



SOUTH WEST INDIAN OCEAN FISHERIES COMMISSION

Managers and decision-makers workshop on the implementation of an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries in the South West Indian Ocean

**23-26 June 2008, Oceanographic Research Institute,
Durban, South Africa**

1. Introduction

The need for an ecosystem approach to fisheries is now globally accepted. It has been emphasised in the Reykjavik Conference on Responsible Fisheries in the Marine Ecosystem, the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and the Convention on Biological Diversity and it is entirely consistent with the FAO Code of Conduct on Responsible Fisheries. The challenge is to implement an ecosystem approach in national and regional fisheries around the world.

In order to assist countries in moving towards an ecosystem approach to fisheries, FAO developed a set of technical guidelines on EAF to help governments and stakeholders to understand what is intended by EAF and how countries can begin to implement it. The approach being followed by FAO is an evolutionary one that aims to build on and extend traditional fishery management practices so that they also address the broader, critical impacts of the fisheries on the ecosystem and of the ecosystem on the fisheries in order to ensure optimal and sustainable use of marine ecosystems. The guidelines therefore focus strongly on the assessment and management processes, emphasising the steps and tasks involved in an ecosystem approach to fisheries management. This workshop is intended to provide an opportunity to discuss, at a regional level, the concept and practice of EAF and to consider the way forward in implementing EAF by members of the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC). The workshop is targeted at decision-makers, fisheries managers, senior scientists and industry.

2. Objectives

Most SWIOFC countries have already made progress in implementing the EAF in ways that differ from country to country. However, this progress has often been in response to specific needs, crises and opportunities rather than within comprehensive, proactive plans. As a result, many high priority issues are not yet being addressed and management actions taken on other issues could be substantially improved if dealt with in a comprehensive plan. The goal of the workshop therefore is to initiate planning and implementation of EAF as a coordinated, regional activity within SWIOFC. Specific objectives are:

1. review the principles and practices of the ecosystem approach to fisheries, using the the experience of the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem as an example;

2. familiarize members of the SWIOFC with the principles and practices of the ecosystem approach to fisheries;
3. report on national activities in implementing the EAF by members of the SWIOFC.
4. identify priorities for implementing the EAF in the SWIOFC;
5. consider the obstacles to implementation of EAF in the region and how to overcome them;
6. draft a program of action for implementing EAF in the SWIOFC;

Item 3 would draw on the results of the SWIOFC EAF Workshop in Maputo in 2005 and would aim to update reports presented at that meeting, and consider them from both the SWIOFC and the national perspectives.

In addition, one day will be used to present the EAF Nansen Project to participants and to discuss how the project can best serve SWIOFC and the SWIOFC countries.

3. Participants

Participants should include senior management and senior scientists providing management advices that have worked extensively in the fisheries in their countries, and have a good research or management background. Participants should be employed by relevant national fisheries institutions or affiliated Universities or non-governmental Organizations. It is also important to have stakeholders e.g. fishing industry, heads of fishing community as participants at the workshop.

4. Tentative Agenda

June 23

Introduction to principles and practices of the ecosystem approach to fisheries
Review of country reports

June 24

Identification of priority areas for implementing the EAF in SWIOFC.

June 25

Program of action for implementing EAF in SWIOFC
EAF and the Nansen project

June 26

Adoption of conclusions of the workshop.

5. Contact

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