

Sea Cucumber Management Advisory Committee (MAC) Meeting
SFA Conference Room
Fishing Port Victoria
Minutes of Meeting
Tuesday 10th February 2026, 13h30HRS

In attendance:

No.	Name	Organization/Position
1	Paul Morin	AMSSI Chairman
2	Naron Payet	AMSSI Vice Chairman
3	Ramsamy Pillay	AMSSI Member
4	Patrick Portlouis	AMSSI Member
5	Gino Lespoir	AMSSI Member
6	Gaetan Payet	AMSSI Member
7	Vincent Lucas	SFA (HOD F.R.M ¹)
8	Elisa Radegonde	SFA (F. R.M)
9	Mellissa Joseph	SFA (F. R.M)
10	Sabrena Lawrence	SFA (Research)
11	Dainise Quatre	SFA (Research)
12	Roddy Allisop	SFA (HOD MCS ²)
13	Freddy Lesperance	SFA (MCS, Enforcement)
14	Sharon Roselie	SFA (MCS, Enforcement)
15	Diane Ernesta	SFA (MCS, Enforcement)
16	Isha Coopoosamy	SFA (MCS, License)

Fisheries Resource Management (F.R.M)

Agenda

1. Welcome and opening remarks.
2. Adoption of Agenda
3. Seychelles Sea Cucumber Industry-Way Forward beyond the 2025/2026 Season
4. Quota Redistribution Mechanisms
5. Sea Cucumber Fisheries in the JMA Areas-Proposed Way forward
6. Skipper's Validation processes
7. AOB
8. Next Steps & Closing remarks.
- 9.

¹ Fisheries Resource Management

² Monitoring Control and Surveillance

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks/Purpose of the Meeting

The chairperson (Mr. Vincent Lucas) Welcomed the members emphasizing that the meeting was long overdue, delayed by changes in administration. Members were thanked for their continued engagement with the MAC process.

2. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was presented and it was proposed that agenda Items 3 and 5 be discussed together as they are related. With this change, the agenda was adopted.

3. Seychelles Sea Cucumber Industry–Way Forward Beyond the 2025/2026 Season

5. Sea Cucumber Fisheries in the JMA Areas–Proposed Way Forward

- i. Based on the latest survey conducted by the SFA's research team, members were briefed on the recommendations regarding the future of the fishery, including the possibility of closure and implementing a stock rebuilding plan. As previously agreed, the fishery would be opened for the 2025-2026 fishing season; however, Pentard (Flower Teatfish) would no longer be targeted the following season. Members noted that, given the economic importance of Pentard, this decision could effectively amount to a complete closure of the fishery. In this context, it was proposed that Government be approached to explore possible support mechanism for the industry's smooth transition.
- ii. Industry members acknowledged that the survey results highlight serious concerns regarding the status of Pentard stocks, while also noting that a full closure of the fishery would have significant implications for the sector. It was suggested by members that the industry may have reached a stage where operations in the Saya de Malha area could be considered, while recognising that some species in this area have not previously been targeted. Members agreed on the need to maintain an appropriate balance between economic continuity and stock sustainability, and to avoid repeating past patterns of overexploitation.
- iii. It was agreed that AMSSI and SFA would work towards developing a joint position on the way forward within two months, ahead of any potential closure of the fishery. It was reiterated that management discussions on this matter have been ongoing for several years and emphasised on the importance of ensuring that future decisions are guided by best available scientific advice.
- iv. Industry members noted that, in the event of a closure of the outer islands fishery, the southern islands would remain unfished, which could increase the risk of poaching by foreign fishers. It was therefore proposed that operators be permitted to undertake at least one trip to the southern island's region. Concerns were also raised regarding

Kokonm, with members indicating that it is not currently being effectively targeted and that existing fishing methods are not yielding product of satisfactory quality. The viability of limiting access to a single trip to the southern islands was discussed as per observation from previous years. It was stated that only one or two vessels had operated in that area. The possibility of sustainably exploiting alternative species was also raised for consideration.

- v. Concerns were raised regarding the governance arrangements of the Joint Management Area (JMA) following the conclusion of Mr Philippe Michaud's term. Members also noted that the mandate of the JMA committee expired last year and that the committee is currently non-operational. Members were informed that an update on the matter would be provided on 19 February 2026. It was proposed that an industry representative be included on the JMA committee. In response, it was clarified that JMA is governed under a bilateral arrangement between the two Parties and therefore does not provide for direct industry representation. However, where necessary, a technical working group could be established to support the Committee's functions and facilitate broader input.
- vi. Members also sought clarity on future management responsibility for the JMA. It was emphasized that a comprehensive scientific survey must be undertaken prior to the initiation of any commercial operations. Furthermore, any initial operations should be conducted on an exploratory basis, with clearly defined criteria established before consideration is given to transitioning to commercial exploitation.
- vii. In terms of immediate possible options, industry members identified the following possible pathway:
 - a. Full or partial closure of the fishery.
 - b. Transition to alternative livelihoods or industries.
 - c. Identification of other species that could be sustainably exploited, noting that scientific advice indicates that the three (3) main commercial species require a rebuilding plan.
- viii. Industry members observed that the same vessels consistently fail to fully utilise their allocated quotas each year. It was suggested that licences of underperforming vessels be reviewed, pointing out it can help in reducing the Pentard quota or that certain areas could be closed off, as potential management measures.
- ix. It was agreed that AMMSI would prepare a formal position paper outlining industry proposals and options for the future of the fishery. A meeting would then be convened with the Ministry of Fisheries, Agriculture and Blue Economy, Ministry of Finance, and SRC, to discuss possible support measures based on this position paper. In the interim, the industry would continue internal discussions while JMA governance issues are addressed. Members were also informed that SFA is preparing an internal position paper on the socio-economic impacts of a potential closure and possible mitigation measures.

- x. Industry members also enquired about the status of the sea cucumber aquaculture project. It was stated that the research is ongoing and more information will be provided.

4. Quota Redistribution Mechanisms

Industry members indicated that the current quota redistribution mechanism has become an operational constraint and proposed that the system be discontinued. It was reported that, following AMSSI's AGM, members noted that between three weeks and one month may be lost each season while awaiting the quota redistribution, particularly during the previous season.

SFA explained that the redistribution mechanism was introduced to improve operational efficiency and to address instances where allocated quotas were not fully utilised by certain vessels. While industry representatives recognised the rationale for maximisation of opportunities underpinning this measure, they reiterated concerns regarding the delays associated with the process and its impact on fishing operations and profitability.

6. Skippers' Validation Process

Members noted that skippers are not guaranteed insurance coverage if they do not hold a recognised and credible licence. The industry enquired whether a formal training course could be developed to provide appropriate certification. It was noted that discussions have already been initiated with SMSA, the Blue Economy Department, and SMA.

It was agreed that a structured practical training and certification programme for skippers should be developed. However, an initial assessment is required to determine how many individuals currently require such certification.

7. Any Other Business (AOB)

- i. A tentative date for the next MAC meeting was discussed and proposed for the 3rd March 2026
- ii. It was agreed that the AMSSI position paper would be reviewed at the next meeting.
- iii. Members agreed that the composition of the MAC membership should be reviewed.

8. Next Steps and Closing Remarks

Key outcomes of the meeting were summarised, including the preparation of the AMSSI position paper, the need to JMA governance issues, and the importance of basing future decisions on best available scientific advice.

The industry also proposed appointing a focal person to act as a liaison between MAC and SFA on operational matters. Ms. Mellissa Joseph from Fisheries Resource Management department was appointed to take on this role.

Members were thanked for their constructive contributions and the meeting was closed.