

SC-03-06 (01)

3rd Meeting of the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) Scientific
Committee

20-24 March 2017, Saint Denis, La Reunion

Proposal to create a permanent group for Ecosystem Monitoring and Management

Relates to agenda item: 6

Working paper Info paper

Delegation of French Territory

Abstract

This proposal describes the need for establishing a permanent group for Ecosystem Monitoring and Management

Recommendation

The SC is invited to consider this proposal

Proposal to create a permanent group for Ecosystem Monitoring and Management

Following the adoption of UNGA Resolution 61/105 in 2006, 64/72 in 2009 and 66/68 in 2013 on deep-sea fisheries, the management of bottom fisheries and protection of deep-sea ecosystems on the high seas has been a priority for the international community.

Measures to implement these UNGA Resolutions have been put in place by a number of States and through RFMOs, including those active in high seas bottom fisheries in the Southern Ocean, North East Atlantic, North West Atlantic and South East Atlantic Oceans.

UNGA Resolution 61/105 calls on high seas fishing nations and RFMOs to take urgent action to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) from destructive fishing practices. In particular, Resolution 61/105 calls on States to:

- Conduct impact assessments to determine whether bottom fishing activities would have significant adverse impacts on VMEs, and ensure effective management to prevent such impacts, or else prohibit the activity;
- Close areas of the high seas to bottom fishing where VMEs are known or likely to occur unless fishing in these areas can be managed to prevent significant adverse impacts to such ecosystems; and
- Establish and implement protocols requiring vessels to cease fishing in areas where an encounter with VMEs occurs and to report the encounter so that appropriate measures can be adopted in respect of the site.

An evaluation of the status of biotic components in an ecosystem assessment will depend upon an adequate understanding of the components. Further, a successful predictive ability will require a good understanding of current and past ecosystem dynamics and how they are likely to change in the future. An important adjunct to the ecosystem assessment process would be a continual review of the information required to understand the system sufficiently to make effective assessments. This review would include reappraisal of, *inter alia*, the taxa considered as key species within the dependent and harvested components, spatial and temporal aspects, and the most appropriate parameters to measure.

The MoP4 adopted the standard protocol for future protected areas designation as recommended by the SC2 (Annex H, SC2 Report).

Following the adoption of this protocol, we propose to the Scientific Committee to approve to create a permanent group for Ecosystem Monitoring and Management. This group will be composed by scientist from the SC and independent expert. The objectives of this Group will be:

- (i) to provide advice on an ecosystem assessment combining information from dependent and harvested species and the environment; and
- (ii) to use this assessment to provide advice on management.

This committee will meet annually by e-mail or physically in September each year to review all the propositions. This Group will have to submit these conclusions for approval to the SC at least two months before the plenary meeting.