

Project Evaluation Series

**Terminal evaluation of the
ABNJ Deep-Sea project
“Sustainable fisheries management and
biodiversity conservation of deep-sea
living marine resources and ecosystems
in the areas beyond national jurisdiction”**

**Project code: GCP/GLO/366/GFF
GEF ID: 4660**

**Annex 2. Management measures
adopted by RFMO/As to protect VMEs and biodiversity**

1. The ABNJ Deep-Sea fisheries project provides a useful page on Regional Fisheries Bodies with a definition of their roles (the beginning of the second paragraphs is misleading, the mandates of most RFMO/As are not limited to deep-sea fisheries in their areas, but also cover pelagic fisheries), when they started operation and whether their decisions are binding or advisory.

Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization

2. NAFO is the successor of the International Commission for Northwest Atlantic Fisheries (ICNAF). The ICNAF Convention was signed in 1949 and the first meeting was held in 1951. With the extension of jurisdiction to 200 nm in the late 1970s, ICNAF was replaced by NAFO whose Convention was adopted in 1978 and came into force in 1979 (amended in 1980, 1987, 1996 and 2007).
3. The NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures (CEM) incorporate all NAFO measures in force as adopted by the Commission. The NAFO CEM are revised every year.
4. The 2007 Conservation and Enforcement Measures and those in previous years (did not mention deep-sea fisheries nor did it contain measures directed at deep-sea fisheries, but from 2008 onwards, there is a chapter dealing with bottom fisheries in the NAFO Regulatory Area with articles dealing with i) purpose and definitions (implementation of effective measures to prevent significant adverse impacts of bottom fishing activities on vulnerable marine ecosystems), ii) identification of existing bottom fishing areas (mapping of footprint in 2008), iii) bottom fishing activities in new fishing areas (to be conducted under exploratory fishery protocol), iv) assessment of bottom fishing (Scientific Council to evaluate proposed new fishing activity), v) encounters with vulnerable marine ecosystems (members must report data on VMEs) and vi) review (these measures in the 2008 CEM were to be reviewed in 2011). In 2009, article 4 dealing with assessment of bottom fishing and 5 dealing with encounters were expanded considerably. In 2011, Article 2 gave a table gave the boundary points of the footprint in the NAFO Regulatory Area, essentially the so-called nose and tail of the Newfoundland Grand Banks.
5. During 2008-2011, measures dealing with bottom fisheries in the NAFO Regulatory Area were covered in Chapter Ibis of the Conservation and Enforcement Measures. From 2012 onwards, they were covered in a new Chapter II. A new Article (16) was added covering Seamount, Coral and Sponge Protection Zones. In 2013, three new articles were incorporated on i) management measures in exploratory fishing to protect VMEs, ii) evaluation of exploratory fishing activities, and iii) reassessment of bottom fishing activities.
6. In 2014, the Conservation and Enforcement Measures document adopts a new format that will remain unchanged to this date. In that year, the VME recommendation was a merging and overhaul of earlier VME recommendations applied in 2005, 2007 and 2008. The Commission then adopted NEAFC's first more general/comprehensive measures on bottom fishing in its Regulatory Area (Recommendation 13/2009). This was comprehensively updated in 2014. NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures are regularly evaluated and improved as seen necessary. By 2019, NAFO is considered to have a complete set of effectively implemented conservation and management measures to protect VMEs and Chapter II is now appropriately labelled: Protection of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs) in the Regulatory Area from Bottom Fishing Activities. The name of the chapter was changed in 2015.

North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission

7. The NEAFC Convention was first adopted in 1959, coming into force in 1963. Similar to the Northwest Atlantic, with the extension of jurisdiction by coastal states, a new Convention was adopted in 1980 and came into force in 1982 (amended in 2004 and 2006).
8. NEAFC adopted its first recommendation for the protection of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems in 2014 amended in 2015 and again in 2018. The recommendation defines i) existing fishing areas (article 4) based on fishing activities over 1987-2007 ii) closed areas to protect VMEs (article 5) iii) an exploratory fishing protocol (article 6), iv) how exploratory fishing activities will be assessed (article 7), v) what to do when possible VMEs are encountered (article 8), vi) thresholds for action (article 9), vii) a calendar to review the recommendation (article 10), and viii) identifies previous recommendations that have been repealed.
9. In addition, NEAFC has adopted specific recommendations to protect Chimearas, deep-sea rays, deep-sea sharks, blue ling, spurdog as well as other general and species specific recommendations.

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean

10. The Agreement was adopted in 1949 and came into force in 1952 (amended in 1963, 1976, 1997 and 2014).
11. Fishery management in the Mediterranean and Black Seas, the area of competence of GFCM faces sizable challenges due, among others, to the differences in capacity of its member states. Nevertheless, GFCM has achieved considerable progress in the last decade or so to implement data collection and data analyses programs that have allowed it to adopt a number of decisions. The limits of EEZs in the Mediterranean are not agreed and, until recently, the data collection system did not allow to identify the precise geographical location of deep-sea fisheries. The ABNJ Deep-Sea project has helped GFCM members understand their obligations with respect to deep-sea fisheries. GFCM has recently created a permanent working group on vulnerable marine ecosystems (GFCM/41/2017/4) which will facilitate the implementation of the FAO Guidelines for deep-sea fisheries in the high seas in its area of competence.

The Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement

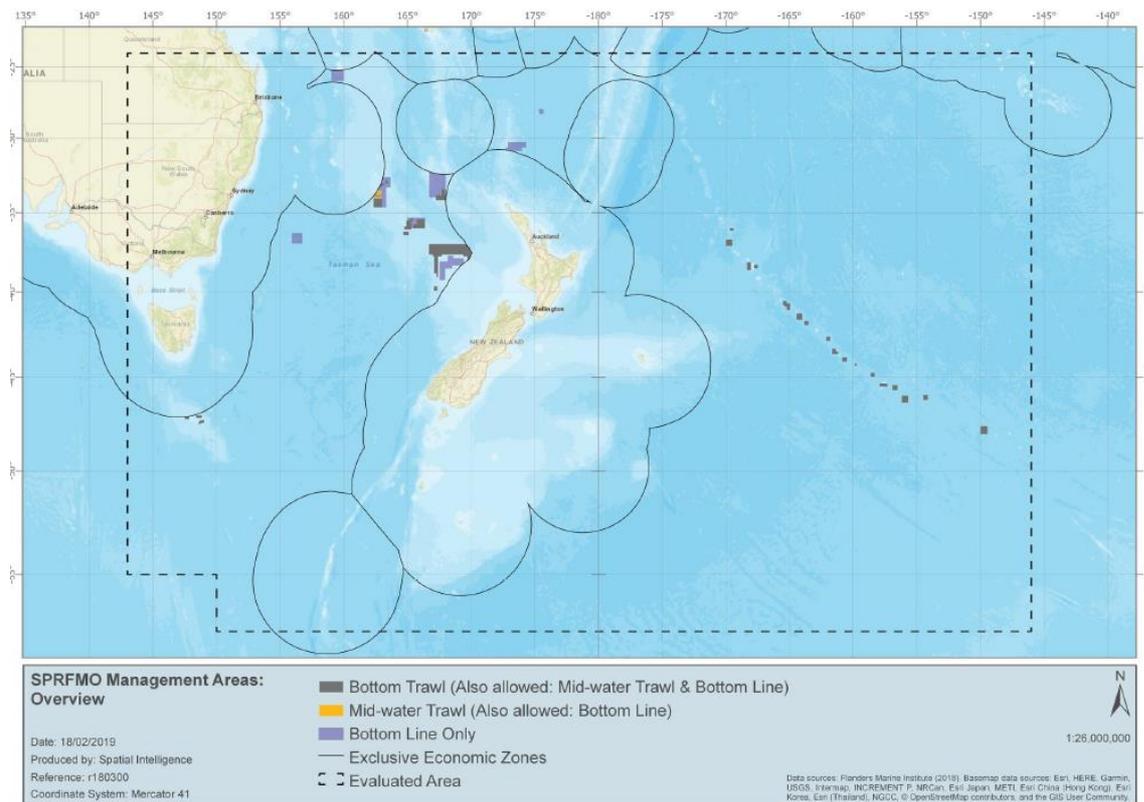
12. The SIOFA Agreement was adopted in 2006 and came into force in 2012 with the first meeting of the Parties taking place in October 2013. In 2016, SIOFA CMM 2016/01 for Interim Management of Bottom Fishing, required each SIOFA Contracting Party, CNCPs and PFEs undertaking bottom fishing activity in the Agreement Area to disclose at the Fourth Meeting of the Parties held in 2017, measures established in accordance with the provisions set out in para 9(1) relating to interim bottom fishing measures.

The North Pacific Fisheries Commission

13. The FAO table states that the Convention was adopted in 2012 and came into force in 2015.
14. The first Conservation and Management Measures appear to have been adopted in 2016. Measures to protect VMEs in the NW and NE Pacific Ocean were adopted in 2019.

The South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO)

15. The SPRFMO Convention was adopted in 2010 and came into force in 2012. A Conservation and Management Measure on bottom fishing adopted in 2019 includes protection of VMEs. This CMM identifies where different fishing gears (bottom trawl, midwater trawl, bottom line) are allowed to fish. Fishing outside these areas should be undertaken following an exploratory fishery protocol. The CMM also covers by-catches of marine mammals, seabirds, reptiles and other species of concern. The bottom trawl fishing areas account for a very small proportion of the Convention Area.



Source: SPRFMO. Corresponds to United Nations World Map (2020)

The South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation

16. SEAFO is the oldest of the new RFMO/As. The Convention was adopted in 2001 and came into force in 2003. SEAFO adopted Conservation and Management Measures to improve conservation of sharks in 2006, to reduce sea turtles mortality in 2009, to reduce incidental catches of seabirds in 2012, and to protect VMEs in 2015. There has been very limited fishing activity, if at all, in recent years in the SEAFO Convention area.

The Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources

17. The Convention was adopted in 1982 and came into force in 1982.
18. The Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) has a wider mandate than the management of fisheries only. The objective of the CCAMLR is the conservation of Antarctic marine living resources, including their rational use. The Convention applies conservation principles that are based on the maintenance of ecological relationships between harvested, dependent and associated species, and the

prevention or minimization of irreversible changes to the marine environment. The actual measures to protect VMEs, CM 22-06 and CM 22-07 which set requirements for the identification and avoidance of VMEs, were first adopted in 2007 and 2008.

19. A compendium of past (from 1989) and present management measures for the CCAMLR can be found here: <https://www.ccamlr.org/en/publications/past-conservation-measures>

The most recent one provides a history of when measures were adopted and modified (). Prohibition of directed fishing on specific species, mesh size regulation, cap on total catches, closed areas were included from the start. Measures to protect monitoring sites were progressively adopted and improved starting in November 1990. Similarly, measures to minimize incidental mortality of seabirds and protocols for new fisheries were first adopted for the 1991-1992 season. Directed fishing for finfish was limited to longlining starting in 1997-1998. Marine Protected Areas, in addition to the protection of monitoring sites, were introduced starting in 2009. Limiting directed fishing on finfish to longline implies de facto protection of VMEs from trawling.

20. Some of these bodies have a management mandate and can take decisions that are binding on their members (those established in accordance with Article XIV of the FAO Constitution, e.g. GFCM), while others have an advisory mandate (those established in accordance with Article VI of the FAO Constitution, e.g. CECAF, WECAFC).

Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic

21. CECAF is a Regional Fishery Body under Article VI of the FAO Constitution and as such has an advisory role to its member. CECAF held its 22nd Session in September 2019. There is no indication of management advice on its web site (<http://www.fao.org/cecaf/advice/en/>).

Western and Central Atlantic Fishery Commission

22. WECAFC is a Regional Fishery Body under Article VI of the FAO Constitution and as such has an advisory role to its member. It met for the last time in 2014.

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