

**A Productive and Sustainable Ocean - Securing the Foundation for
Fish Contribution to Food Security through Ecosystem based
Management of Ocean-based Activities in Times of Climate Change
and a changing Ocean.**

by
securing the ecological foundation and by sustainable management
practices – through a regional cooperation approach

Report of a Stakeholder Scoping Meeting

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1. Introduction

Fishery resources make a major, irreplaceable contribution to nutrition and food security, particularly in developing countries. In addition fisheries and other marine sectors contribute to economies of many countries in terms of income and creation of employment. In many African countries fish is the only affordable source of protein and several essential nutrients and therefore of overwhelming importance for food and nutrition security.

However, the capacity of the marine environment to produce the food on which many human communities depend is currently being threatened by unsustainable fishing methods and other human activities and/or by human induced activities such as climate change. For example, toxic dumping has major impacts on fish stocks and marine biodiversity. Pollution can affect fish during their life cycle and result in the presence of chemical contaminants, making affected fish unsuitable for human consumption. Microplastics infiltrate the flesh and organs of fish and might have a future serious adverse effect on fecundity and thus the recruitment of new year-classes. Other human impacts from shipping and unsustainable aquaculture can introduce diseases and negatively affect habitats, which undermine ecosystem health and adversely affect fish and associated food security. Studies of the impacts of climate change on marine and coastal habitats and fisheries also suggest that detrimental change such as the loss of coral reefs is occurring in some areas.

There is broad agreement that such pressures on marine resources, biodiversity and ecosystems are increasing and it is expected that they will continue to do so, particularly with a growing human population. The impacts are often locally compounded, poorly documented and very seldom managed, including in developing countries. In addition there is usually very limited coordination and collaboration across regional and national agencies and sectors to ensure the necessary harmonization of policies, goals and management frameworks.

Integrated and ecosystem-based management, founded on sound sectoral management (E.g. EAF) is today seen as a prerequisite for maintaining the health of the oceans so that they can deliver the full potential for fish food production. This will in turn result in an increased ability of the oceans to contribute to food security and reduction of poverty.

Limited experience exists in some regions of the world at maintaining or recovering the sustainability of the oceans through an integrated management approach and through arrangements for cooperation between the Fisheries and Environmental agencies, supported by a common or coordinated advisory science framework that underpins regulation and policy. This connection does not exist or is still very poorly developed in many developing regions around the world.

At the Rio+20 Conference in 2012 Ocean's were at focus. The Declaration "The Future We Want" recognized the role of fish for food security:

"We also stress the crucial role of healthy marine ecosystems, sustainable fisheries, and sustainable aquaculture for food security and nutrition, and in providing for the livelihoods of millions of people" (§113)

Ocean issues in the context of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in Areas beyond national jurisdiction are also at the heart of the discussions of the *Ad Hoc Open-ended*

Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction (BBNJ WG), established by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2004. The BBNJ discusses: marine genetic resources, including questions on the sharing of benefits; area-based management tools, including marine protected areas; environmental impact assessments; capacity-building and the transfer of technology. In this context, in 2011, a process was started with the view to ensuring that the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction effectively address the above issues. Subsequent to the wide range of discussions, the BBNJ is expected to make recommendations to the 69th Session of the UNGA on the scope, parameters and feasibility of a possible international instrument under UNCLOS, under which these issues would be regulated. Importantly, the discussions within the BBNJ WG have focused on the question whether the current governance frameworks for ocean governance show implementation gaps or whether there is a regulatory gap, which might be addressed by the development of a new implementing agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

In order to showcase a good example of collaboration and implementation of existing governance mechanisms, a proposal to address the above, based on an initiative from the Norwegian ministries for environment and for fisheries respectively, was prepared by UNEP and FAO focusing on developing the concept of an approach and a mechanism for collaboration, including testing in a pilot area on a subregional level in the western part of Africa.

This project plan concept was thereupon approved by the Government of Norway, which is funding the initiative.

During the project preparation phase (Phase 0), UNEP in collaboration with FAO and other partners intend to achieve the following:

1. A review and sharing of lessons learned on a coordinated effort by regional seas and regional fishery bodies and on proposed approaches and mechanisms to build foundations for Ocean fish food security, including ecological foundations; To this end, background material will be prepared, including an analysis of the modalities as well the causes for successes and failures in the cooperation between existing Regional Fisheries Bodies and Regional Seas Programmes;
2. Identification of main issues and activities in and between the relevant regional seas programmes and regional fishery bodies that can form the basis for strengthened collaboration, based on lessons learned, including from other initiatives such as LME initiatives, and from for example approved fisheries management plans;
3. Plan and recommend on the scope, scale, timing and the nature of technical content (types of activities) of a larger project including pilot project(s) to be implemented with key partner RFBs and RSP within West, Central and Southern Africa; and
4. Identification of institutional, programme and legal frameworks for cooperation between the relevant Regional Seas Programme and RFB(s), and possibly proposed joint action/initiative, including at national level.

FAO and UNEP already collaborate on some initiatives in West Africa, including on the Canary Current and Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystems projects. In the Canary Current LME (CCLME), the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department is collaborating with UNEP and the Abidjan Convention Regional Coordinating Unit in the execution of the project in close

collaboration with RFBs such as the Sub-regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC) and the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF).

To start addressing the above tasks an initial project-scoping meeting was organised at Ivotel, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, during 15-17 July 2014. The meeting was conducted in two languages: English and French. The following organisations were represented at the meeting: UNEP, FAO, Government of Norway, GRID-Arendal, OSPAR, NEAFC, FCWC, COREP, SRFC, CECAF, and Abidjan Convention secretariat (see Appendix 1 for the list of participants). The meeting was co-chaired by Abou Bamba of the Abidjan Convention and Kossi Sedzro, Togo, the current chair of the Scientific Sub-committee of CECAF. The background note and agenda for the meeting can be found in Appendix 2. All presentations made at the meeting can be accessed through the web site: [Abidjan workshop presentations](#)

1.2 Welcome remark and opening statements

The Regional Coordinator of the Abidjan Convention welcomed participants.

The representative of the government of Norway indicated that the assumption on which the project is based is that good ocean health contributes to healthy fisheries, which in turn contributes to food security in the region. He mentioned that coordination at the regional and at the national level of activities is crucial to avoid duplication and conflicts. The government of Norway would like to support the regional organizations related to marine environment and fisheries to facilitate enhanced collaboration, starting first in the countries bordering the Atlantic coast of Africa.

The representative of FAO and UNEP welcomed the initiative and stressed that RFBs and RS have complimentary mandates that can support the planned initiative. FAO described that fisheries management has evolved tremendously over the last decade, noting the uptake of the EAF, which strives to strike a sustainable balance between human benefits and ecosystem health, noting that in the long run maximum human benefits can only be maintained if natural resources are maintained and impacts are controlled.

1.3 Meeting objective and structure

The objective and structure of the Scoping Meeting was placed in the context of the broader FAO/UNEP/Norway initiative, which has as its goal: productive and sustainable oceans by securing the ecological foundations for fish food security through ecosystem based management and strengthening collaboration between Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) and Regional Seas (RS). It was noted that this meeting was the first step in a long-term process (5+ years) to build cooperation between RS and RFBs in support of improved management as a contribution to food security. The project will start in West Africa and if it succeeds, it can be up-scaled and expanded to other regions.

The objectives of the Project Preparation Phase were highlighted: sharing lessons learned from regional organizations cooperation experiences; identification of main issues and activities for strengthened collaboration; and of modalities for cooperation. In particular this scoping meeting was to define the scope and scale of the project, possible thematic and geographic areas of collaboration and associated pilot selection criteria and modalities of cooperation. This

would be done by discussing elements of and modalities for improved collaboration in support of securing foundations for food security between regional seas programmes and regional fishery bodies. The presentation of the meeting objectives and structure can be found on the web site: [Abidjan workshop presentations](#)

2. Regional organizations and examples of collaboration including through projects

2.1 Presentations by West and Central African Regional Organizations

The representatives of regional organizations present (COREP; FCWC; SRFC; CECAF; Abidjan Convention) as well as of the Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem project (CCLME), presented along the following items:

- Background: geographic focus and members;
- Structure and mechanisms of work;
- Thematic areas of work, main activities;
- Existing partnerships and existing collaborative mechanisms;
- Key emerging issues with focus on food security and environmental issues;
- Views on improved collaboration with other organizations covering thematic areas and possible collaborative mechanisms;
- Application of EAF;

The presentations showed among others: the overlap of competence areas of many bodies; the shared membership, at least in part, among bodies; the advisory nature of most bodies, although in many cases advice is related to management; the collaborative efforts on cooperation among some bodies, including through MoUs and participation in respective meetings, as well as the coordinating role of some bodies. Areas of work reported on included: policy harmonization; improved fisheries management; capacity building; EAF; IUU; MCS; scientific advice; support to decision making, data and information compilation and collection. In relation to coordination, most bodies reported on formal and informal arrangements and one (CECAF) reported on providing an informal role for cooperation among the RFBs. Most bodies reported on the application of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) addressing not only target stocks, but broader impacts of fisheries and external factors. The presentation on the Abidjan Convention outlined the broad thematic area of work, including pollution, land based and oil and gas issues as well as natural resource management. It furthermore indicated the establishment of MoUs with some RFBs. The Abidjan Convention mentioned that it is a co-executing agency of the CCLME.

Several of the presentations illustrated that their organization already was working jointly with other regional bodies, either on same projects like CCLME or have entered into a MoU. A common nominator was the apparent links between fisheries and ecosystem issues and how that is linked to the issue of fish and food security, and how a regional cooperation approach can give benefits in this respect.

All presentations are available on: [Abidjan workshop presentations](#)

2.2 Presentations on OSPAR and NEAFC, EAF-Nansen and GRID Arendal

The representatives of OSPAR and NEAFC shared their experience in developing a successful collaborative arrangement between the two organizations. The representatives acknowledged that the collaboration was difficult in the beginning, but mentioned that their perseverance had

been rewarded in the form of an effective cooperation model, based on a MoU and characterized by formal and informal collaboration. The representatives indicated that their cooperative model is based on a clear mutual understanding of and respect for the mandates and work of the other body.

The representative of FAO presented the next phase of the EAF Nansen Project, which is expected to start in 2016, when the new vessel will be available. The new EAF NANSEN program will focus on the continued implementation of EAF, supporting the development of sound management strategies, including provision of the necessary knowledge base, with an added focus on climate change and pollution.

A representative of GRID Arendal, as a partner with UNEP in this initiative, described their view on key environmental and food security issues in the region including key features of the fisheries in the region, including their importance for food security and national economies. He also addressed impacts from fisheries and other activities on the marine environment. It was agreed that further information was needed to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the environmental impacts and of fisheries to accompany the project proposal, based on among others, FAO statistics and data.

2.3 Plenary discussion on regional organizations' work in relation to food security and environment

Discussions focused on a number of issues related mainly to fisheries, and partly to the interface environment-fisheries. Participants discussed among others: the need to focus on issues related to food security and its link with environmental changes in particular; the importance of capacity building activities; socio-economic aspects of fisheries; the increasing interest in fisheries by organizations that have not traditionally dealt with it, in particular regional economic organizations; the importance of sharing of fisheries data and statistics; fish food safety and the interface with pollution and environmental issues, including oil spills; increasing demand for fish and the development of market prices of fish; mariculture; the importance of artisanal fisheries; green investments in food security and sustainable development; Need to consider the youth and their unemployment in interventions but only if they are willing/motivated to stay in the sector; creating wealth in the value chain of seafood may contribute to generating increased incomes so jobs are created along the change helping to reduce poverty and food security.

There was considerable interest in how RFBs and Regional Seas Programs could co-operate, and which areas of co-operation would be the most important to the fisheries/food security concept. There was a general consensus amongst the participants that there were many areas for close co-operation and joint action that would benefit both fisheries and general ecosystem concerns, which in its turn would benefit the Ocean's fish production ability, and thus contribute more to regional and global food security.

Participants also discussed the need to include in the process representatives of the different LME projects, and noted the absence of a representative of the BCC (who was invited by could not attend) and GCLME (which was not represented since the GEF implementation project is still in the PIF development stage).

3. Modalities for collaboration

In the morning of day 2, the participants split up into two break out groups and discussed modalities of collaboration, guided by four questions, as set out below:

1. *How can collaboration facilitate achieving your organization's goals and how can the other organization contribute to achieving your goals?*

- Clear understanding of the mandates, functioning and role of the other organizations
- Acknowledge that despite differences, the other organizations may have complimentary objectives and roles
- Need for defining common issues of concern and for:
 - a. establishing formal and informal communication and information sharing mechanisms to inform other organizations of relevant organizations;
 - b. jointly addressing common issues of concern, where relevant;
 - c. including areas of concern identified by other organizations in the work programmes, where relevant to mandate;
 - d. harmonizing policies and developing common standards where applicable;
- Strengthen the linkage between regional and national processes and activities
- Need to strengthen collaboration among RFBs

The following thematic areas were then discussed in this context:

- Fisheries and aquaculture impacts on the environment;
- Introduction of exotic species;
- Shared stocks;
- EAF in particular through involvement in EAF working groups;
- Research and data collection, scientific advice, and sharing of data;
- Marine spatial planning, ICM, MPAs (RAMPAC);
- Protection of certain species;
- Survey work (EAF Nansen)
- Pollution standards relevant for fisheries;
- Valuation studies on the value of environment for fisheries;
- Awareness raising on habitat protection and environment;
- Collaboration on fisheries access agreements;
- Capacity development for fisheries access agreements (UOMIRA)

2. *What do you and the other organization need to do to facilitate cooperation at regional and national level?*

- At the regional level, strengthen exchange and information mechanisms between RFBs and RSP, and encourage the participation in meetings of the other bodies (as observers);
- At national level, address lack of communication and understanding between on the one hand focal points of the Abidjan Convention and on the other hand the fisheries focal points, for awareness raising and information exchange as well as for developing, where possible, common goals. The strengthening of communication should build, as much as possible, on:

- a. existing mechanisms, such as inter-ministerial commissions and others (e.g. EAF commissions, Abidjan Convention implementation commissions, LME commissions);
- b. strengthening efficiency of already existing commissions;

3. *What are the challenges to cooperating with the other organizations including your internal processes; what would those internal processes look like?*

- Misunderstanding of the roles and mandates of other organizations;
- Mismatch of programming cycle.
- Insufficient interactions and coordination among RFBs;
- Lack of opportunities for feed back for countries to react on reports and outcomes from regional processes (e.g. reports and studies);
- Internal processes of regional organizations: human resource capacity; financing; procedures; internal functioning

4. *What would the mechanisms used to facilitate cooperation contain?*

- Acknowledging the already existing mechanisms, such as MoUs between some organizations, and some level of informal cooperation, there is need to strengthen cooperation at both levels: informally and formally
- An appropriate legal format needs to be identified (e.g. MoU), which should contain detailed ToRs that go beyond the level of detail usually provided in a MoU. The legal instrument should address, among others: timing and revision, financing. It should provide a description of mandates of organizations involved, as well as on areas of collaboration, and the collaboration mechanism to be used, including e.g.: establishment of working groups; participation in meetings.

4. Key environmental and food security issues

In the afternoon of day 2, the participants split up into two break out groups and discussed key environmental and food security issues, guided by three questions, as set out below.

- a. Impacts of fisheries on ecosystems: how can RFBs and RS contribute?
- b. What are the main environmental issues that affect fisheries (food security)?
- c. What above priorities can RFBs and RSPs work on?

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