



IMPLEMENTING INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES TO MANAGE DEEP-SEA FISHERIES IN THE HIGH SEAS

Deep-sea fisheries in the high seas are those that occur in areas beyond national jurisdiction and are characterized by the harvesting of species that can often sustain only low exploitation rates. The potential impact of deep-sea fisheries activities on deep-sea fish stocks, habitat and biodiversity emerged as an issue for concern at the international and regional levels in the early 2000s. In response to this concern, the FAO *International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas* were adopted in 2008; these provide guidance for States and deep-sea Regional fishery management organizations or arrangements (RFMO/As) in the adoption of management and conservation measures for deep-sea fisheries in the high seas, prevent significant adverse impacts to vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs), and protect marine biodiversity. Despite these advances, however, many challenges remain in the management of deep-sea fisheries. The aim of the project was thus to improve the management of deep-sea fisheries and conservation of marine biodiversity by States and deep-sea RFMO/As, and enhance engagement and communication among stakeholders by building capacity in these fields. The project also worked to establish a knowledge baseline in relation to these fisheries and related ecosystems.



WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The project objective was to contribute to the sustainable use of deep-sea marine living resources and the protection of VMEs through the implementation of *the International Guidelines on the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas*, specifically by addressing areas for further guidance and gaps in knowledge as identified through multi-stakeholder consultation. The project outcomes were the improved regional understanding of States, deep-sea RFMO/As, and other relevant stakeholders of management measures for sustainable deep-sea fisheries management and the conservation of associated marine biodiversity, and enhanced scientific knowledge on VMEs through information-sharing and collaborative processes. Project outputs included collaboration in the collection of relevant data, improved tools for the identification of VME species, an improved knowledge base of VMEs in major deep-sea fishing areas, technical assistance in areas not covered by RFMOs, and the sharing of experience and best practices at a global level. The project successfully achieved all its aims.

IMPACT

The project successfully built capacity at a technical level, through its contribution to scientific surveys in deep-sea areas in the high seas and the subsequent analysis and reporting of results, and enhanced regional understanding of management processes for regulating deep-sea fisheries in the areas beyond national jurisdiction, including inter-governmental and other collaborative processes. The project supported the implementation of the International Deep-sea Fisheries Guidelines through information-sharing and cross-sectorial collaboration with the fishing industry, national research institutes, governments, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. In the context of such multi-stakeholder collaboration, the project established the foundations for the development of processes and practices for sustainable deep-sea fisheries management and associated biodiversity conservation at the global level.

KEY FACTS

Contribution

USD2 402 203

Duration

January 2011 - December 2016

Resource Partners

Government of Norway

Partners

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway; regional fishery bodies, academic and scientific research institutions, non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations, the deep-sea fishing industry

Beneficiaries

Regional fishery management organizations (RFMOs), fishing states and the deep-sea fishery industry

ACTIVITIES

- Consultation guidelines developed on the collection and use of data, and published after meetings with stakeholders.
- Collaboration links developed and awareness raised among stakeholders.
- Expert groups met to develop regional deep-sea shark, sponge, and coral reviews and guides that were subsequently prepared, discussed and tested, with training for their use.
- Regional meetings held for the dissemination of technical information and tools on VMEs, and global guidance given on the application of VME criteria.
- Multi-stakeholder meetings organized to engage parties in development of possible management and conservation measures.
- Workshops held on assessment and management of key deep-sea stocks globally, and technical advice, information and tools provided.
- Global assessments for data-poor areas complemented through partnerships and use of new technologies.
- Scientific surveys conducted in a data-poor case study area and results analysed to address knowledge gaps.
- Best practices and effective solutions identified among regions on VME encounter protocols, and background document published.
- Multi-stakeholder meetings held on impact assessments.
- *Worldwide Review on Bottom Fisheries in the High Seas* publication update initiated.
- Regional workshops held to compile knowledge on deep-sea fisheries in data-poor areas for inclusion in relevant chapters of the *Worldwide Review*.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Project Code

FAO: GCP/GLO/323/NOR

Project Title

Support to the Implementation of the International Guidelines on the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas

Contact

Merete Tandstad (Lead Technical Officer)

Merete.Tandstad@fao.org



Resource Mobilization Division
Marketing, Outreach and Reporting Team
Reporting@fao.org