid-term progress in implementing the co-management plan.

Regular mid-term reviews monitor and assess the effectiveness of the co-management plan, identifying problems early and enabling timely corrective action to stay on track. Fisheries management must adapt to changes in the status of fish stocks, environmental conditions, and fishing practices. Interim review allows for adjustments to the plan, ensuring that it remains relevant and practical. The ICCP will assess mid-term progress in implementing the co-management plan.

6. Recommendations of the SAS for ICCP consideration

The SAS provides scientific and technical recommendations based on the latest stock assessments. Reviewing these recommendations ensures that the ICCP makes informed decisions grounded in the best available science. The ICCP will appraise the recommendation from SAS

7. Other matters

8. Date and place of the next meeting

Appendix 2

List of Documents circulated in advance of the meeting.

Working documents

ICCP24/WD/1. Agenda

ICCP24/WD/2. Developments since the last meeting

ICCP24/WD/3. MCS Monitoring and compliance to the Fisheries Regulations 2021

ICCP24 /WD/4. Midyear progress in implementation of the Co-management Plan

ICCP24/ WD/5 Recommendations of the SAS for ICCP consideration

Information documents

ICCP22/ID/1. List of Documents

ICCP24/ID/2 Minutes of the 23rd ICCP meeting of 2 May 2024

Appendix 3

List of Participants

Members, other Stakeholders and Secretariat

Members	
Rodney Nicole	Bel Ombre Fishermen Association
Ray Payet	Lasosyasyon Peser La Digue
Jean- Claude Hoareau	Fishtech
Shantilal Dhanjee, Edwin Adrienne	Hire Craft (Fishing) Representative
Kevin Moumou	Min of Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment (MACCE)
Faizal Suleman	Recreational Fisher Representative
Terrence Labrosse, Neddy Labrosse	Roche Caiman Fishers Association
Roy Clarisse	Department of Fisheries (MOFBE)
Phillippe Michaud	Consultant (MOFBE)
Other Stakeholders / Observers	
Chantal Ellen	Project Manager, Citizen Engagement Platform Seychelles
Theophane Estro	Anse Aux Pins Fishermen Representative
Albert Napier	National Coordinator Stella Maris
Secretariat	
Elisa Socrate	Assistant-Manager, Resource Management (SFA)
Joanne Lucas	Fisheries Officer, Resource Management (SFA)
Daniel Bristol	Fisheries Officer, Resource Management (SFA)
Stephanie Hollanda	Fisheries Scientist, Research (SFA)
Rodney Govinden	Head of Department, Fisheries Research (SFA)
Barbara Hoareau	Senior Liaison Officer (SFA)
Vincent Lucas	Head of Department, Fisheries Resource Management & Technical Coordination Department (SFA)
Ronny Malvina	Assistant Manager, Enforcement (SFA)
Aubrey Harris	Fisheries Management Committee (SFA), SFA Board Member
Absent with excuse	
Mervin Dugasse	Seychelles Sports Fishing Clubs (SSFC)
Wilna Accouche	Green Island Foundation (GIF)
Nancy Onginjo Ramkalawan	Seychelles Boat Owners and Fishermen Association (SFBOA)
Absent	
Darell Green	Praslin Fishermen Association

