

MoP-08-INFO-18

**8TH MEETING OF THE PARTIES OF THE SOUTHERN INDIAN OCEAN FISHERIES AGREEMENT
(MoP8)**

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**ABNJ Deep-Sea Fisheries Project under the Ecosystem Approach -
Proposed workplan and activities**

RELATES TO AGENDA ITEMS:

MoP8 12.4

WORKING PAPER

INFO PAPER X

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the development of the FAO ABNJ Deep-Sea Fisheries (DSF) Project and to seek feedback on the Project's proposed activities and their relationship to the SIOFA workplans. The project outputs, particularly on data-limited stocks, deepwater sharks, and VMEs and bottom fisheries, will be global and include management, scientific advice, and compliance activities. The DSF Project is in its development phase and will be executed in 2022-2027.

ABNJ Deep-Sea Fisheries Project under the Ecosystem Approach - Proposed workplan and activities

Introduction/Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the development of the FAO ABNJ Deep-Sea Fisheries (DSF) Project and to seek feedback on the Project's proposed activities and their relationship to the SIOFA workplans.

Background

The FAO ABNJ Deep-Sea Fisheries (DSF) Project (2022-2027) follows on from the ABNJ Deep-Sea Project (2014-2019). Information papers have been submitted to the following meetings: 5th CC (CC-05-INFO-xx), 6th SC (SC-06-INFO-01) and 3rd PAEWG (PARWG-03-INFO-01), 7th MoP (MoP-07-26), 5th SC and 2nd PAEWG (SC-05-INFO-03), 6th MoP (MoP -INFO-10, MoP6-INFO-11 and MoP6-INFO-19), and 4th SC (SC-04-INFO-04). The DSF project's concept note was approved by GEF in June 2020 and is available from FAO¹. Information contained within these documents will not be further elaborated here.

DSF Project development

The DSF Project is funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF). The Project will be submitted to the GEF Secretariat for endorsement towards the end of 2021.

The DSF project is currently in the project document drafting phase. The project document builds on earlier communication with potential project partners to identify the Project's thematic work areas. These work areas will be implemented through activities funded by the project and through partner in-kind contributions. The project implementation is expected to start in 2022, with a duration of 5 years.

The project is global in scope and will collaborate with and support regional activities that lead to the project's objective:

To ensure that DSF in the ABNJ are managed under an ecosystem approach that maintains demersal fish stocks at levels capable of maximizing their sustainable yields and minimizing impacts on biodiversity, with a focus on data-limited stocks, deepwater sharks and vulnerable marine ecosystems.

The project's Theory of Change summarizes the activities, outputs and outcomes that underpin the project (Annex 1). The successful achievement of the project objective will require inputs and support from project partners, in particular the participating RFMOs and industry.

There are many aspects of SIOFA's management, compliance and scientific work that support the project's objective (Annex 2). The activities cover general areas of cooperation and will evolve in line with developments in SIOFA and the project.

SIOFA feedback

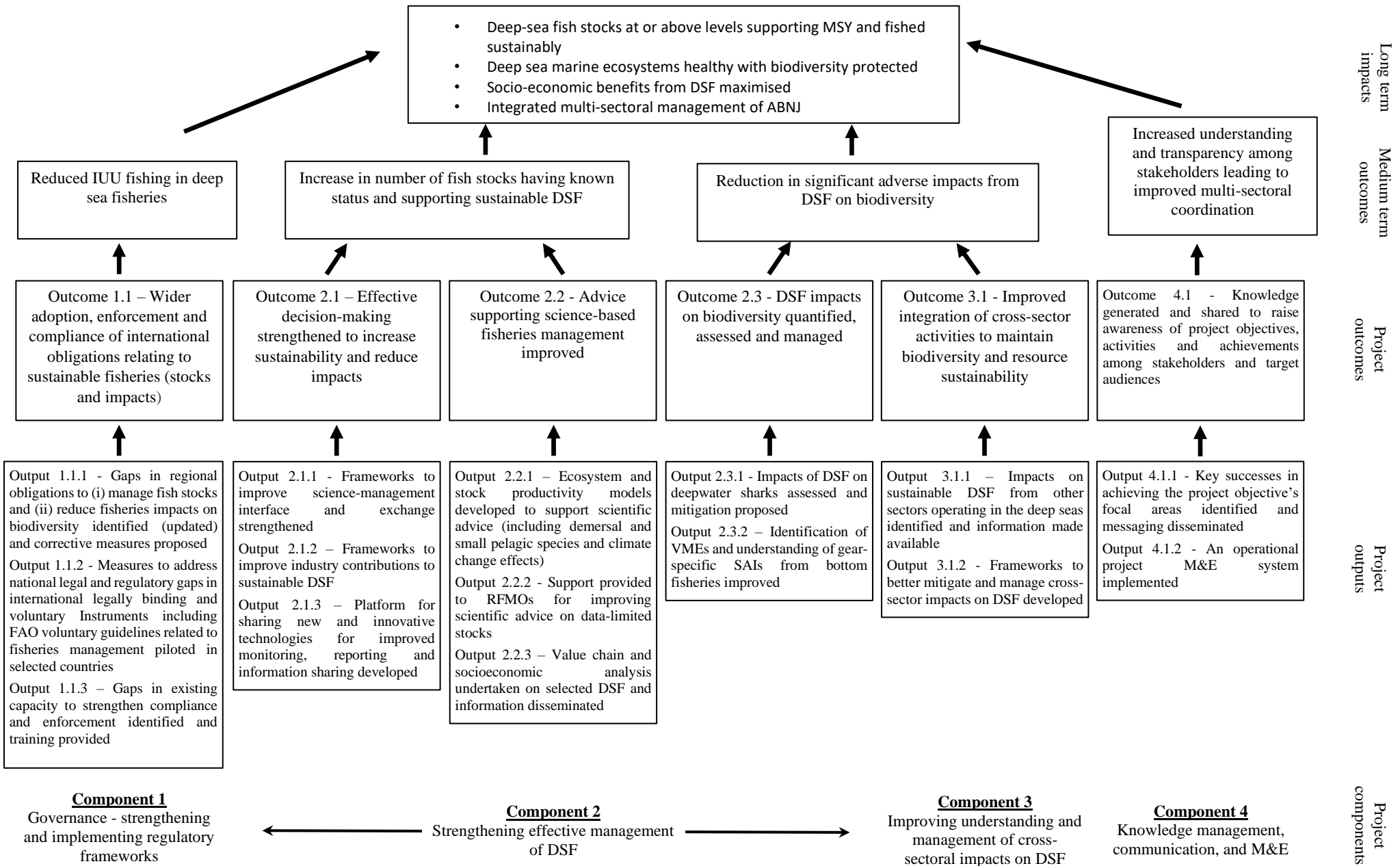
We welcome any comments and questions on the DSF Project and the joint activities identified in Annex 2.

Next steps

Within the coming months, the FAO GEF Unit (on behalf of the DSF Project) will request formal endorsement of SIOFA's contributions to the DSF project and an associated in-kind co-financing amount.

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ANNEX 1. DSF PROJECT THEORY OF CHANGE (VER 10 06 2021)



ANNEX 2. DSF PROJECT WORKPLAN AND ACTIVITIES OF RELEVANCE TO SIOFA.

Component 1: Governance -strengthening and implementing regulatory frameworks

Outcome 1.1 – Wider adoption, enforcement and compliance of international obligations relating to sustainable fisheries (stocks and impacts)

Project Outputs	Project Activity	SIOFA Partner Activity (in kind)	Source of Contributions
<p>1.1.1 - Gaps in regional obligations to (i) manage fish stocks and (ii) reduce fisheries impacts on biodiversity identified (updated) and corrective measures developed.</p>	<p>Scoping study on international obligations, with focus on data-limited and bycatch species with workshop Capacity Building - RFMO/As Members’ Forum and self-assessment tools for PMA and other FAO binding and voluntary instruments with workshop (same as above workshop) Coordinated by Project consultant Run by Project consultant</p>	<p>Improved monitoring of vessel activity (including gears used). Support for reporting obligations. Harmonised observer coverage.</p>	<p>Compliance and Commission meetings and reports In-kind support from Secretariat staff (Executive Secretary, Compliance manager, fisheries coordinator) to support project consultant Attendance at one workshop (online or in person) to validate international obligations and develop self-assessment tools (travel, dsa and any stipend covered by RFMO). Supporting capacity building as determined necessary</p>
<p>1.1.2 - Measures to address national legal and regulatory gaps in international obligations related to fisheries management piloted in selected countries.</p>	<p>Focus on GEF-eligible countries following on from GEF-5 project Aligning national legislation with RFMO measures and reporting requirements Run by Project consultant</p>	<p>RFMO GEF eligible member countries providing in-kind support for updating their legislation (follow-up from GEF-5 project).</p>	<p>Focus with GEF-eligible countries in SEAFO and SIOFA regions. Possibly GFCM but this likely already supported through other GFCM work. No anticipated contribution from RFMOs.</p>
<p>1.1.3 - Gaps in existing capacity to strengthen compliance and enforcement identified and filled.</p>	<p>Focus on GEF-eligible countries following on from GEF-5 project Observer training (compliance and scientific) Port inspection training Deepwater shark catch monitoring and bycatch reduction (support to output 2.3.1) VMS and mapping of DSF by gear type (support to output 2.3.2) Run by Project consultant</p>	<p>Provide support to selected and GEF-eligible member countries to build their capacity to strengthen compliance and enforcement measure where necessary. Follow-up work from GEF-5 and the “DEEP FLIP” survey.</p>	<p>Focus with GEF-eligible countries in SEAFO and SIOFA regions. Possibly GFCM but this likely already supported through other GFCM work. No anticipated contribution from RFMOs. Potentially in-person contributions from national laboratories to provide training, with expenses covered by the Project (and subject to negotiation).</p>

Component 2: Strengthening effective management of DSF

Outcome 2.1 – Effective decision making strengthened to increase sustainability and reduce impacts

Project Outputs	Project Activity	SIOFA Partner Activity (in kind)	Source of Contributions
2.1.1 - Frameworks to improve science-management interface and exchange strengthened following an ecosystem and precautionary approach	Desk top study on how dsRFMO committees communicate internally (eg by requests for advice, joint groups, etc) and to trail new ways if appropriate. Further development of PA and EAF frameworks by dsRFMOs. Run by Project consultant	Development of PA and EAF frameworks Work of SC and examples of dealing with confidentiality restrictions in catch data. Drafting and independent reviews of scientific advice to assist interpretation by managers. Clearer requests for advice from MoP to SC with additional explanation to guide the work. Inclusion of scientific research into CMMs (SC-05-24, 177-184)	Outputs of dsRFMO committees and discussions on communication strategies with Secretariats. Uptake of new initiatives, if appropriate. Take part in project workshop on PA and EAF frameworks (including the social and economic pillars of EAF, data-poor stocks, deepwater sharks and VMEs).
2.1.2 - Frameworks to improve industry contributions to sustainable DSF	Desk top study on how industry works with dsRFMOs and to trail new ways if appropriate applicable to the management, compliance, and scientific committees. Including better identification of communication and data sharing strategies. Conclusions discussed at workshop and frameworks developed as appropriate. Run by Project consultant	Scoping study and workshop to examine options for a more cooperative partnership between RFMOs and industry. Follow-up as required.	Sharing of information frameworks among industry and dsRFMOs and discussions with Secretariats and industry. Take part in project workshop on industry – dsRFMO cooperation.
2.1.3 – Uptake of new and innovative approaches and technologies for improved monitoring, reporting and information sharing piloted and introduced	Development of web-area (under Common Oceans Programme?) for sharing information from researchers and developers with a wider audience (such as dsRFMOs) of new and innovation technologies that support sustainable fisheries. Run by Project consultant	Improved data collection for compliance and scientific purposes Pilot new technologies in existing and exploratory fisheries. Cameras on LL to collect more VME and shark data (97) Camera technologies on gear to monitor benthos. FAO SmartForm app trialling.	RFMO Secretariats to identify “needs or constraints” that could be solved through the application of technology and share with the project. These would normally arise during discussions at various committee meetings. Little input from RFMOs, other than circulation of relevant project reports on this topic at meetings.

2.2 - Improved advice supporting science-based fisheries management

Project Outputs	Project Activity	SIOFA Partner Activity (in kind)	Source of Contributions
2.2.1 - Stock productivity models developed and advice generated and tested (including demersal and small pelagic species and climate change effects)	<p>Organise symposium on Application to fisheries management of ecosystem and stock productivity models under changing conditions – short, medium and long term implications”.</p> <p>Promote relevant work undertaken by dsRFMOs, including CC work.</p> <p>Draft publication on current work and its use in sustainable fisheries.</p> <p>Run by Project consultant</p>	<p>Potential use of commercial vessels to collect data to develop ecosystem models of Indian Ocean.</p>	<p>Sharing of relevant work by RFMO management and science committees.</p> <p>Present at symposium.</p> <p>Support (in-kind) drafting of symposium proceedings publication.</p> <p>Distribute relevant project publications.</p>
2.2.2 - Low-yield and data-limited stocks assessed and managed	<p>(Focus fisheries are alfonsino and armourhead)</p> <p>Review and support appropriate and coordinated data-collection programmes.</p> <p>Identify and support current RFMO assessment methods.</p> <p>As appropriate, coordinate training workshops, possibly with ICES.</p> <p>Assist in evaluation of stock status for data limited stocks.</p> <p>Run by Project consultant</p>	<p>Support data collection for alfonsino and assessment methods.</p> <p>Possible alfonsino acoustic survey support</p> <p>Alfonsino stock structure work (if relevant to management)</p> <p>alfonsino (seamounts), (and for information purposes: orange roughly (seamounts))</p>	<p>Sharing data-collection and assessment methodologies through RFMO reports and access to stock experts.</p> <p>If appropriate, have assessments reviewed in an open forum (focus fisheries are alfonsino and armourhead, but other data-limited fisheries should also benefit).</p> <p>For Indian Ocean (subject to suitability and availability) join work to support the use of the R/V F. Nansen to assist assessments.</p>
2.2. 3 – Socio-economic considerations of DSF assessed and information disseminated	<p>Undertake value chain analysis of 1-4 fisheries that supports the sustainable management of deep-sea fisheries and EAF.</p> <p>Perform gender and decent employment analyses as part of the value chain work.</p> <p>Examine relevance of value chains to work of RFMOs.</p> <p>Run by Project consultant.</p>	<p>Selected value chain data collection.</p> <p>Gender work throughout entire fisheries chain (including management, science and MCS).</p>	<p>Likely little input from RFMOs.</p> <p>Discussions with RFMOs later in the work to examine relevant to fisheries management.</p>

2.3 - DSF impacts on biodiversity quantified, assessed and managed

Project Outputs	Project Activity	SIOFA Partner Activity (in kind)	Source of Contributions
2.3.1 - Impacts of DSF on deepwater sharks assessed and mitigated	<p>Collate and assess data collection programmes and data collected among dsRFMOs. Providing support, training and testing of future data collection programs including new technologies to aid identification.</p> <p>Promotion of risk assessment methodologies involving shark distribution, fishing effort distribution (by gear), and catch susceptibility.</p> <p>Reviews of impact assessment methodologies and comparison of results from high seas regions through workshop or symposium as appropriate.</p> <p>Methods to review effectiveness of mitigation options.</p> <p>Run by Project consultant.</p>	<p>FAO can support shark data collection programmes (SC05, 158-159)</p> <p>Risk assessments using PSA and SAFE methods.</p> <p>Pilot experiment and promotion of nylon vs wire snoods for long lines to reduce shark bycatch</p> <p>Gear modifications to reduce shark catch</p>	<p>Collaboration with project to support this output, including sharing of work undertaken for RFMO meetings.</p> <p>Consistent with obligations and current work of RFMOs, undertaken deepwater shark stock and impact assessments with RFMOs.</p> <p>Working jointly with the project, review effectiveness of mitigation measures to protect deepwater shark species.</p>
2.3.2 – Knowledge of impacts of fishing activities on VMEs improved and mitigation measures developed and adopted	<p>Review of current methods used to identify VMEs in ABNJ, including those used in exploratory fisheries, and produce publication entitled “VME identification methodology”.</p> <p>Review implementation of FAO DSF Guidelines (follow-up of Busan meeting in 2010)</p> <p>Methods to monitor the health of VMEs in closed areas to see if they are changing, either negatively through non-fisheries impacts or positively through recovery.</p> <p>Improved monitoring and analysis of fishing effort by gear type (essential fundamental requirement to monitoring of fisheries and impacts).</p> <p>Run by Project consultant.</p>	<p>Collaboration with industry using underwater cameras.</p> <p>Detailed impact assessments provided by CPs.</p> <p>Improved understanding of gear-specific impacts.</p> <p>Possible Nansen cruise in Indian Ocean 2023.</p> <p>Detailed knowledge of bottom fishing footprints by gear to help with impact assessments and ERA.</p>	<p>RFMO collaboration, mainly through the provision of meeting reports and working documents, but sometimes by expert in-kind contributions, to advance work required for this output.</p> <p>Representation by RFMOs at various workshops to develop and conclude work of this output.</p> <p>Some joint work with Compliance Committees and Scientific Committees on how to improve the monitoring and mapping of fishing effort, whilst respecting confidentiality requirements and restricted access rules.</p>

Component 3. Improving understanding and management of cross-sectoral impacts on DSF

Outcome 3.1 - Improved integration of cross-sector activities to maintain biodiversity and resource sustainability

Project Outputs	Project Activity	SIOFA Partner Activity (in kind)	Source of Contributions
3.1.1 - Interactions between fisheries and other sectors operating in the deep seas identified and information made available.	<p>Scoping study to identify possible interactions with DSF (including overlap with current spatial extent of fishing by stock and gear).</p> <p>Methodologies identified to identify significance of threats (including where identified in similar cases for EEZ fisheries).</p> <p>Guidance developed on consequences of threats (fisheries production, ecological, social, economic).</p> <p>Run by Project consultant.</p>	Impacts on DSF from other sectors	<p>Information in RFMO reports and working papers</p> <p>Consultations with RFMO Secretariat staff, Scientific committees, and members as appropriate.</p> <p>In-kind support for workshops and project publications</p>
3.1.2 - Mechanisms to better mitigate and manage cross-sector impacts on DSF developed.	<p>Project consultant to draft report on current and planned multi-sectoral marine use (to include all spatial aspects of fisheries including distribution of fishing effort and biodiversity protection measures).</p> <p>To inform RFMOs on developments in international instruments affecting the use of the ABNJ.</p> <p>As appropriate, any follow-up work necessary to mitigate the negative effects of interactions with DSF.</p> <p>Run by Project consultant.</p>		<p>RFMO meeting reports and working papers.</p> <p>In-kind discussions between project and RFMOs.</p>

Component 4. Knowledge management, communication, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

Outcome 4.1 Knowledge generated and shared to raise awareness of project objectives, activities and achievements among stakeholders and target audiences

Project Outputs	Project Activity	SIOFA Partner Activity (in kind)	Source of Contributions
4.1.1: Key successes in achieving the project objective's focal areas identified and messaging disseminated (inc. IW:Learn at 1%).	<p>Review and support to RFMO websites with an emphasis on sharing information with a wider multi-sectoral audience to better display the remit of RFMOs and the work they undertake with fisheries and environmental monitoring.</p> <p>Run by Project consultant.</p>		In-kind discussions between Secretariat and project's communications experts on current website design and possibilities for improvement in messaging.
	Programme level messaging via Global Coordination Project		No inputs
4.1.2: An operational project M&E system implemented	Project monitoring and evaluation undertaken by Project Management Unit		RFMO Secretariat to provide annual updates to DSF project on their contributions to the project as specified in the co-financing letter.