



**Workshop on the implementation of the FAO guidelines for the  
management of deep-sea fisheries in the high seas  
Busan, Republic of Korea, May 10 -12, 2010**

**A note by the Secretariat**

NEAFC was invited to participate in this workshop, with the following agenda items.

**The FAO Guidelines and the programme**

- Overview of FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas and the FAO Programme

**Management and conservation in areas where a competent RFMO/A is in existence**

- **Presentation:** Ross Shotton

management and conservation issues - monitoring and research, management measures, and enforcement and compliance, etc. – in relation to the FAO Guidelines. Identification of major challenges and solutions. - Conclusions and recommendations

**Protection of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs)**

- **Presentation:** Jake Rice

protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems – identification, mitigation of adverse impacts, encounter protocols, VME database, etc – in relation to the FAO International Guidelines.

- **Discussion on the implementation of the guidelines:**

Identification of major challenges and solutions

**Management and conservation where there are no competent RFMO/As**

- **Presentation:** Dave Japp

management and conservation issues in relation to the FAO Guidelines where no RFMO/A is in place

- **Discussion on the implementation of the guidelines:**

**Adoption of key recommendations and conclusions**

The following points were made in discussions.

We should concentrate on what has been done and what has succeeded, where the gaps are and where improvements can be made.



The Guidelines were found to be very prescriptive and some scientists involved in drafting them seemed to think that the objective should be to reach pristine status. The objective must be sustainable use, and the criteria should be linked to recovery periods.

Experience in the Indian Ocean shows that rights-based deep sea fisheries in the high seas is the way, a common sense and proportionate approach. The contrast between the high principles and approaches and transparency and the reality and practical problems in many of these fisheries is striking. All fisheries are special cases and generalisation and ideological approaches are not feasible.

Deep sea fisheries for economic reasons have to be profitable, because they are capital intensive. They are easy to follow from the fishing areas to ports.

Deep sea fisheries are candidates for management by effort control, technical gear regulation and area closures. We are talking of a limited number of vessels that can easily be monitored. Status and trends in stocks can be monitored separately as can technical creep.

- Impact assessments on the ecosystem
- Stock assessments and fleet assessments.
- Performance of the fisheries socially and economically.

We have to give the vessels the right incentives in order to make data from the deep seas fisheries available to assessment and management and mapping VMEs.

Deep sea fisheries are seen as very minor in the North Atlantic. Governments are, therefore, not prepared to fund expensive surveys, but have to rely on fisheries data which may not be sufficient for giving relevant advice to governments. Advice has to be based on rather patchy and dispersed data

The guidelines do not give guidance on how we get from evaluation to risk assessment.

The impact assessments deal with footprints and stop before bringing in the species involved and the gear type influence involved. That will be needed to make assessments of risk and severity of impacts.

It is a general principle that impact assessments mainly apply to areas where new activities are planned.

If there is a valid assessment of a fished area that concludes that there are no features that are in risk of serious adverse impact on VMEs there should not be any risk assessment. If fisheries resources are assessed is there a need for impact assessments and risk assessment? Impact assessments have to be gear specific.

The definition of VMEs is not clear at all. Is it the density of certain species? What is the trigger to set in motion encounter procedures?



Is it necessary to protect every coral, or it is ok to set aside some areas to protect a proportion? As the only entities that have closed areas without strict definition of VMEs, NEAFC and New Zealand have significant concentrations, but on general principles of protecting representative areas.

The use of peer reviewed literature to solve the scientific problems was questioned. There is a problem with timeliness and the most prestigious journals are not interested in this kind of applied science. The scientific structures of RFMOs are more adequate, but could benefit from cooperation on solutions of common problems.

The FAO report from the meeting will be published later this year. NEAFC and NAFO were the only Regional Fishery organisations attending the meeting.