

Echebatar Sustainability Working Group

Monthly Meeting: December 1st, 2021

10.00 h (CET)

Minutes

PARTICIPANTS

Ane Iriondo (Azti), Marga Andres (Azti), Ian Scott (Echebatar), Jose Luis Jauregui (Echebatar)

1. Comments on work plan

The revised work plan until May 2022 was presented and accepted. Essentially, activities are separated between response to MSC conditions and those going beyond MSC requirements to strengthen Echebatar's sustainability credentials.

2. Progress on conditions November 2021

C1: 2.3.3 Information is adequate to measure trends and support a strategy to manage impacts on ETP species

Following restrictions imposed by COVID regulations, observer activity has returned to normal and overall coverage in 2021 should reach that recorded in 2020 and be above the minimum needed (50%) to allow the identification of trends. We will review approach to take into account CFTO outcome and AGAC assessment (under objections process).

Virtually all fishing activity ceased in November due to nearly 100 % take up of quota.

C2: 2.4.1 By the fourth annual surveillance audit, the client must demonstrate that FADs are highly unlikely to reduce structure and function of coral reefs to a point where there would be serious or irreversible harm.

Given the continued uncertainty of regional FAD policy following the outcome of IOTC SS5, IRS will prepare a short up-date (3 to 4 pages) on existing FAD management plan taking into account more recent information and the views expressed by stakeholders. This will be completed by end-January 2022.

C3: 2.4.2 By the third annual surveillance audit, the client must provide evidence that a partial strategy in place that is expected to result that it will be highly unlikely that derelict FADs could reduce structure and function of the coral reefs to a point where there would be serious or irreversible harm

Closed.

C4: 2.4.3 By the fourth annual surveillance audit, the client must provide evidence that information is adequate to allow for identification of the main impacts of derelict FADs on coral reefs, and there is reliable information on the spatial extent of interaction and on the timing and location of use of the fishing gear.

A draft MOU has been sent for consideration of the Seychelles local partner for implementation of field work to provide empirical evidence of the risk to coral communities posed by derelict dFADs.

A draft report on the desk research to identify issues related to dFADs will be delivered by AZTI by end-December 2021.

The findings of the AGAC draft report following the objection procedure will be taken into consideration in reviewing activities.

C5: 2.5.3 Sib. By the fourth annual surveillance audit, the client must provide evidence that the main impacts of the FADs used in the UoA/UoC on these key ecosystem elements can be inferred from existing information, and some have been investigated in detail.

Sid. By the fourth annual surveillance audit, the client must provide evidence that there is adequate information on the impacts of the UoA on these components to allow some of the main consequences for the ecosystem to be inferred.

The issue of how to respond to this condition is under review in SIOTI in conjunction with ORTHONGEL

C6: 3.1.2. By the third annual surveillance audit, the management system in the Seychelles includes consultation processes that regularly seek and accept relevant information, including local knowledge. The management system demonstrates consideration of the information obtained.

In his recent visit to the Seychelles, JLJ had met with all local stakeholders.

C7: 3.2.1 By the third annual surveillance audit, short and long-term objectives, which are consistent with achieving the outcomes expressed by MSC's Principles 1 and 2, are explicit within the fishery-specific management system.

Once the objections process is complete, we will need to assess why AGAC met this PI without condition and review if the same rationale can be proposed for Echebatar.

C8: 3.2.2

Closed

C9: Condition 9: PI 1.2.1: By the first annual surveillance audit following re-certification (anticipated to be in 2024), the client must demonstrate that the harvest strategy is responsive to the state of the stock and the elements of the harvest strategy work together towards achieving stock management objectives reflected in PI 1.1.1 SG80 (i.e., it is highly likely that the stock is above the PRI and is at or fluctuating around a level consistent with MSY).

SIOTI has contracted a consultant to prepare a report. This will start in January 2022.

IRS and JLJ participated in the IOTC WPTT and SS5 meetings as observers.

JLJ described Seychelles tuna allocation process.

C10: 1.2.2 By the first annual surveillance audit following re-certification (anticipated to be in 2024), the client must demonstrate that available evidence indicates that the tools in use are appropriate and effective in achieving the exploitation levels required under the HCRs.

IRS separated the SIOTI HCR ToR between scientific and socio-economic inputs in the expectation that a consultant to carry out the work may be identified.

C11: 3.2.2. By the first annual surveillance audit following recertification (anticipated to be in 2026), the client fishery should demonstrate that at IOTC level, decision-making processes regarding skipjack stock management respond to important issues, specifically to skipjack catches in excess of the annual catch limit corresponding to the HCR, in a transparent, timely and adaptive manner. This could be done by implementing the harvest strategy set out in Resolution 16/02 and in Condition 1, or by some other means as appropriate.

Echebatar has participated in all SIOTI PMT meetings and several relevant IOTC meetings that are considering this issue.

3. Other activities November 2021

- AGAC: Once the final outcome of the AGAC assessment is known, IRS will assess the implications for Echebatar if the condition on 2.1.2 is maintained.

IRS will await the final list of objections that have been accepted prior to reviewing potential issues for Echebatar and SIOTI.

- Silky shark: the field work for the second stage has been completed and the released silkies with TAGS will be monitored for the next 12 months.
- Marine Waste: Echebatar is reviewing the options for a suitable research project.
- Standard on working practises: Echebatar is consulting with its main customers to identify the best approach.

4. Next meeting.

January 31, 2022