

## ECHEBASTAR SUSTAINABILITY WORKING GROUP

### MEETING MINUTES: JULY 24, 2020

#### PARTICIPANTS

Ane Iriondo (Azti), Marga Andres (Azti), Ian Scott (Echebastar- remotely), Jose Luis Jauregui (Echebastar)

The meeting started at the Echebastar offices at 09:00

In accordance with the "Agenda" the following topics were covered.

#### 1. Status of the 10 conditions.

##### Condition 1.

- Due to the virus, observers decline to work on purse seiners fishing tuna in the Indian Ocean. This means no observer data has been collected since March 2020.
- Echebastar will ask AZTI (that analyzes the data) and SFA to provide a confirmatory letter to justify the situation raised by Covid -19. 100 % catch and landing data continues to be provided as required by the authorities.
- AZTI will extrapolate data from previous years to provide indicative by-catch data for the period. This would not identify trends.

##### Condition 2.

- SFA is about to finalise the Seychelles FAD Management Plan, with the latest draft released in the past week.
- The FAD WATCH project is in final review with implementation scheduled from September.
- SFA has confirmed the up-date of Themis software to cover their proximity to the areas covered and their subsequent recovery.
- Further activity on this condition in addition to the recovery of FADs to prevent them becoming derelict on vulnerable habitats will complement understanding of the possible damage to corals from FADs.
- Concurrently, we are working on biodegradable FADs with the aim of achieving the 100% usage in 2022. Echebastar will report on progress, including a description of the materials being tested and the results obtained.

##### Conditions 3 & 4.

- These are linked to condition 2. While specific data are available on lost and recovered FADs, there is limited understanding of their potential impact should they become derelict on corals.
- Ane and Marga will consult with Maitane Grande (AZTI) on studies previously completed on this subject and consider if it would prove useful to extrapolate the results to our case.
- Ian will prepare ToR for a project that examines the nature of potential damage to corals arising from interaction with derelict FADs. This would replace the previously proposed work to extend FADWATCH to a second country.

##### Condition 5.

- It was agreed to continue working with SIOTI, although it is clear that this condition only relates to our UoC, as cumulative impacts do not apply to C2.5. Harmonization with other MSC certified purse seine fisheries in the IO is, however, relevant.
- We will seek clarification from our CAB, BV Spain, on the issue while it will be important to see how the CFTO assesses C2.5.
- It was agreed that further and deeper approach to the study by Maria José Juan Jorda may be appropriate.

#### **Condition 6.**

- While highly beneficial, the potential for a consultation visit to the Seychelles is limited. Accordingly, video calls with the interested parties (SFA, Ministry of Fisheries, Association of Artisanal Fishermen, suppliers, shipping agents, etc.) will be arranged.
- Our past comments to the various initiatives of the Seychelles government have been positively considered.

#### **Condition 7.**

- Progress has been made following publication of the Seychelles Fisheries Management Plan, that clearly indicates the objectives of Seychelles fisheries policy. To-date, there has been limited need for Echebatar to be involved in the process.

#### **Condition 8.**

- Echebatar Fishing licenses and its terms and conditions, both by direct (private) agreements and those reached officially through intergovernmental negotiations are already published on our website.
- Ian will identify areas where further information and analysis would be useful to improve stakeholder understanding of the issue.

#### **Conditions 9 & 10.**

- Ian will draft an options analysis of the potential harvest strategy and harvest control rules and tools. This should be available for review by ESWG in mid-September.
- It is noted that (i) Spain has established quota-based catch limitations for the yellowfin and a TAC for the total fishing possibilities per boat for this year 2020 and (ii) while Seychelles has not defined new rules, the 2019 limits on fishing activity using various analytics, such as T3, should effectively control the total volume of catch.
- In addition, there is the work of Gorka Merino for SIOTI.

#### **2. Compliance with objectives and deliverables for the second year, facing the audit.**

- Strong progress has been made in responding to the second-year milestones.

#### **3. Date for the Second Surveillance Audit. (An estimate that we can propose to BV).**

- Given the 6-month extension to the validity of the Certificate, the most likely time for the second audit is May 2021.
- It would be preferable to coordinate with the Maldives 3<sup>rd</sup> annual audit.

#### **4. Next meeting date.**

- September 17 at 09:00 CET; virtual.

#### **5. At 11:15 Iñigo Onandia (Aztí) and Txema Galaz (Echebatar- remotely) joined the meeting, to discuss the Silky Shark Tagging Project details:**

- ToR of the project (Iñigo gave a brief explanation of the proposed protocol).
- Summary of the work done by Melanie Hutchinson.
- Marking criteria.
- Necessary materials are specified, equipment purchase, (Iñigo has sent us an email).
- It was agreed to perform blood tests to measure lactose.

- Possibility of additional criteria for release (others than the ones published in the Good Practices Code), that could be applied and investigate.
- The date for implementation is dependent on the possibility of traveling to Seychelles and the availability of Iñigo and Txema. Tentatively, it would be in September 2020.

**The meeting ended at 1:00 p.m.**