

ECHEBASTAR SUSTAINABILITY WORKING GROUP

MINUTES OF MEETING: 28th APRIL 2021

PARTICIPANTS

- Echebatar: José Luis Jauregui & Ian Scott
- AZTI: Ane Iriondo & Marga Andrés

MINUTES

The meeting opened at 10.00 (CET)

1. SIOTI. The AZTI members of the ESWG were updated on progress being achieved by SIOTI.
 - I. Scott had prepared draft terms of reference for two SIOTI projects; fishery management / harvest control tools and a silky shark strategy. These drafts will now be reviewed and modified as required by the SIOTI PMT for subsequent implementation.
 - II. SIOTI has committed to funding the dFAD/Coral project with the caveat that agreement on the field is received from the Seychelles. Given the need for Echebatar to discuss the issue with the relevant Seychelles authorities in the context of continuing travel restrictions due to COVID, Echebatar has modified the project with division into two phases. The first will cover the desk research needed to provide a baseline understanding of the issues, including detailed planning and design of the field work which, if it goes forward, would be subject of a second contract. It is anticipated that field work, second phase would start in November 2021.
 - III. There was consideration of the report prepared by AZTI (Gorka) for SIOTI on harvest strategy that may be taken as a basis for the SIOTI to prepare ToR for a second project on harvest strategy and harvest control rules.
2. SILKY SHARK. Project 2. With the results of the first project that assessed post release survival of silky sharks taken as a by catch in tuna purse seine sets, the second project will focus on gaining a better understanding of silky shark habitat and migration that may support the definition of an effective silky shark management strategy. In this stage of the overall project, tags will be attached to those silky shark specimens that have a lower risk of post release mortality. Echebatar will send its comments on the draft proposal prepared by AZTI. Echebatar will request a number of entities to provide tags.
3. FADWATCH. SIOTI in harmony with OPAGAC continues to discuss the MOU with the Seychelles authorities.
4. Scott had prepared a draft of the submission to the auditors charged with completing the second annual surveillance audit (SASA) that is confirmed for week beginning May 17. The progress being made against the 10 conditions to certification was considered to be up to date with the potential to close one or two of them. It was recalled that the second-year milestones of nine of the conditions had been put by one year. Points that require more detail and information were identified. JL will prepare up-dates on bio-degradable FADs and the forensic accounting of FADs.
5. Scott will request an up-date from SIOTI (Robinson) on the reported World Bank project to support Seychelles in the preparation of a tuna fishery management plan.
6. Iriondo and Andrés had drafted an annual statistical report covering active vessels, number of sets, observed number of sets, total catch and by catch. The report will inform the SASA audit, but also be published to provide stakeholders with relevant data.
7. The next meeting is scheduled for 14 May CET 9.00.