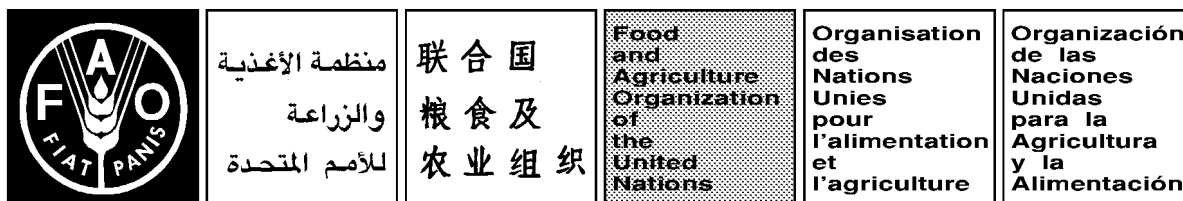


April 2016



## FISHERY COMMITTEE FOR THE EASTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC

### Twenty-first Session

**Dakar, Senegal, 20 – 22 April 2016**

**The potential role of Regional Fishery Bodies in the new EAF-Nansen Programme:  
the case of CECAF**

### SUMMARY

Implementation of the EAF-Nansen project (*Strengthening the Knowledge Base for and Implementing an Ecosystem Approach to Marine Fisheries in Developing Countries*) started in 2006 as a new phase of the Nansen programme. Under the institutional arrangement for the project, a Regional Steering Committee (RSC) was established for each of the four operational areas of the project namely; the CECAF-North, CECAF-South, BCC, and SWIOFC. The RSC was responsible for assessing the project progress and formulating recommendations to the project management regarding requirements, priorities and work-plans for project implementation in the respective region. It was a mechanism to strengthen ownership at regional level and an opportunity to reinforce the linkages with the RFBs and other projects in the region.

A new phase of the project (to be called the EAF-Nansen Programme) is to start in January 2017. For the new Programme, it has been proposed that the Regional Fishery Bodies in Africa (CECAF, SWIOFC) and also the BCC play the role of RSCs. The Committee is requested to examine the proposal and to consider the modalities for this in view of the vast area that CECAF covers and also the frequency of meetings.

## **BACKGROUND**

In December 2006, the EAF-Nansen project (*Strengthening the Knowledge Base for and Implementing an Ecosystem Approach to Marine Fisheries in Developing Countries*) started as a new phase of the long running Nansen programme which had carried out fisheries resources surveys in developing countries since 1975.

The development objective of the EAF-Nansen Project is “to strengthen regional and country specific efforts to reduce poverty and create conditions to assist in the achievement of food security through development of sustainable fisheries management regimes and specifically through the application of the ecosystem approach to fisheries in a number of developing countries globally but with an early emphasis on Sub-Saharan Africa”. The Immediate Objective is “to provide the fisheries research institutions and management administrations in the participating countries with additional knowledge on their ecosystems for their use in planning and monitoring and, to further the acceptance of the key principles of the EAF”.

The project partners are all coastal states from Morocco (in northwest Africa) to Somalia (in northeast Africa) and including all the island states off Africa. Maldives is associated with the project through its membership of the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC). Each of the 32 countries involved in the project also belongs to at least one Regional Fishery Body (namely CECAF and SWIOFC) or a Large Marine Ecosystem Commission (e.g. the Benguela Current Commission - BCC).

The EAF-Nansen Project has provided support to CECAF, the other RFBs and to all the Large Marine Ecosystem projects in Africa. It has provided technical and financial support for the organization of meetings of the various CECAF assessment working groups and the Scientific Sub-Committee. The project has also organized training and other capacity development activities involving all CECAF member States and assisted many of the States to prepare fishery management plans – for national fisheries, and a management framework for shared resources – that are consistent with the ecosystem approach to fisheries.

A new phase of the project (the EAF-Nansen Programme) will start in January 2017 with a new research vessel. The new phase would continue to support African countries in their efforts to implement the ecosystem approach to fisheries and will continue to build capacity for fisheries management. It will also consider issues related to climate variability and change (including oceans acidification), impacts of other human activities (e.g. oil/gas, litter, pollution) on fisheries, the use of research results for management and greater emphasis on gender mainstreaming. Consequently, stronger partnerships with other UN agencies, other projects and programmes, in particular for the use of the research vessel, as well as the RFBs is quite critical.

## **THE CONSULTATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE EAF-NANSEN PROJECT**

Under institutional arrangement for the project, a Regional Steering Committee (RSC) was set up for each of the four operational areas of the project. The four operational areas are CECAF-North, CECAF-South, BCC and SWIOFC. These perfectly match with the Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem area, the Guinea Current LME area, the Benguela Current LME area and the Agulhas and Somali Currents LME area.

Each RSC was expected to have representatives of fisheries research and management institutions in the partner countries in the region, as well as IMR (the Norwegian Institute of Marine Research), FAO and representatives of the LME Programmes and other partner programmes/ projects operating in the region.

The RSC was responsible for assessing the project progress and formulating recommendations to the project management regarding requirements, priorities and work-plans for project implementation in the respective region. It was thus, a mechanism to strengthen ownership at regional level and an opportunity to reinforce the inter-linkages between the EAF-Nansen Project, the RFBs, as well as with related projects and programmes in each sub-region.

At the commencement of project implementation, a Project Advisory Group was also constituted to play the role of a global “Steering Committee” to assess the project progress across regions, and to advise the project management to ensure effective implementation of the project. Members of the Advisory Group included scientists vexed in the development of the EAF concept, EAF practitioners, an EAF Regional Task Group chairman, the chairman of Scientific Committee of one Regional Fisheries Body and the Chairman and Secretary of CECAF and SWIOFC.

An EAF Regional Task Group (RTG) was also established in each of the four operational regions. Each RTG was composed of 1 member (and an alternate) from each country in the region and representatives from relevant regional projects and Sub-regional Fisheries Commissions/Committees where applicable. The RTG was a forum for learning and exchange of ideas and advice in relation to EAF in a given region. It also provided a mechanism to develop regional goals and objectives for shared fishery resources using inputs from the EAF National Task Groups (NTG) established in each country and from other sources.

The SWIOFC adopted the EAF-Nansen Regional Steering Committee and Regional Task Group as subsidiary bodies of the Commission in response to proposals made by the SWIOFC-Scientific Committee at its third Session held in Maputo, Mozambique in September 2008. The objective was to avoid establishment of another steering committee for a project operating in the South West Indian Ocean area. CECAF, on the other hand, decided that the EAF Regional Task Group could provide inputs into the work of the Scientific Sub-Committee. In the BCC area, the BCC Ecosystem Advisory Committee (EAC) played the role of the RTG there. The EAC reports directly to the Commission.

A Project Forum was put in place to serve for progress reporting on field activities, dissemination of experiences, and identification of good practices and discussion of strategies. Attendance at the forum was open to partner countries and partner projects involved in implementation of EAF-related activities.

## **THE CONSULTATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE NEW EAF-NANSEN PROGRAMME**

In the new phase of the project, a recommendation has been put forward for the RFBs in Africa (CECAF, SWIOFC) and the BCC to be requested to play the substantive role of Regional Steering Committees (RSCs) for the programme. This is to institutionalise the steering committees within the permanent bodies that the partners are party to, rather than running them separately to these permanent mechanisms. Provision is also made for a fourth ad hoc steering

committee to handle work on global issues and in other regions (e.g. in Southeast Asia). The structure is presented in Figure 1.

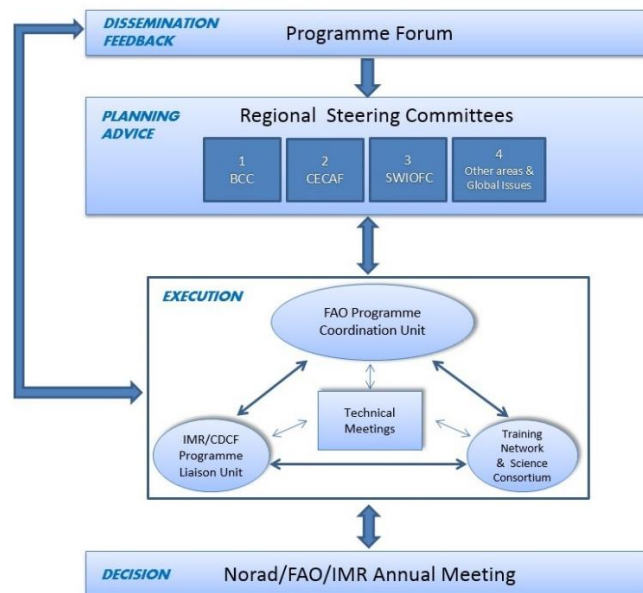


Figure 1: The proposed consultative and strategic planning structure of the new EAF-Nansen Programme

Representatives of IMR, FAO and partner programmes and projects operating in the area will continue to be members of the steering committee. The implication is that institutions that are not members of the RFB but are members of the EAF-Nansen Programme RSC would also be sitting in the meeting of the RFB. It is important to note, however, that most of the traditional partners of the EAF-Nansen project (e.g. the LME projects, the sub-regional fishery bodies, the UNEP regional seas programmes – Abidjan Convention in the case of CECAF) are also either members of CECAF or attend the Committee meetings as observers.

In this new consultative structure, the Project Advisory Group will be discontinued and consultations with key partners and experts will be done at special sessions of the Programme Forum. The RTGs will remain as subsidiary bodies of the Scientific Committee or continue to report to the Scientific Sub-Committee in the case of CECAF. The Programme Forum will continue to be held.

The EAF-Nansen Programme will continue to provide support to the RFBs, LME projects and other regional fisheries projects in Africa.

## REQUEST TO THE COMMITTEE

The Committee is requested to:

1. Consider the proposal made to play the role of RSC for the EAF-Nansen Programme in the area of competence of CECAF;
2. Examine the need to hold RSC meetings on regular basis; an issue to consider here is the frequency with which meetings of the RFBs are organized vis-à-vis the meetings of the EAF-Nansen Programme Regional Steering Committee; and

3. Examine the modalities of allowing members of the programme's Regional Steering Committee who are not members of CECAF to participate in the meetings of CECAF.