

MINUTES 9th MEETING
IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE
OF THE
MAHÉ PLATEAU TRAP AND LINE FISHERY CO-MANAGEMENT PLAN

CARE House Conference Hall, Freedom Square

Friday 30 April 2021

09:00 A.M.

Introduction

The 9th meeting of the Implementation Committee for the Co-Management Plan (ICCP) of the Mahé Plateau demersal trap and line fishery was held at the CARE House Conference Hall, Freedom Square, on the 30th of April 2021.

Opening to the meeting

Mr. Roy Clarisse, Principal Secretary (PS), Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy (MFBE) opened the meeting, and presented an apology to the Committee for the delay in holding the 9th ICCP meeting, due to delays in receiving approval from the Public Health Authority (PHA) for hosting of the ICCP, in view of the COVID-19 situation. He welcomed and introduced the Minister, welcomed the participants and asked for introductions from attendees.

Vision and direction of the Minister

The Minister of Fisheries and Blue Economy, Mr Jean-Francois Ferrari, recognised several of the fishers and associations at the meeting, and would have liked to have seen more, but nevertheless expressed his satisfaction of the representation present. He emphasised the co-management nature of the plan and that the fishers were a centre and full partner to the plan and as to the decisions that are made under the plan. They should realise the power that they have in decision-making ('zot ki annan mayos') and use it appropriately. There was illegal fishing taking place on the Mahé Plateau from outside of the Seychelles and the fishers were assured that these would be taken care of, so as to assure their Mahé Plateau resources are not depleted but sustained. He appealed to fishers to take an active part in their associations, and for those that may not be already represented, to form their associations. Government was committed to support fisher associations, as it provided them the unity and power to make their voices heard and their concerns addressed. Fisheries resources had to be managed so that fishers get money, get profit and a good livelihood from fishing to support themselves and their family. It was in the interests of all that they are successful and live well, as that will also be an encouragement for their kids to also get involved and work in support of a thriving fishing industry. He strongly supported the Mahé Plateau trap and line fishery Co-management Plan, and looked forward to its effective implementation, in due course.

Finally, the Minister appointed Mr Roy Clarisse, PS Fisheries, as the Chairperson of the ICCP and representative of the Ministry. He also informed that Ms Karine Rassool, Fisheries Economist, who had been seconded by SFA to the Ministry, would continue to work closely with fishers and would also be attending the ICCP on behalf of the Ministry as its alternate. A round of applause was given to the Minister's appointments.

Adoption of the Agenda

The meeting proceeded with the new chairperson, Mr Roy Clarisse, PS, Department of Fisheries, MFBE. The Agenda (Appendix 1) was approved noting that the meeting had to end by 1200hrs because of existing commitments of the Department of Fisheries and SFA. The Minister decided to stay for the meeting of the ICCP, a demonstration of his support and interest in this process which was much appreciated by the participants.

This 9th ICCP meeting incorporated mixed physical and remote conferencing facilities. All physical participants were required to adhere to the prevalent Covid-19 sanitary measures and distancing guideline as approved by the PHA. It had an attendance of ICCP 12 members (12 member representatives, 1 alternate) and six observers (other fisher associations). As Seychelles has three national languages (Kreol, English and French), participants were at liberty to use whichever language they preferred.

The list of participants is presented in Appendix 2.

There was still need for representatives of Hireboat stakeholders and of the Sportfishers Association to be nominated.

Developments since the last meeting

The meeting was briefed of developments since the last ICCP meeting which had been held on 11 December 2020. Unfortunately, with the deteriorating national Covid-19 situation later in December 2020, and the subsequent restrictions on gatherings and meetings, none of the then planned meetings could take place until the present 9th ICCP meeting.

Following several rounds of advertisements and selection last year, the position of Fisheries Liaison Officer for the Co-management Plan had still not been filled. The Terms of Reference (TORs) of this position had been reviewed and circulated as one of the information papers to the meeting. An appeal was made for meeting participants to assist by sending the names of possible candidates to the Secretariat.

The development of the Communication strategy was well advanced and would be presented as a subsequent item on the agenda.

SFA's Legal Adviser informed that the draft Fisheries (Mahé Plateau Trap and Line Fishery) Regulations 2020 was presented to the Cabinet on the 16 December 2020, together with the history and background of the Co-management Plan. Following some clarifications, Cabinet approved the Fisheries (Mahé Plateau Trap and Line Fishery) Regulations, and requested that it be re-presented following the usual consideration by the Attorney-General's Office. The SFA legal adviser had been in contact with the Legal Draftsperson at the AG's Office. The sanctions included in the Fisheries (Mahé Plateau Trap and Line Fishery) regulations could only be those that are in conformity with the current Fisheries Act, 2014, until that Act is amended or revised. The Fisheries Act, 2014, is in the process of amendment, as well as a complete revision, but these may take some time before final legislative approval and enactment. *The ICCP agreed to proceed with the legislative framework that currently exists (Fisheries Act, 2014) and make allowances for more appropriate fisheries sanctions when that Act is subsequently amended or revised.*

In discussions that accompanied the presentation of developments since the last meeting, there was apprehension that the measures would come in with insufficient fisher communication and understanding of the measures. This for some of the fishers was their first encounter with the details of the Plan and it was explained that the implementation of the Plan would be preceded by active participation of a Fishery Liaison Officer, as well as the implementation of a communication strategy. In relation to the regulations, there was a proposal for there not to be penalties, as it may be targeted more towards commercial fisheries than other non-commercial fishing activities. However, it was also considered as pointless having fisheries regulations to implement actions that had been agreed by fishers, without some form of sanction. Under annexes of guidelines to the regulations, sanctions are advanced in a measured manner, with warnings before any fines or court proceedings are applied.

Update of the Communication Strategy

In view of discussions that had already started on the communication of the regulations, the Chair advanced this item of the agenda.

The Project Director of the marketing company, Com and Click, Ms Marie Rignace, made a presentation of the Communication Strategy (see Appendix 3) which included:

- The Strategy team
- The objectives of the Strategy
- Breakdown of the target audiences
- Two campaign Logos – the ICCP was asked to choose the preferred logo
- Communication tools
- The media plan on TV and radio, *including a specially composed song.*
- Online strategy, meetings with fisher associations
- Other public relations such as with schools and others

The discussion following the presentation revolved around three main concerns:

The focus of the communication and regulations messages was too focussed on the fishers and not sufficiently on the other stakeholders. It was pointed out that the communication strategy had identified all the target groups (general public; licenced artisanal fishers; fish processors; sports and recreational fishers; kids; hotels, restaurants and takeaways; seafood retail businesses; NGOs; Government agencies; GOP holders) and the communication and regulation messages would be directed to each of these groups. If such an impression had come out, it was not what was intended by the Strategy. *The ICCP decided that going forward the strategy should take due consideration of this sensitivity and make sure messages are balanced across all groups.*

The message “Nou resours lanmer, nou responsabilite” was not unanimously acceptable. The term ‘responsabilite’ was considered to apply to almost everything one does, and was considered to be a cliché. We should be looking towards the future some participants said. It was pointed out that a choice of messages had been sent to all ICCP members on 3 March 2021 and the message was taken from the responses received by 12 March 2021. Nevertheless, in true consultative manner, this was for reconsideration by the present ICCP meeting participants. The Chair took proposals which were compiled over the coffee break, and subsequently re-presented to the meeting. *The ICCP, through unanimous endorsement, agreed on the message “**Nou resours lanmer, pour nou lavenir**” which translated is “Our marine resources, for our future” or “The resources of our seas, for our future”.*

The Communication strategy still required guidance on the logo, two of which were presented to the meeting. Participants settled on one of the logos (see Appendix 3, slide no 6, right) but suggested:

some bottom structure, some more fish, a larger bourzwa in case the logo was interpreted as an under-sized fish being caught, an island similar to Silhouette, and the sea to be bluer. *The ICCP requested that the marketing company take these considerations on board in the modification of the logo for the Communication Strategy.*

Update of the Seychelles Fishing Authority

The CEO of SFA, Mr Nichol Elizabeth, provided an update on the Seychelles Fishing Authority (SFA). He noted that the Authority had had 6 CEOs and almost as many Ministerial changes over recent years which had not helped. In his response he mentioned some of the proactive, positive orientations that were taking place including:

- A representative from Praslin was now a member of the SFA Board.
- Long overdue audits of SFA accounts for over the last four years are ongoing, and one nearing completion.
- SFA is reviewing its Strategic Plan for 2021 – 2023.
- The backlog of SFA annual reports is being addressed and the 2017-2018 report is due out soon.
- Proceeding with an organisational re-structuring – a first for the operational arm
- Bringing back ownership and accountability in management – individual Divisions are stepping up in the way they run.
- Reversing the spend culture – more use but greater scrutiny of expenses relating to the sectoral support of projects.
- Improving the receivables in the books, i.e., reduce the debt owed by stakeholders.
- Accelerate property management and ensure the leases are up to date.
- Accelerate Capital Projects at district levels and target 7 projects in one fiscal year.
- Ensure an accountable Procurement process and its subsequent payment process.

The CEO brought to the attention of the meeting some of the directions along which he sees the SFA develop over the next year such as:

- Bring Research back and made known / publish our findings to the public.
- Bring our Statistical Bulletin up to date, have regular issues and distribute in the region.
- Bring a closer relationship and engagement with stakeholders. Good customer service is important.
- See the Value Addition / Processing accelerated, both at Providence and Ile du Port (Exports)
- Bring fisheries management as a core mandate.
- Ensure effective participation in relevant national and international fora.
- Revisit some management plans, especially in relation to licensing and quota distribution.
- Develop management plans for other fisheries such as Spanner crab, Octopus, etc.

SFA had increased from 141 to 221 staff over the last two years. The current management team has an understanding that SFA has to move fast. A highly active Board of Directors had high expectations of SFA. Together and in collaboration with stakeholders, there will be a good outcome to this process. SFA would continue its strong support of the Mahé Plateau Trap and Line Fishery Co-management Plan.

Following the presentation, a question on crewing and work conditions on industrial fishing vessels was directed by the Chair to a more appropriate meeting when organised. *The ICCP noted the progress of the SFA and its continuing support of the Co-management Plan process with appreciation.*

Consideration of the launch of the Co-management Plan

It was recalled that Mahé Plateau Trap and Line Fishery Co-management Plan was approved by the previous Minister in January 2020 and gazetted on 6 February 2020. Follow up ICCP meetings to implement the Co-management Plan had been constrained by the Covid 19 situation. There had been relatively few meetings of the ICCP last year, as a result, and the launch of the management plan had to be re-scheduled several times (for 28 September 2020, for 30 November 2020, and for 31 March 2021). These scheduled launches could not take place because not all elements of the launch were in place, and partly because of the Covid-19 situation.

It was emphasised the launch of the Co-management Plan was an integrated process that required:

- A Fisheries Liaison Officer to have been recruited by SFA and be already well involved in liaising with fishers and Fisher Associations.
- A Communication Strategy to be in place and operational. Coordinated communication messages, radio and television interviews and communication aids, posters, school visits, for example, must be started well in advance of the launch.
- The SFA Enforcement section to be primed, visible and able to effectively enforce the regulations.
- The Mahé Trap and Line Fishery Regulations be either gazetted on the same day as the launch or gazetted previously with a delayed date of commencement that coincides with date of the launch of the co-management plan.

Having a nominal date for the launch was important as a milestone for all required actions to work towards. Since the ICCP meeting had been updated on the status of these actions, it was in a position to decide on a date for the launch.

Following, the Chair opened the discussions on a nominal date of the launch. This was briefly discussed from suggestions provided by the participants. Taking the fishing season particularly into consideration (Northwest Monsoon), *the ICCP agreed on **1 October 2021** as date of the launch of the Mahé Plateau Trap and Line Fishery Co-management Plan.*

Other matters

The attention of the meeting was drawn to the Fisheries Transparency International (FiTI) process and the importance of transparency in fisheries management to ensure the sustainability of fisheries resources. FiTI is hosted by the Seychelles. It had provided an opportunity for an open dialogue among stakeholders in preparation of an assessment. The FiTI assessment of Seychelles had been circulated, and district meetings were planned.

The meeting was informed that the Terms of Reference on a socio-economic impact assessment of the Mahé Plateau Trap and Line Fishery Co-management Plan had been prepared and that it would be circulated, the following week. The assessment, which will take place during the implementation of the Plan, will determine both direct and indirect impacts of the new measures and how to mitigate or reduce any adverse effects. It will also be used to inform modifications of the Co-management Plan and its regulations, following the first year of the Plan's implementation. The comments and suggestions of the ICCP participants on the proposed TORs were welcomed.

Participants were reminded to provide the names of possible candidates for the post of Fisheries

Liaison Officer to the Secretariat, so that it can follow up with these candidates in relation to the post.

It was raised that there was need for more clarity in the proposed enforcement of the Mahé Plateau regulations and the process that would be involved. The Chair requested that this should be included as an item in the next meeting.

The Chair thanked the participants for their active participation and looked forward to fisher associations continuing to attend the ICCP meetings, either as members or as observers.

8. Date and Place of the next meeting

Since the country was in the process of going into more meeting restrictions due to an increase of Covid-19 positive cases, the date and location of the next meeting was left open for later announcement. It was noted though that there was need for sufficient lead time and arrangements to allow for the participants from Praslin and La Digue to attend the meeting.

Appendix 1

Agenda

1. Opening to the Meeting

Remarks by the Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy (MFBE)/Seychelles Fishing Authority (SFA)

2. Vision and direction of the Minister

The Minister of Fisheries and Blue Economy intends to attend this meeting and address all ICCP members and all fisher associations. The Minister will inform the meeting of his visions and directions for the fisheries sector going forward, particularly in relation to the small-scale and semi-industrial fisheries relating to the Mahé Plateau Co-management Plan. Also, what he expects of participants in these fisheries as responsible stakeholders. The Minister will announce his appointment of the next Chairperson of the ICCP.

3. Adoption of the agenda

To be moved by the new Chairperson.

4. Developments since the last meeting

The ICCP will be briefed on the developments since the 8th ICCP meeting (11 December 2020) including: progress and status of draft Fisheries (Mahé Plateau Trap and Line Fishery) regulations 2020; selection and recruitment of a Fisheries Liaison Officer; selection of a service provider and progress of the Communication Strategy; preparations of the MCS section.

5. Update of the Seychelles Fishing Authority

The SFA's Chief Executive Officer will appraise the meeting of ongoing/proposed changes to the SFA and of its new orientation.

6. Update on the Communication Strategy

The ICCP will be briefed on elements of the Communication Strategy in preparation for the launch of the Co-management Plan for its consideration/ advice.

7. Date of launch the Co-management Plan

The ICCP will review and decide on a nominal date to launch the Mahé Plateau trap and line fishery management plan, and its fisheries regulations and their enforcement jointly with the communication strategy.

8. Other matters

9. 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, MFBE
Roy Clarisse / Karine Rassool	Department of Fisheries, MFBE
Keith Andre	Fishers and Boat Owners Association
Jean Claude Hoareau	Fish Tech
Wilna Accouche	Green Island Foundation
Ray Payet	La Digue Fishers Association
Kevin Moumou	Ministry of Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment
Graham Green	Praslin Fishers Association
Faizal Suleman	Recreational Fisher
Therence Labrosse	Roche Caiman Fishers Association
Nichol Elizabeth	Seychelles Fishing Authority
Other Stakeholders	
Albert Napier	Apostolat de la Mer
Diolend Bamboche	Artisanal Shark Fishers Association
Steve Payet	Cascade Fishers Association
Darney Barbé	Glacis Fishers Association
Dimitri Maiden	La Retraite Fishers Association
Richard Bossy	Praslin Fishers and Boat Owners Association
Secretariat	
Vincent Lucas	Chief Fisheries Officer (SFA)
Aubrey Harris	Consultant (SFA)
Jan Robinson	Co-ordinator, SWIOFish3 Project
Joanne Lucas	Fisheries Officer (SFA)
Yannick Roucou	Legal Adviser (SFA)
Marie Rignace	Marketing Consultant, Com & Click
Johnny Louys	MCS Manager (SFA)
Elisa Socrate	Principal Fisheries Officer (SFA)

