MINUTES 25th MEETING

IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE OF THE MAHÉ PLATEAU TRAP AND LINE FISHERY CO-MANAGEMENT PLAN

Seychelles Trading Company Conference Room
Victoria, Mahe
Thursday 18th July 2024

Introduction

The 25th meeting of the Implementation Committee for the Co-Management Plan (ICCP) of the Mahé Plateau demersal trap and line fishery was held at the Seychelles Trading Company Conference Room in Victoria, Seychelles, on the 19th of September 2024.

Opening to the meeting

Mr. Roy Clarisse, Principal Secretary (PS), Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries and the Blue Economy (MFBE) opened the meeting, welcomed the participants and asked for introductions from attendees.

Adoption of the Agenda

The meeting proceeded with the chairperson, Mr Roy Clarisse, PS, Department of Fisheries, MoFBE. The approved agenda is presented in **Appendix 1.** The list of documents circulated in advance of the meeting is in **Appendix 2**.
The meeting had an attendance of 22, consisting 10 ICCP members and two (2) other stakeholders or observers. Participants were at liberty to use any of the three national languages. The list of participants is in **Appendix 3**.

DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE LAST MEETING

Ms Elisa Radegonde, Assistant-Manager, Fisheries Resource Management (SFA) and the representative of the ICCP Secretariat presented the progress documented in the working paper ICCP25/WD/2.

This document covers key updates since the 24th ICCP meeting, held on July 18, 2024. Major developments include:

Communication Campaign:
A three (3)-month campaign promoting sustainable fisheries using digital platforms, including eight promotional videos and a documentary was discussed.

Release Ruler Initiative:
SFA will distribute calibrated rulers during license renewals to encourage compliance with fisheries regulations.

Legislation:
A revised bill regarding fisheries regulations is under review, with plans to resubmit to the National Assembly before the end of the year.

Fisheries Research:
Ongoing length sampling of key demersal species with some progress, but delays in finalizing the size-at-maturity studies.

Market Opportunities Working Group:
A working group has been established to explore market promotion for Mahe Plateau finfish products, with representation from SFA, the Ministry, and other stakeholders.

Dredging at English River:
A project to improve mooring facilities for fishing vessels is underway.

Workshops on Hygienic Fish Handling:
SFA organized workshops to enhance fish handling practices to improve market competitiveness.

SFA Anniversary and Rebranding:
SFA celebrated its 40th anniversary with rebranding and an exhibition highlighting sustainable fishing achievements.

Discussion:
An inquiry was made regarding the annual distribution of release rulers, emphasizing that these rulers would be provided upon the renewal of fishing licenses, a timeline perceived as excessively distant. The matter was deliberated, and alternative distribution locations were proposed, including the out offices located on Praslin and La Digue. Additionally, the offices of the Fishermen's Association were identified as a potential distribution point, particularly during the fuel claim period. It was suggested that a record be kept to track individuals who have already received a release ruler for monitoring purposes. Questions arose concerning the provision of rulers to recreational, chartered, sport fishermen, and processors, with the allocation system to be disclosed once finalized by the SFA. The committee chair also proposed the installation of metre rulers at point-of-sale locations, such as the SFA market, ensuring that arrangements are made for their placement at various outlets. The committee was updated on the availability of release rulers and the procedures for restocking them.

Additionally, inquiries were raised about the enforcement of hygienic practices in the sale of fishery products in collaboration with police services, although the idea of patrolling selling outlets is not currently under consideration. This topic will be addressed within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding between the SFA and the Police Department, which is presently concentrating on patrol activities.

Recommendations:

- The actions decided under the MoU between the police and the SFA take effect.
- To invite a member of the police department to attend ICCP meetings.

MCS MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE TO THE FISHERIES REGULATIONS 2021

1. Overview:

The Seychelles Fisheries Authority (SFA) focuses on monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) activities to ensure compliance with fisheries regulations. The report covers enforcement actions from 1st July to 31st August 2024 and includes recommendations from the prior ICCP meeting.

2. Introduction:

The report aims to provide updates on MCS activities related to the 2021 Fisheries Regulation. Despite staffing challenges, with two officers absent, recruitment is underway for two replacements, alongside capacity building measures.

Recommendations and Key Issues from the 24th Meeting:

Emphasis on resource shortages for enforcement and the need for enhanced community involvement in fisheries compliance.

Proposed MCS improvements include greater financial support, integration of cost-effective solutions, and targeted enforcement strategies.

3. Patrol Activities:

Regular sea and land patrols using various methods to monitor fishery compliance.

Summary of inspections and recorded infractions indicates several enforcement actions undertaken during the reporting periods.

4. Cost-Effective MCS Solutions:

In July 2024, a risk analysis of high vessel risk activity was commissioned to inform future patrols, emphasizing the importance of community reporting and engagement in managing fisheries.

5. MCS Action Plan and Compliance Encouragement:

The MCS approach seeks to involve fishers in decision-making and adapt tailored monitoring strategies for different fisheries to improve compliance and resource management.

6. MCS Structure:

The Enforcement Section consists of dedicated units for port control, surveillance, and post-harvest inspections, ensuring adherence to regulations from landing to consumption.

The report highlighted the ongoing efforts to manage and enforce sustainable fisheries practices within the Mahe Plateau, addressing existing challenges while encouraging community participation and resource allocation for better compliance outcomes.

Discussion:

The efficiency, resource and human capacity of the Enforcement unit was yet questioned, in which species confusions remained the issue. Introduction of spots fines were discussed in which it will be introduced upon approval of the new Fisheries Act.

Recommendations:

- It was recommended that poster differentiating the different red fish species be produced by the Research department to avoid the confusions and waste of resources and time.
- It is recommended that all fish processors keep a purchase document holding the record of sale to track whom they are purchasing from. The document should state the vessel license number, boat owner, and the type and number of species.
- It was recommended that cameras be placed in the different markets to identify offenders in which the technicalities of prosecuting an offender were discussed.
- Recommendation that enforcement officers be placed on Praslin and La Digue to curb offenses.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF FISHERIES REGULATIONS.

The Socio-economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) of the Mahe Plateau Trap and Line Fishery Co-Management Plan, introduced by the Fisheries (Mahe Plateau Trap and Line Fishery) Regulations 2021, evaluates the impacts on fishers in the demersal fisheries. The study included four components: artisanal fishers survey, semi-industrial vessel owners survey, public survey, and historical length frequency data analysis.

KEY FINDINGS:

- **Artisanal Fishers:**

Support for Measures: Most artisanal fishers supported the introduced measures, particularly the size limits on species like Emperor Red Snapper and Green Jobfish.

Impact on Fishing Practices: Many fishers were already releasing undersized fish before the regulations. However, trap fishers were more affected than line fishers.

Economic Losses: A financial loss analysis showed varied monthly revenue loss, with whalers experiencing the highest loss, followed by outboard and schooner fishers.

Compliance: Compliance with the regulations was high, with many fishers adhering due to concerns about legal consequences or seeing long-term benefits for fish stocks.

- **Semi-Industrial Vessel Owners:**

Minimal Impact: Vessel owners indicated minimal impact as demersal fish are not their primary target. Most fish for pelagic species, and demersal fishing is for personal consumption on board.

Support for Bag Limits: They supported the bag limit of 20 demersal fish per vessel per trip, as it did not interfere with their core activities.

- **Public Survey:**

Support for Regulations: Most members of the public supported the regulations, particularly size limits. However, there was limited awareness of other measures beyond size restrictions.

Minimal Socio-Cultural Impact: Less than 10% of respondents reported economic, social, or cultural impacts, though some recreational fishers felt disadvantaged by the bag limits.

Financial Impacts:

Realistic, Optimistic, and Pessimistic Scenarios: Financial losses varied across different fishing fleets under realistic, optimistic, and pessimistic scenarios. Losses ranged from SCR 431 to SCR 2,382 per month depending on the vessel type and catch size.

Legislative and Policy Recommendations:

The results indicated no need for immediate legislative changes. However, continued strengthening of fisheries management, especially in the second phase of the Mahe Plateau Trap and Line Fishery Co-Management Plan, was encouraged.

This assessment highlighted the balance between conservation measures and their socio-economic impacts, emphasizing the need for further engagement and adaptation as the management plan progresses.

Discussion:

Stakeholders inquired about the minimum size requirements for additional fish species, and it was clarified that the individuals advocating for the introduction of new measures were recent entrants to the fishing industry. Despite the prevailing assumption that there were no new young entrants in the fishing sector, this was not accurate; in fact, it was these newcomers who were proposing the implementation of alternative measures. They tend not to be too critical as compared with the older generation of fishers. There was a suggestion to extend length frequency monitoring programs at other sites instead of only at the fish processing facilities in which it was clarified that the sampling is done over a range of other landing sites in different districts. Access to A.M. radio was of a concern in which the possibility of liaising with the Seychelles Maritime Safety Administration was suggested as a means of acquiring safety measures.

Recommendations:

- Recommendations were to have more enforcement officers given that offender are responsive to their introduction.
- Information needs to be made available to fishers on the port.

CONSIDERATION OF IMPLEMENTATION OF PHASE 2 THE CO-MANAGEMENT PLAN.

Consideration of implementing the Second Phase of the Co-management plan (ICCP25-WD-4)

This document outlines the plan for implementing Phase 2 of the Mahe Plateau Trap and Line Fishery Co-management Plan:

Phase 1 Overview: Phase 1 included key conservation measures such as fleet restrictions, size limits, and seasonal closures. Initial results indicate positive impacts on fish stock recovery.

Socio-Economic Impacts: Artisanal fisheries faced challenges due to fleet restrictions but benefited from higher catch per unit effort.

Phase 2 Focus: This phase will address identified gaps, including updating regulations, strengthening compliance mechanisms, and improving stakeholder engagement.

Regulatory Adjustments: Updates to fishing licenses, gear restrictions, and surveillance systems are planned.

Capacity-Building: Training for enforcement officers and community outreach campaigns will be intensified to improve compliance.

Socio-Economic Considerations: Support for alternative livelihoods (e.g., eco-tourism) will be provided to ease economic impacts.

Timeline: Phase 2 will be rolled out over 12 months, with regulatory adjustments and community outreach in the first six months and a full review by the end of the period.

Discussion and Recommendations:

Reference was made with the recommendation from the seventh SAS meeting to the ICCP during the 24ICCP that **the committee moved cautiously into Phase II of the co-management plan** considering the challenges faced during the implementation of Phase I of the management plan. Consideration on the timeline adoption for the progression of the plan was requested to be considered or whether it should be modified. The enforcement of regulations pertaining to the trap fishery, particularly regarding the specified quantity and the ongoing challenges associated with trap tagging, was a significant concern that required thorough reassessment and evaluation prior to the potential implementation of Phase II measures.. **SFA to brief on the status of developing a licensing framework which has been prescribed in Phase II**. The prescribe measures of the Phase I were specified and the committee was asked to review them and to evaluate on their feasibility. Members of the

committee was in **agreement that there was no need in rushing into phase II** and **to wait until mid of next year to evaluate whether to proceed into moving in the next phase.**

The availability of funding to **conduct an independent consultancy to evaluate Phase I** of the co-management plan was expressed and this could be done at the beginning of next year (early Quarter 1) and **whether to move into Phase II based on the findings and recommendations**. Also, the consideration of waiting for the Fisheries Bill to be adopted which will allow certain measures concerning the enforcement of the plan. **The Committee was in agreement** of considering to proceed into phase II after the evaluation for the independent consultant in the middle of next year. **Education and awareness of certain measures should be intensified**. A request that a study be done on the Socio- economic study of sport fishery was requested and whether there was a possibility for sport fishers to sell their catch to be evaluated. It was expressed that the Fisheries Act 2014, restrict sports fishermen from selling their catch since they derive their benefits from their clients it is a government policy that they should not be competing with the commercial fishermen. The issue should have been a point of discussion in the stakeholder's consultation regarding the Fisheries Bill. There was reference made to a study undertaken by Advance Africa on the contribution from sports fishing, but no SIEA has been done in relation to the co-management plan. The report was on the past SFA webpage and it was **requested that the report be presented in the upcoming ICCP**.

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The issue of bait availability was raised and it was recommended that SFA liaise with the industrial fishing boat owners to have the bait sold with the commercial fishers at a reasonable price.

Phase II consideration:

- that Gainful Occupation Permit (GOP) workers be limited access to the coastal fishery resources given that they are wiping out the coastal resources using nets. There was clarification that there has been discussion with the Ministry of Employment, about the issue GOP for the foreign workers.
- Recreational fishermen should pay a license whereby it was clarified that the SFA is currently working on the licensing framework which should be in the second phase.
- It was explained that enforcing some measures should not await the start of phase II in which it was clarified that the MoU with the police Department will facilitate the enforcement of the measures.
- A mass was being organised by Stella Maris on 29th September regarding the 40th anniversary of tuna fishery in the Seychelles at the Cathedral at 9 a.m.

- **Next Meeting**

The 26th ICCP meeting will be held on Thursday, November 28, 2024, at the STC Conference Room, Latanier Road, Victoria.

Appendix 1

Agenda
PROVISIONAL AGENDA
Seychelles Trading Company (STC), Victoria,
Mahe
Thursday 19 September 2024:
1000-1400 Hrs
PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. **Opening to the Meeting**
   Remarks by the Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy (MFBE)/Seychelles Fishing Authority (SFA)
2. **Adoption of the agenda**
   To be moved by the Chairperson.
3. **Developments since the last meeting**
   *The ICCP will be briefed on the developments since the 24th ICCP meeting (*18th July *2024) including continuing fisher communications and other relevant matters from SFA and from the Secretariat.*
4. **MCS monitoring and compliance to the Fisheries Regulations 2021.**
   The SFA MCS Section will update the meeting on the results of patrols and enforcement actions undertaken since its last report to the 24th ICCP.
5. **Socio-economic assessment of the impact of fisheries regulations.**
   The assessment of the socio-economic impacts associated with the trap and line fishery co-management plan began in February 2022 and concluded in June 2024. This study aims to evaluate the effects of the regulatory measures, create scenarios to explore potential future changes, analyse stakeholder perceptions that could influence compliance, and identify strategies to mitigate the negative consequences of these measures. The results of the study will be presented to the ICCP for review.
6. **Consideration of implementation of Phase 2 the co-management plan.**
   The co-management plan is structured to be executed in two distinct phases over a period of 24 months, allowing for the prompt introduction of essential measures. Conversely, additional measures will be allocated the necessary time for thorough development prior to their implementation. It is imperative to assess the effectiveness of the conservation measures introduced in Phase 1, review stakeholder feedback, evaluate the socio-economic impact on the artisanal fisheries sector, and examine the required regulatory adjustments, capacity-building needs, and timeline for implementation.
7. **Other matters.**
8. **Date and place of the next meeting.**

Appendix 2

List of Documents circulated in advance of the meeting.

Working documents

ICCP25/WD/1.Agenda

ICCP25/WD/2.Developments since the last meeting

ICCP25/WD/3. MCS Monitoring and compliance to the Fisheries Regulations 2021

ICCP25 /WD/4. Consideration of implementation of Phase 2 the co-management plan.

Information documents

ICCP25/ID/1. List of Documents

ICCP25/ID/2 Minutes of the 20th ICCP meeting of 25 May 2023

ICCP25/ID/3 Terms of Reference for the Working Group to Assess Market Opportunities and Promote Finfish Products from the Mahe Plateau.

Appendix 3

List of Participants

Members, other Stakeholders and Secretariat

Members	
Rodney Nicole	Bel Ombre Fishermen Association
Ray Payet	Lasosyasyon Peser La Digue
Darell Green	Praslin Fishermen Association
Jean- Claude Hoareau	Fishtech
Shantilal Dhanjee	Hire Craft (Fishing) Representative
Kevin Moumou	Min of Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment (MACCE)
Faizal Suleman	Recreational Fisher Representative
Terrence Labrosse, Neddy Labrosse	Roche Caiman Fishers Association
Phillippe Michaud	Consultant, (MOFBE)
Roy Clarisse	Department of Fisheries (MOFBE)
Other Stakeholders / Observers	
Jude Bijoux	Fisheries Consultant, Managing Director Fisheries and Marine Consultancy Services
Albert Napier	National Coordinator Stella Maris
Secretariat	
Elisa Radegonde	Assistant-Manager, Resource Management (SFA)
Alison Hoareau	Fisheries Officer, Resource Management (SFA)
Joanne Lucas	Fisheries Officer, Resource Management (SFA)
Daniel Bristol	Fisheries Officer, Resource Management (SFA)
Stephanie Hollanda	Principal Fisheries Scientist, Research (SFA)
Betty Victor	Senior Technical Coordinator, Technical Coordination Unit (SFA)
Sharif Antoine	Senior Economist, Statistics & Fisheries Economics Department (SFA)
Barbara Hoareau	Senior Liaison Officer (SFA)
Vincent Lucas	Head of Department, Fisheries Resource Management & Technical Coordination Department (SFA)
Ronny Malvina	Assistant Manager, Enforcement (SFA)
Absent with excuse	
Wilna Accouche	Green Island Foundation (GIF)

Absent	
Mervin Dugasse	Seychelles Sports Fishing Clubs (SSFC)
Nancy Onginjo Ramkalawan	Seychelles Boat Owners and Fishermen Association (SFBOA)