

**ECHEBASTAR SUSTAINABILITY WORKING GROUP  
MINUTES OF MEETING: 17<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2020**

**PARTICIPANTS**

- Echebatar: José Luis Jauregui (JL) & Ian Scott (IRS)
- AZTI: Ane Iriondo (AI), Marga Andrés (MA), Josu Santiago (JS) & Iker Zudaire (IZ)

**AGENDA**

1. The IOTC SC meeting
2. Other points

**MINUTES**

- Meeting start: 09:00.
- The meeting started by considering the status of the stocks of skipjack.
- JL: The finding of the SC was that skipjack is not overfished and there is no overfishing. The TAC proposed for the period 2020 – 23 is 513,000 mt, which is above that for the previous three years. Annual catches have reduced since the high of 2018, with about 535,000 mt total in 2019. If Echebatar's experience is reflected in the whole sector, the anticipated total catch in 2020 could be just over 500,000 mt i.e. below the quota. JL wondered if this would meet MSC conditions to certification 9 (PI1.2.1) & 10 (PI1.2.2) especially due to measures on the reduction in the number of active FADs n supply vessels. IRS: The reduction is positive but not related to Component 1.2, rather PI 1.1.1. To meet the conditions, harvest strategy and harvest control rules would need to be defined to be proactive in case of future risk to the stock.
- IZ: presented an up-date on the project designed to measure the real impact of derelict FADs on coral reefs. Various options had been reviewed with a preliminary budget prepared for the fieldwork (manpower, materials and travel). Issues considered included project duration and the independence of selected consultants.
- IRS: the project could be extended to, say, 8 months if feasible from the perspective of cost.
- JL: Requested that the fieldwork proposal be incorporated in the plan. Subsequently, it may be possible to seek additional funding from other entities.
- IZ: AZTI will seek to identify potential partners in the Seychelles.
- JL: There are indications that the status of yellowfin may need to be reviewed due to errors in the current stock assessment. There continues to be issues with the evaluation of big eye.
- JL: Given the need to implement harvest control rules as quickly as possible, he considers that the planned IOTC meeting (SS3) planned for May be postponed until after the next IOTC meeting.
- JL & JS: to improve the stock assessments better data should be collected on size and age. JL will present a proposal for Echebatar to implement a pilot project in early 2021 linked to an AZTI/FAO project.

Meeting end: 10:30

**NEXT MEETING**

Date proposed for next ESWG: January 28<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 h (CET).