3ʳᵈ Meeting of the Protected Areas and Ecosystems Working Group (PAEWG3)

01-04 March 2021 (online)

3ʳᵈ Meeting of the Stock and Ecological Risks Assessment (SERAWG3)

08-11 March 2021 (online)

6ᵀʰ Meeting of the SIOFA Scientific Committee (SC6)

22-25 March 2021 (online)

ABNJ Deep-Sea Fisheries Project under the Ecosystem Approach - Proposed workplan and activities

Relates to agenda items:

PAE WG3	12 (3, 4, 7)
SERA WG3	12 (3.8, 8.4)
SC6	11.1

Working paper   **Info paper X**

Delegation of FAO

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the development of the FAO ABNJ Deep-Sea Fisheries (DSF) Project and to seek feedback on the Project's proposed activities and their relationship to the SIOFA workplans. The project outputs, particularly on data-limited stocks, deepwater sharks, and VMEs and bottom fisheries, will be holistic and include management, scientific advice, and compliance activities. The DSF Project is in its development phase and will be launched in early 2022. The DSF Project would welcome feedback from the SIOFA Committees (PAEWG, SERAWG, SC, CC) on the proposed joint activities outlined in Annex 2.

ABNJ Deep-Sea Fisheries Project under the Ecosystem Approach -

Proposed workplan and activities

Introduction/Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the development of the FAO ABNJ Deep-Sea Fisheries (DSF) Project and to seek feedback on the Project's proposed activities and their relationship to the SIOFA workplans.

Background

The FAO ABNJ Deep-Sea Fisheries (DSF) Project (2022-2027) follows on from the ABNJ Deep-Sea Project (2014-2019). Information papers have been submitted to the following meetings: 7th MoP (MoP-07-26), 5th SC and 2nd PAEWG (SC-05-INFO-03), 6th MoP (MoP -INFO-10, MoP6-INFO-11 and MoP6-INFO-19), and 4th SC (SC-04-INFO-04). The DSF project's concept note was approved by GEF in June 2020 and is available from FAO[1]. Information contained within these documents will not be further elaborated here.

DSF Project development

The DSF project is currently in the development phase with a planned submission date towards the end of 2021. Much of this involves the identification of thematic work areas that will be conducted through activities funded by the project and through partner in kind contributions. The project implementation is expected to start in early 2022, meaning activities will commence by mid- to late-2022, and the project duration is 5 years.

The project is global in scope and will collaborate with and support regional activities that lead to the project's objective:

> **To ensure that DSF in the ABNJ are managed under an ecosystem approach that maintains demersal fish stocks at levels capable of maximizing their sustainable yields and minimizing impacts on biodiversity, with a focus on data-limited stocks, deepwater sharks and vulnerable marine ecosystems.**

This has been summarised in the project's Theory of Change in Annex A. The successful achievement of the project objective will require inputs and support from project partners, in particular the participating RFMOs and industry.

There are many aspects of SIOFA's management, compliance and scientific work that support the project's objective. The table in Annex 2 has been drafted as a matrix of project outputs (rows) and how the work of SIOFA's committees (columns 2-4) could link to these outputs. Industry participation has been included in column 5. The comments industry provided on the project's output and activities questionnaire circulated last November were very helpful in this regard. The remaining columns 6-8 are directed towards cooperation with the Scientific Committee and their two working groups SERAWG and PAEWG.

The workplans of SC, SERAWG and PAEWG (SIOFA 5th SC Report, 2020, Annex G, H, I) cover the period 2020-early 2022. Areas of strong interest to the project have been identified accordingly. The details of cooperation will be identified as the Project's workplans and related activities are developed.

One aspect that does require more advanced planning is the possible collaboration with the F/V Nansen[2] (EAF-Nansen Programme FAO). We are hoping that the vessel will be able schedule research activities in the SIOFA region to support the SIOFA Science Committee objectives. This could include activities related to VMEs, deepwater sharks and alfonsino assessment. The DSF Project will be happy to assist with coordination between SIOFA and the EAF-Nansen Programme, as and when necessary. A letter of expression of interest and more detailed discussions of the SIOFA programme of work, including identification of research priorities, may also be required.

SIOFA feedback

We welcome any comments and questions on the DSF Project and the joint activities identified in Annex 2.
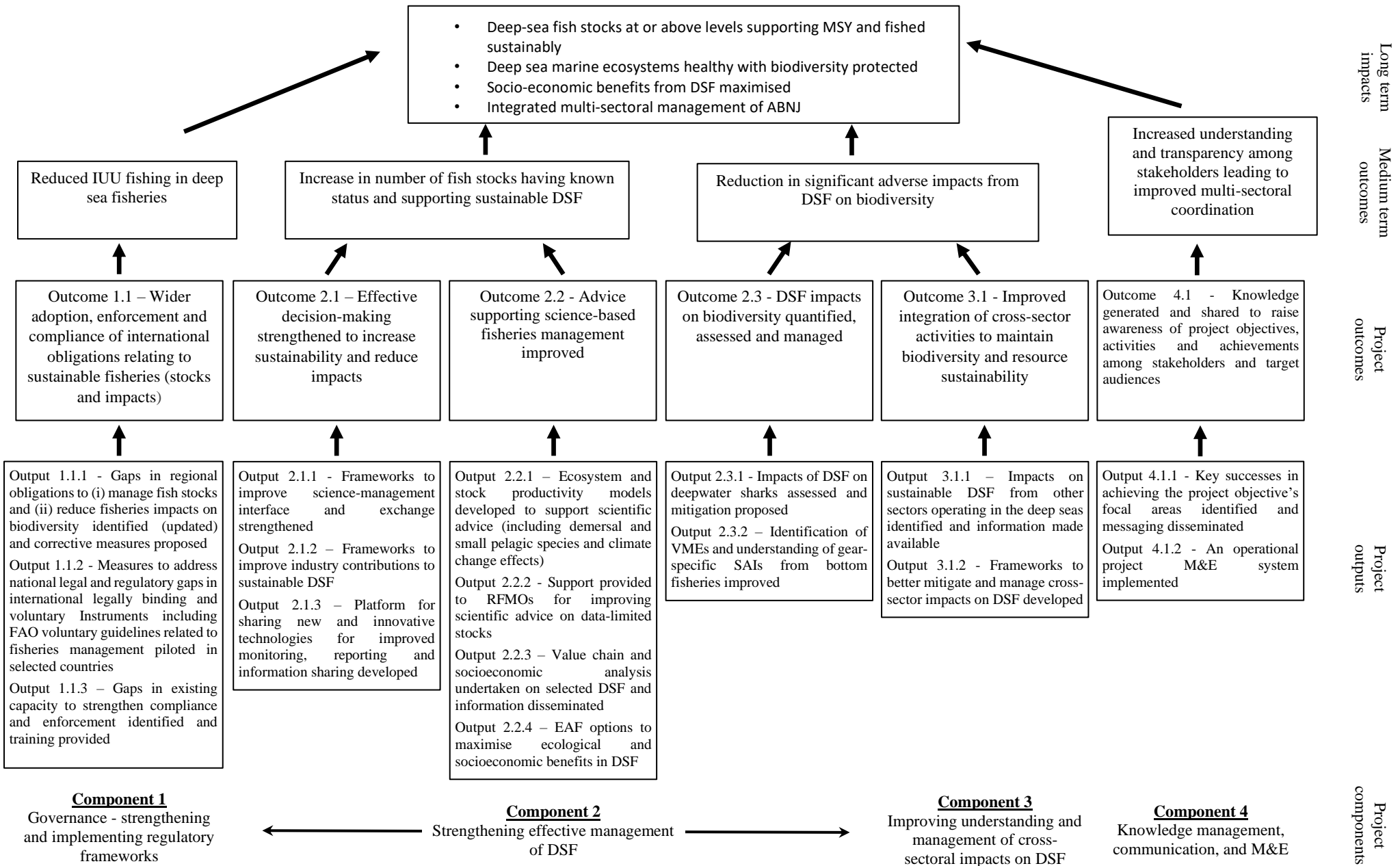
Conclusion

The DSF Project is in its development phase and will be launched in early 2022. The DSF Project would welcome feedback from the SIOFA Committees on the proposed joint activities outlined in Annex 2.

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[1] William.Emerson@fao.org

[2] SC-04 INFO-03 EAF-Nansen Programme Information Paper

Annex 1. DSF Project Theory of Change (ver 28 09 2020)

Long term impacts

- Deep-sea fish stocks at or above levels supporting MSY and fished sustainably
- Deep sea marine ecosystems healthy with biodiversity protected
- Socio-economic benefits from DSF maximised
- Integrated multi-sectoral management of ABNJ

Medium term outcomes

Reduced IUU fishing in deep sea fisheries

Increase in number of fish stocks having known status and supporting sustainable DSF

Reduction in significant adverse impacts from DSF on biodiversity

Increased understanding and transparency among stakeholders leading to improved multi-sectoral coordination

Project outcomes

Outcome 1.1 – Wider adoption, enforcement and compliance of international obligations relating to sustainable fisheries (stocks and impacts)

Outcome 2.1 – Effective decision-making strengthened to increase sustainability and reduce impacts

Outcome 2.2 - Advice supporting science-based fisheries management improved

Outcome 2.3 - DSF impacts on biodiversity quantified, assessed and managed

Outcome 3.1 - Improved integration of cross-sector activities to maintain biodiversity and resource sustainability

Outcome 4.1 - Knowledge generated and shared to raise awareness of project objectives, activities and achievements among stakeholders and target audiences

Project outputs

Output 1.1.1 - Gaps in regional obligations to (i) manage fish stocks and (ii) reduce fisheries impacts on biodiversity identified (updated) and corrective measures proposed

Output 1.1.2 - Measures to address national legal and regulatory gaps in international legally binding and voluntary Instruments including FAO voluntary guidelines related to fisheries management piloted in selected countries

Output 1.1.3 – Gaps in existing capacity to strengthen compliance and enforcement identified and training provided

Output 2.1.1 - Frameworks to improve science-management interface and exchange strengthened

Output 2.1.2 – Frameworks to improve industry contributions to sustainable DSF

Output 2.1.3 – Platform for sharing new and innovative technologies for improved monitoring, reporting and information sharing developed

Output 2.2.1 – Ecosystem and stock productivity models developed to support scientific advice (including demersal and small pelagic species and climate change effects)

Output 2.2.2 - Support provided to RFMOs for improving scientific advice on data-limited stocks

Output 2.2.3 – Value chain and socioeconomic analysis undertaken on selected DSF and information disseminated

Output 2.2.4 – EAF options to maximise ecological and socioeconomic benefits in DSF

Output 2.3.1 - Impacts of DSF on deepwater sharks assessed and mitigation proposed

Output 2.3.2 – Identification of VMEs and understanding of gear-specific SAIs from bottom fisheries improved

Output 3.1.1 – Impacts on sustainable DSF from other sectors operating in the deep seas identified and information made available

Output 3.1.2 - Frameworks to better mitigate and manage cross-sector impacts on DSF developed

Output 4.1.1 - Key successes in achieving the project objective's focal areas identified and messaging disseminated

Output 4.1.2 - An operational project M&E system implemented

Project components

Component 1
Governance - strengthening and implementing regulatory frameworks

Component 2
Strengthening effective management of DSF

Component 3
Improving understanding and management of cross-sectoral impacts on DSF

Component 4
Knowledge management, communication, and M&E

Annex 2. DSF Project workplan and activities of relevance to SIOFA.

DSF Project output (see Theory of Change)	Items of relevance to DSF Project				SIOFA workplans and agendas		
	Meeting of the Parties	Compliance Committee	Scientific Committee	Industry (Indian Ocean)	SC 5 (2020) Workplan	SERAWG 3	PAEWG 3
1.1.1 - Gaps in regional obligations to meet international obligations	Global study with SIOFA as a partner. Harmonisation of IUU lists.			Contribution to policy discussion – industry perspective			
1.1.2 - Addressing national legal and regulatory gaps	Selected countries from SIOFA CPs and CNCPs as required.			Contribution to national policy discussion – industry perspective			
1.1.3 – Strengthen compliance and enforcement		Support for improved monitoring of vessel activity (including gears used). Support for reporting obligations. Harmonised observer coverage. Global initiative to assist Secretariats in drafting compliance reports.	Reviews of effectiveness of relevant CMMs	Contribution to improving compliance – industry perspective			
2.1.1 - Science-management interface	Global initiative to improve drafting of requests for advice (or similar) to help SC better understand reasons for requests. Transparency and confidentiality in reporting vessel positions and use by SC.		Improved drafting of assessment results for data-poor stocks to facilitate understanding by managers (including possible independent review). Clarification from MoP to SC on scientific research and exploratory fisheries frameworks.				
2.1.2 – Industry contributions	Part of a global initiative to develop stronger partnerships between RFMOs and industry	Improved planning and cooperation to enhance compliance.	Improved data collection. Trailing new technologies. Exploratory fishing. VME identification. Joint work with F/V Nansen??	Very relevant with SIODFA, the industry groups, and their interactions with SIOFA (interim and in force).			
2.1.3 –New and			Gear modifications.				

innovative technologies			Data recording including onboard and in situ cameras. Others?			
2.2.1 – Ecosystem and stock productivity models			? if uptake	Vessel time, data collection	**6. Climate change impacts on fishery resources and ecosystems**	
2.2.2 - Data-limited stocks		Data submission as a compliance issue (including review of data quality).	Improved data collection and submission. Alfonsino data requirements for assessment. SIOFA Observer data database. Acoustics to verify cpue trends using F/V Nansen??	Vessel time, data collection. Collaboration and representation of demersal trawl industry.	**1. Scientific data standards for the collection, reporting, verification and exchange of data** -E-monitoring -Protocols for data collection -Observer coverage and data review and support **4. Stock assessments for key targeted species** -Alfonsino support (data collection)	Agenda item 3 – alfonsino Agenda item 7 – reference points and harvest strategy?
2.2.3 – Value chains				? An opportunity to highlight good practices in the Indian ocean?		
2.2.4 – EAF options and maximising benefits	This is a global cross-cutting output to support sustainable fisheries and maximise sustainable yield, economic returns and livelihood security.					Agenda item 7 – reference points and harvest strategy?
2.3.1 - Deepwater sharks			Part of a global program on deepwater shark bycatch reduction. Supporting risk assessment and data collection. Species identification and guides. Review of effectiveness of shark bycatch mitigation measures.	Vessel time and data. Observer (crew) training.	**1. Scientific data standards for the collection, reporting, verification and exchange of data** -ID guides and data collection for sharks -Smart forms **3. Current and historical status of fishing activities** -Characteristics of shark fisheries (including bycatch) **4. Stock assessments for key targeted species** -Deepwater chondrichtyans data collection **5. Advice on the impacts of fishing on associated and dependent species** -Deepwater chondrichtyans risk assessment	Agenda item 6 – deepwater sharks
2.3.2 – SAI on VMEs		Frameworks for research, new and exploratory fisheries (para 46)	Observer (crew) training. SAI from LL, mid-water trawls and bottom trawls (including % area impacted). Improved data on fishing activity. Mapping of VMEs using the F/V Nansen and support to industry for mapping in routine and exploratory fisheries.	Vessel time, underwater camera operations. Admin and data support on spatial analyses.	**2. Advice on vulnerable marine ecosystems** -FAO VME database -Indicator species and thresholds -ID Guides (development and use) -Mapping -Benthic sampling -Gear specific impacts (with ABNJ project)	Agenda item 3 – VMEs Agenda item 4 – BFIA Agenda item 7 – fishing footprint by gear and effort

				3. Current and historical status of fishing activities -Support of bottom fishing effort maps for cumulative BFIA		Agenda item 8 – work plan and resource requirements
3.1.1 – Impacts on DSF from other sectors		Global work to look at threats to DSF from other sectors.				
3.1.2 - Frameworks for cross-sector impacts	Developing frameworks with other sectors to support sustainable and rational resource utilizations and cross-sectoral impact assessments.					Agenda item 8 – representative area protection.
4.1.1 - Information sharing	Global and cross-cutting to better inform wider stakeholder community and public on substantiable fisheries and impact mitigation. Promotion and awareness building of project activities.					