



**Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations**



Report of the  
**Areas Beyond National jurisdiction Deep Seas Project  
Inception & First Project Steering Committee Meetings**

15—16 December 2015 • Rome, Italy

**ABNJ Deep Seas Project**

**Sustainable Fisheries Management and Biodiversity Conservation of Deep-sea Living Marine Resources  
and Ecosystems in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction**



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Please reference this publication as:

ABNJ Deep Seas Project (2016). Report of the Inception & first Project Steering Committee meetings, 15–16 December 2015, Rome. FAO, Rome. ABNJ\_DSP-2015-Doc-02 (Inception & PSC Report)

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The combined Inception and first Project Steering Committee meeting of the ABNJ Deep Seas Project Steering Committee (PSC) was held in Rome, Italy from 15-16 December 2015.

### *Inception meeting*

The Inception Meeting noted the progress of the project to date, and that there were no changes apparent to external conditions that might affect Project implementation. It also endorsed the monitoring and evaluation plan, and a revised terms of reference for the Project Steering Committee.

The meeting reflected on a range of challenges facing the Project Management Unit (PMU) in implementing the Project. In particular, the need for partners, as much as possible, to integrate project activities into their 'normal' work plans to avoid the project being an added burden to staff.

The meeting also requested the PMU to take particular care to ensure that the linkages between project activities and outputs are well identified and managed to ensure information is exchanged when relevant and duplication of work is avoided. A similar approach should also be taken regarding the projects Common Oceans Programme and any other relevant projects working in the deep seas area.

The meeting endorsed a ABNJ Deep Seas Project Communications Strategy.

### *Project Steering Committee meeting*

The Project Steering Committee endorsed the 2016 work plan.

The Committee requested that the PMU investigate, and if feasible, convene a side event at the forthcoming UNGA bottom fisheries review in August 2016, to promote the Project, its partners, and its major achievements.

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABNJ	Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction	M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
ABP	Area-Based Planning	MPA	Marine Protected Area
BBNJ	Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction	NAFO	Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity	NEAFC	North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission
CCAMLR	Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources	NPFC	North Pacific Fisheries Commission
CECAF	Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic	NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
COFI	Committee on Fisheries	OPP	Ocean Partnerships Project
CCRF	Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries	PIR	Project Implementation Review
CPPS	Comisión Permanente del Pacífico Sur (Permanent Commission for the South Pacific)	PMU	Project Management Unit
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific Industrial Research Organization (Australia)	PPR	Project Progress Report
EAF	Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries	PSC	Project Steering Committee
EBSA	Ecologically or Biologically Significant Area	PSMA	Port State Measures Agreement
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone	RFMO/A	Regional Fisheries Management Organizations or Arrangements
GFCM	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean	RSN	Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network
GOBI	Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative	RSP	Regional Seas Programme
GOF	Global Ocean Forum	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
ICFA	International Coalition of Fisheries Associations	SEAFO	South East Atlantic Fisheries Organization
IGO	Inter Governmental Organization	SIOFA	Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement
IMO	International Maritime Organization	SIODFA	Southern Indian Ocean Deep-sea Fishers Association
IOC	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission	SPRFMO	South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization
ISA	International Seabed Authority	UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature	UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
IUCN-FEG	IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management Fisheries Expert Group	UNEP-WCMC	UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated	UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
LTO	Lead Technical Officer	UNFSA	United Nations Fish Stock Agreement
MCS	Monitoring, Control and Surveillance	VME	Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem
MDG	Millennium Development Goals	WOC	World Ocean Council
		WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

## 1. Opening of the meeting

1. The combined<sup>1</sup> Inception and first Project Steering Committee meeting of the ABNJ Deep Seas Project Steering Committee (PSC) was held at the FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy from 15-16 December 2015. PSC members from FAO and the Project partners attended. The list of participants is attached as [Appendix 1](#).
2. Ms Jackie Alder opened the meeting and welcomed the participants on behalf of the FAO.
3. The meeting elected Mr. Fred Kingston (NAFO) as Chairperson.
4. The meeting adopted the Agenda (Doc 1.1) as presented in [Appendix 2](#) to this report. The documents referred to at the meeting are listed in [Appendix 3](#).

## Inception meeting activities

## 2. Overview of the Common Oceans Programme and recap of the ABNJ Deep Seas Project

### 2.1. The common oceans ABNJ Deep Seas Programme and Projects

5. The Project Coordinator gave a brief overview (ppt-01) of the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction Programme – often referred to as Common Oceans – which is a broad scale initiative supporting efficient and sustainable management of fisheries resources and biodiversity conservation in the ABNJ. The Programme comprises four projects including the ABNJ Deep Seas Project. The meeting noted that there are commonalities between the projects and effort should be made to identify these linkages and avoid duplication of activities.

### 2.2. The ABNJ Deep Seas Project- design and objectives

6. The Project Coordinator described the project Components, outcomes and outputs (ppt-02). The Inception meeting noted the following points:
  - Output 1.1.4 — the meeting was informed that the FAO Subcommittee on Trade will hold a technical consultation in April 2016 to develop guidelines on the Catch Documentation Schemes (CDS) — and present these to COFI in July 2016. This work is supported by FAO which has a dedicated CDS programme. Furthermore, the ABNJ Tuna Project already has a draft report on the best practices and guidelines for the implementation of catch document schemes in the tuna fisheries. And the ABNJ OPP Project will address market-based incentives from an economic viewpoint. The meeting agreed that the above initiatives should inform the work on CDS for the Deep Seas

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<sup>1</sup> The Project commenced in September 2014 and while some activities were implemented from this time, the Project staff were not in place until July 2015. Therefore the Project had a slower than expected start up. The Project document notes two important milestone meetings that are to be convened at the beginning of the Project: (1) an Inception meeting to address progress to date on project establishment and start-up activities, including updates of any on the institutional roles and responsibilities of the project partners, and an update on any changes in external conditions that might affect project implementation; and (2) a first Project Steering Committee meeting. Just prior to official project approval, a Project ‘partners’ workshop was held in June 2014 to update partners on the status of the project, clarify where and how partners would contribute to the different outputs and activities, prioritize activities, and clarify the reporting process of the project. Given that over one year had passed since the project started, and that the partners meeting covered many of the elements of an inception meeting, and the participants expected for an Inception meeting and a PSC meeting are the same, permission was obtained from the GEF to hold a combined Inception and PSC meeting in December 2015.

Project. The meeting also requested that that activities on certification, eco-labelling and tradeable quotas also be included in this output.

- Component 2 — the meeting noted that much of the material to be produced under Component 2 of the Project could be useful for the forthcoming UNGA review of bottom fisheries that is expected to take place in August 2016. FAO confirmed the VME publication (due early 2016) will be available to inform the review.
  - Output 2.1.1 —SIODFA noted it might be challenging to gather the socioeconomic information under Activity 2 of Output 2.1.1.
  - Output 2.1.2 —the EBSA information to be collected by Duke University or CSIRO is relevant to UNEP-WCMC in its work on Component 4.
  - Output 2.1.4 — SIODFA reiterated that it is looking forward to testing the new techniques identified in this output.
  - Output 3.1.4— Sealord informed the meeting that activities under this output will be important for the successful Marine Stewardship Council certification of high seas fisheries (e.g. orange roughy in the Indian Ocean). The Tuna Project will be drafting a document on best practices of MCS in general, with a focus on tuna fisheries, and this might overlap with DSF.
  - Component 4 — the meeting stressed that linkages should be made where possible with RFMOs in the pilot regions, and SIODFA and SIOFA should be added as partners to this component. SIODFA also informed UNEP-WCMC of the area-based management approached currently being employed by SIODFA vessels.
7. The meeting requested the PMU to monitor the linkages between activities, targets, outputs and outcomes to ensure that the targets are achievable, and linkages are clear and that project expectations can be met.
  8. The meeting also requested the PMU to take particular care to ensure that the linkages between project activities and outputs are well identified and managed to ensure information is exchanged when relevant and duplication of work is avoided. A similar approach should also be taken regarding the projects Common Oceans Programme and any other relevant projects working in the deep seas area.
  9. The meeting noted the progress of the project to date, and that there were no changes apparent to external conditions that might affect Project implementation.

### **3. Project implementation and status**

#### **3.1. 2015 Annual Report: Progress and Results**

10. The Coordinator described in detail the work that had been undertaken by the Project over the period January to December 2015 (Doc-3.1 – [click here to view](#) ).
11. The Inception meeting noted that while the Project commenced in September 2014 the Area Based Planning Specialist (Component 4) started in April 2015 and the Coordinator started in July 2015. Despite this slower than expected start up, 23 of the 37 activities expected to commence in 2015 were started, although only 2 of the 11 activities expected to be concluded in 2015 were completed. The meeting acknowledged the valuable work of FAO and the partners up to the time the Project staff were on board.

### 3.2. Matters relating to project implementation

12. The Coordinator described a range of matters and challenges that the PMU faced in implementing the Project; including the need for close agency interaction, overcoming the complexities and possible delays associated with administration, contracting and organising travel.
13. The meeting noted in particular, the need for partners, as much as possible, to integrate project activities into their 'normal' work plans to avoid the project being an added burden to staff. In addition, the meeting noted that the PMU and partners will need to carefully consider the timing of Project activities in relation to national and RFMO processes in order to achieve many of the impact outcomes.

### 3.3. Partner activities

14. Representatives of CPPS (ppt-03), IUCN (ppt-04), NOAA, ABNJ Tuna project, ABNJ Capacity Project, GFCM (ppt-05), NAFO (ppt-06), Sealord Group (ppt-07), SIODFA and the Nairobi convention gave updates to the PSC about the activities of their respective organizations. Written descriptions are provided in the 2015 annual report ( [click here to view](#) ).
15. The meeting noted the wide range of activities being undertaken by partners that are contributing to the Project and encouraged all partners, including the other projects in the Common Oceans Programme, to provide brief written reports on their activities that can be included on the annual report.

### 3.4. Monitoring and evaluation

16. The Coordinator described the monitoring and evaluation plan, noting that the plan as contained in the Project Document was still valid. The coordinator also highlighted the need to review the Project indicators and targets during 2016 in order ensure clarity and that project expectations will be met. The results of this review would be reported at the next PSC meeting.
17. Ms Kathrin Hett from the ABNJ Programme informed the meeting about the M&E linkages between the ABNJ Programme and its component projects, which includes the Deep Seas Project. The Deep Seas Project provides a range of M&E information to Global Programme Coordination Unit.
18. The meeting endorsed the monitoring and evaluation plan.

### 3.5. Communications

19. The Coordinator presented a draft communications strategy (Doc-3.5). The meeting endorsed the strategy with several minor amendments and the following amendments in particular:
  - the strategy should note that RFMOs are likely to be able to only communicate after their annual commission meetings after the businesses of the commission has been agreed to.
  - the strategy needs to note the requirements of — and be compatible with the GEF visibility requirements.
  - the Project will produce an annual newsletter highlighting the major achievements which will form part of the annual report to the PSC, and then made available on the Project website.
20. The revised communications strategy is attached – [click here to view](#) . In addition, the meeting requested that a report on communications be a permanent agenda item for future PSC

meetings where the Coordinator will describe communication activities as they relate to the communications Strategy.

### **3.6. Terms of reference for the Project Steering Committee**

21. The Inception meeting reviewed the terms of reference of the Project Steering Committee as described in the Annex 7 of the Project Document (Doc-3.6). A revised TOR was endorsed by the meeting and this is provided in [Appendix 4](#).

## **Project Steering Committee activities**

### **4. Review of the proposed 2016 work plan**

#### **4.1. Presentation and discussion of the 2016 work plan**

22. The draft 2016 Work Plan (Doc-4.1a) was presented by the Coordinator (Components 1, 2, 3 and 5) and the Areas Based Planning Specialist (Component 4).
23. The PSC reviewed the work plan, with reference to the guidance on project activities from the project Document (Doc-4.1b). A wide range of inputs were received and modifications to the document were made. Individual partners confirmed their activities.
24. The PSC noted the current wording of output 1.1.3 (Model policy and legal frameworks, enabling sustainable DSF management and biodiversity conservation at the regional and national levels, developed and integrated into national legislation in countries in at least one region) and agreed that the Project has no mandate for interventions on policy and legal frameworks at the regional level; therefore the focus of this output and its related activities should be at the national level (with the intention of achieving improved implementation of existing policy and legal frameworks on a regional scale). To this end the PSC agreed that target 11 be amended as follows: National ~~regional~~ model policy and legal framework, providing practical guidance on implementation of relevant instruments completed for at least one region. And activity 1.1.3.1 be amended to: Development of a national ~~regional~~ model policy and legal framework for at least one selected pilot region.
25. The PSC noted the current wording of output 1.2.1 activity 2 (Strengthening of global and regional networks related to DSF and associated biodiversity) and agreed that national networks should also be also included. To this end the PSC agreed to that activity 2 be amended as follows: Strengthening of global, regional and national networks related to DSF and associated biodiversity.
26. The PSC noted the proposed duration of output 3.1.1, activity 1 (Analysis of best practices for DSF and development of an operational manual for improved planning and management for DSF), was limited to years 1 and 2, and agreed that this activity be undertaken over the duration of the project i.e. years 1 to 5.
27. The PSC requested that the PMU investigate, and if feasible, convene a side event at the forthcoming UNGA bottom fisheries review in August 2016, to promote the Project, its partners, and its major achievements.
28. The PSC endorsed the revised 2016 work plan ( [click here to view](#) ).

#### **4.2. Timing and location of the next meeting**

29. The PSC agreed to hold its 2nd meeting from 7-8 February 2017 at UNEP-WCMC, Cambridge England.

**5. Any other business**

30. None.

**6. Adoption of the report**

31. The meeting adopted the substantial statements (disseminated on 21 December 2015) and meeting report (disseminated on 25 January 2016) by email.

## Appendix 1 Meeting participants



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## Appendix 2 Agenda

Day 1 Tuesday 15 December - starting 9 am - Philippines Room	
<b>1. Opening of the meeting</b>	
1.1	Opening remarks
1.2	Introductions
1.3	Election of a chairperson
1.4	Adoption of the agenda
<b>Inception meeting activities</b>	
<i>Aim: to obtain a clearer understanding on project establishment and start-up activities and progress to date, including updates of any on the institutional roles and responsibilities of the project partners, and an update on any changes in external conditions that might affect project implementation</i>	
<b>2. Overview of the Common Oceans Programme and recap of the ABNJ Deep Seas Project</b>	
Actions:	(i) Recall the relationship between the Programme and Project. (ii) Recall the nature and extent of the Project
2.1	The Common Oceans ABNJ Programme and projects
2.2	The Deep Seas Project – design and objectives
<b>3. Project implementation and status</b>	
Actions:	(i) Note the current status and associated matters of the Project. (ii) Adopt a terms of reference for the PSC
3.1	2015 Annual report: progress and results – Doc-3.1
3.2	Matters relating to project implementation – best practices, challenges etc
3.3	Partners – a brief update from partners on any activities relating to the project
3.4	Monitoring and evaluation
3.5	Communications – Doc-3.5
3.6	Terms of Reference for the Project Steering Committee – Doc-3.6
Day 2 Wednesday 16 December	
<b>Project Steering Committee activities</b>	
<i>Aim: to endorse the annual work plan</i>	
<b>4. Review of the proposed 2016 work plan</b>	
Actions:	(i) Review the proposed work plan. (ii) to provide guidance on project implementation, the inter-institutional and partner coordination required for the proposed activities and the strategic direction of the project overall. (iii) Adopt the 2016 work plan (iv) Agree on the time and location of the next PSC meeting
4.1	Presentation and discussion of the 2016 work plan – Doc-4.1a, 4.1b
4.2	Timing and location of PSC2
<b>5. Any other business</b>	
<b>6. Outstanding items and adoption of the meeting conclusions</b>	

### Appendix 3 List of documents

Reference	Title
<i>Session</i>	
ABNJ_DSP-2015-IM&PSC_Doc-1.1	Agenda
ABNJ_DSP-2015-IM&PSC_Doc-3.1	Annual report on the year 2015
ABNJ_DSP-2015-IM&PSC_Doc-3.5	Communications Strategy
ABNJ_DSP-2015-IM&PSC_Doc-3.6	Terms of Reference for Project Management (ProDoc Annex 7)
ABNJ_DSP-2015-IM&PSC_Doc-4.1a	2016 Work Plan
ABNJ_DSP-2015-IM&PSC_Doc-4.1b	Description of outputs (ProDoc Annex 8)
ABNJ_DSP-2015-PSC1_ppt01	Presentation ABNJ Programme
ABNJ_DSP-2015-PSC1_ppt02	Presentation ABNJ Deep seas Project
ABNJ_DSP-2015-PSC1_ppt03	Presentation CPPS
ABNJ_DSP-2015-PSC1_ppt04	Presentation IUCN
ABNJ_DSP-2015-PSC1_ppt05	Presentation GFCM
ABNJ_DSP-2015-PSC1_ppt06	Presentation NAFO
ABNJ_DSP-2015-PSC1_ppt07	Presentation Sealord

## Appendix 4 Terms of Reference for PSC

### Project Steering Committee (PSC) Adopted Terms of Reference.

(ex. ProDoc Annex 7 – as amended by the Inception Meeting)

**Role.** The PSC will be the policy setting body with regard to all issues affecting the achievement of the project's objectives. The PSC will be responsible for providing general oversight of the project's implementation and will ensure that all activities agreed upon, under the GEF project document, are adequately prepared and carried out. In particular, it will:

- Provide overall guidance to the PMU in the execution of the project;
- Ensure that all project outputs are in accordance with the Project Document;
- Review, amend if appropriate, and endorse the draft Annual Work Plan and Budget of the Project;
- Provide inputs to the mid-term and final evaluations, review findings and provide comments; and
- Ensure dissemination of project information and best practices.

**Meetings.** The PSC meetings will normally be held annually, but the Chairperson will have the discretion to call additional meetings if necessary. Meetings of the PSC will not necessarily require physical presence and could be undertaken electronically. No more than 13 months may elapse between PSC meetings. Invitations to a regular PSC meeting shall be issued not less than 90 days in advance of the date fixed for the meeting. Invitations to special meetings shall be issued not less than forty days in advance of the meeting date.

**Agenda.** A provisional agenda will be drawn up by the Deep-Sea Project Coordinator (in collaboration with the Area-based Planning Specialist) and sent to members and observers following the approval of the Chairperson. The provisional agenda will be sent not less than 30 days before the date of the meeting. A revised agenda including comments received from members will be circulated five working days before the meeting date. The Agenda of each regular meeting shall include:

- a) The election of the Chairperson;
- b) Adoption of the agenda;
- c) A report of the Project Coordinator on project activities during the inter-sessional period, including a section on communications;
- d) A report and recommendations from the Project Coordinator on the proposed Annual Work Plan and Budget for the ensuing period;
- e) Reports from partners
- f) Matters that need PSC intervention;
- g) Consideration of the time and place (if appropriate) of the next meeting;
- h) Any other matters as approved by the Chairperson.

The agenda of a special meeting shall consist only of items relating to the purpose for which the meeting was called.

**The Secretariat.** The PMU will act as Secretariat to the PSC and be responsible for providing PSC members with all required documents in advance of PSC meetings, including the draft Annual Work Plan and Budget and other relevant documents. The PMU will prepare written report of all PSC meetings and be responsible for logistical arrangements relative to the holding of such meetings.

**Election of Chairperson.** The chair of the PSC will be selected during project implementation by the members of the PSC. The Chairperson will serve up to the subsequent PSC meeting, finishing his/her term upon the completion of the PSC meeting held closest to one year after selection. At this point, a successor Chairperson shall be chosen by the PSC members in a similar manner. The position of

Chairperson is not renewable and the new Chairperson shall not represent the same project partner as the outgoing Chairperson. The Chairperson shall assume his/her role at the beginning of the regular meeting in which they are elected.

**Functions of the Chairperson.** The Chairperson shall exercise the functions conferred on him/her elsewhere in these terms of reference, and in particular shall:

- a) Declare the opening and closing of each PSC meeting;
- b) Direct the discussions at such meetings and ensure observance of these terms of reference, accord the right to speak, put questions and announce decisions;
- c) Rule on points of order;
- d) Subject to these terms of reference, control the proceedings of meetings;
- e) Appoint such ad hoc committees of the meeting as the PSC may direct;
- f) Ensure circulation by the Secretariat to PSC members of all relevant documents, including penultimate versions of all major documents produced by the project before they are finalised for public release (this is to enable partners involved in the publication to check that the documents, meet their respective visibility requirements);
- g) In liaison with the PSC Secretariat, be responsible for determining the date, site (if appropriate) and agenda of the PSC meeting(s) during his/her period of tenure, as well as the chairing of such meetings.

A Vice- Chairperson shall be elected to exercise the functions of the Chairperson in the Chairperson's absence or at the Chairperson's request.

**Participation.** The PSC may include the project's executing partners, the Project Coordinator, the Area-based planning Specialist, the FAO LTO, UNEP Task Manager and an official from FAO's GEF Coordination Unit shall also be represented on the PSC, in ex-officio capacity. The Project Coordinator will act as the Secretary to the PSC. Other institutions active in DSF and Biodiversity Conservation may also be invited to participate as observers.

**Decision-making.** All decisions of the PSC shall be taken by consensus.

**Reports and recommendations.** At each meeting, the PSC shall approve report text that embodies its views, recommendations, and decisions, including, when requested, a statement of minority views. A draft report shall be circulated to the Members as soon as possible after the meeting for comments. Comments shall be accepted over a period of 20 days. Following its approval by the Chairperson, the Final Report will be distributed and posted on the project website as soon as possible after this.

**Official language.** The official language of the PSC shall be English.

The Sustainable Fisheries Management and Biodiversity Conservation of Deep Sea Living Resources in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction Project (ABNJ Deep Seas Project for short) is a five year project supported by the Global Environment Facility, and implemented jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the United Nations Environment Programme. The UNEP project component is executed through the UNEP World Conservation and Monitoring Centre.

The Project is designed to enhance sustainability in the use of deep-sea living resources and biodiversity conservation in the ABNJ through the systematic application of an ecosystem approach. It brings together over 20 partners who work on deep-sea fisheries and conservation issues in the ABNJ globally. The partnership includes regional organizations responsible for the management of deep-sea fisheries, Regional Seas Programmes, the fishing industry and international organizations. The Project aims to:

- strengthen policy and legal frameworks for sustainable fisheries and biodiversity conservation in the ABNJ deep seas;
- reduce adverse impacts on VMEs and enhanced conservation and management of components of EBSAs;
- improve planning and adaptive management for deep sea fisheries in ABNJ; and
- develop and test methods for area-based planning.

The ABNJ Deep Seas Project started in September 2015 and is one of four projects under the GEF Common Oceans Programme. More information is available from [www.commonoceans.org](http://www.commonoceans.org)

