

Echebatar Sustainability Working Group
Monthly Meeting: Martes, September 7 2021
09.00 h (CET)
Minutes

Participants:

ECHEBASTAR: J. L. Jauregui, Ian Scott, Pablo Gonzalez

AZTI: Ane Iriondo, Marga Andres

1. IOTC – 21/01

JL up-dated the team on the situation related to the voting on the Kenyan proposal on dFADs IOTC Reg 21/02 ([IOTC-2021-S25-PropE_Rev2E - clean dFADS Kenya et al cf Res19-02 with track changes.pdf](#)) that the FAO has ruled to be invalid due to issues on the voting. While the Kenya proposal would have limited impact on Echebatar as we already work with less FADs than permitted, there are questions about the timescale for introducing biofads and restricting the number of supply vessels. The head of delegation are due to meet to consider the issue.

Somalia, India and Oman have objected to Res 21/01. (On an interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC area of competence). Unless one-third of the members object this Resolution will come into force on December 17, 2021.

2. SIOTI PMT

There was a discussion on the SIOTI FIP which is in its final year. While being in favour of its extension, ESWG has a number of issues with the FIP, and these will be raised at the opportune time.

3. Second Annual Surveillance Audit. Including PI1.2.1 & PI 3.2.2.

(<https://echebatar.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/ECHEBASTAR-MSC-SECOND-SURVEILLANCE-AUDIT-REPORT-AUGUST-27-2021.pdf>)

The findings of the audit team are extremely positive and reflect the success of activities of the ESWG over the past year in meeting the defined milestones for the individual conditions. Of the original 8 conditions to certification, two have been closed, while progress on meeting another 5 is judged to be ahead of target. In addition, progress on Conditions 9 and 10 that were set following the first annual surveillance report were found to be ahead of target.

Due to the need to harmonize with the now MSC certified CFTO fishery, a new condition was defined on PI 3.2.2, this despite the previous condition on this performance indicator having been met. Echebatar awaits clarification of this scoring in the soon to be published Public Comment Draft Report for the AGAC Indian Ocean fishery.

We were disappointed that the work completed by SIOTI / ESWG with the commissioning of a second study by Juan-Jorda was not considered sufficient to meet the condition on PI 2.5.3.

Again, we await clarification in the upcoming AGAC PCDR while noting the following comment in our audit report *“This ... study represents an important contribution in different issues related to PI 2.5 (i.e. review of potential impacts to be considered, potential interactions and cross cutting issues between P2 PIs, review of past and on-going ecosystem research, assessment of available information to score these PIs...). Based on this analysis, the team recommends that a harmonization process on how to assess PI2.5 for purse seine tuna fisheries is undertaken as soon as the AGAC fishery assessment is completed, and the engagement of the MSC in this process would be advisable”*

4. AGAC

The Draft Final AGAC report is awaited.

5. Bigeye

Review of the Echebatar bigeye fishery will depend on the outcome of the AGAC assessment.

6. Harvest Strategy

SIOTI is in contact with AZTI to up-date a previous study and complete SIOTI activity Y4c Study on how multispecies catch limits can be incorporated in MSE, HCRs and HS. This responds to Echebatar condition 9.

7. Harvest Control Tools

The ToR prepared by Scott for SIOTI activity Y4f Study on effective options for management of tuna fisheries (all 3 target species, incl. env variability) has been distributed to identify a suitable consultant. This responds to Echebatar condition 10.

8. FADWATCH

Progress is being made. The delivery of equipment awaits prior payment to the contracted company.

9. MSC OSF

A final report will be sent to MSC to describe the outcome of the 4 projects that received partial funding for 2020 /21.

- Silky sharks: completed and a second phase has begun to improve knowledge of the migratory patterns of the species following release.
- Corals/dFADs: Desk research is underway and will be complete in October 2021. Field work is in the process of confirmation, and scheduled to be completed between November 2021 and March 2022 when weather conditions are favourable.
- Echebatar successfully completed the second annual surveillance audit.
- Work on examining cumulative impacts is pending confirmation of the MSC status of the AGAC fishery.

On September 15, JL and IRS will make a presentation to the MSC on the implementation of the projects.

Consideration of the options for applying for more OSF support awaits publication of the details in October 2021 covering the Innovation Fund, Science and Research Fund and Post Graduate Fund.

10. Coral project

The first phase of the project – desk research – has entered its fourth month. The second phase of the project awaits identification of a suitable location. The options will be considered at a meeting with AZTI on 8 September

11. Silky shark project

The first phase of the project has been completed (video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zq9lej2ckRg> [also available in English]).

This will be followed up from October 2021 to investigate migratory patterns of released silkies with plans to tag 32 specimens that are likely to survive capture and release. The options will be considered at a meeting with AZTI on 8 September

12. Cumulative Impacts

Discussion postponed until AGAC Draft Final Report is published.

13. Work plan September 2021 - April 2021

Discussion postponed until the next ESWG meeting.

14. Data

Discussion postponed until the next ESWG meeting.

15. Any Other Business

The AZTI office in Seychelles will be opened during this month

16. Next meeting

Thursday 30 September 9 a.m. CET

Meeting closed 10.15 a.m. CET