

**44th ANNUAL MEETING OF NAFO - SEPTEMBER 2022****Recommendations of the
Working Group on Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries Management (WG-EAFFM)**

The NAFO Joint Fisheries Commission-Scientific Council Working Group on Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries Management (WG-EAFFM) met on 11–12 August 2022 (COM-SC Doc. 22-02) and agreed on the following recommendations:

- In regard to the VME Assessments,
 1. In regards to the VME and SAI assessments, WG-EAFFM recommends that the Commission direct the Secretariat to develop and electronically host the relevant data sets to support the SC's work and consider providing dedicated staff for data archiving, maintenance, and management, taking into consideration available resources and any confidentiality concerns.
 2. Additionally, WG-EAFFM recommends that the Commission request the Secretariat to begin consideration of how these data sets or suitable derived data products might be made public in the future, while taking into consideration any confidentiality concerns about the data.
- In regard to the Ecosystem Roadmap,
 3. WG-EAFFM recommends that the Commission adopt the use of TCI as a scientifically sound approach, as confirmed by the independent review, and that 2TCI can act as an ecosystem reference point to help inform managers.
 4. Further, that the Commission request SC to include TCI information in its regular reporting on stock and ecosystem assessments.
 5. WG-EAFFM recommends that the Commission request that WG-EAFFM explore effective methods to communicate TCI-related information to the Commission, in particular when 2TCI is, or is expected to be exceeded.
 6. WG-EAFFM recommends that the Commission request SC and WG-EAFFM to explore possible underlying scientific causes and management considerations in the rare event when 2TCI is or is expected to be exceeded, similar to those when exceptional circumstances are triggered within MSE.
 7. WG-EAFFM recommends that the Commission request SC to continue its efforts on the Roadmap, cognizant of capacity constraints and the need for prioritization.
 8. WG-EAFFM further recommends that Commission direct WG-EAFFM to explore how NAFO might consider these management options, including the potential roles of WG-EAFFM and RBMS working groups.
 9. WG-EAFFM recommends that the Commission request the SC and WG-EAFFM inform a Commission discussion on operational objectives for the protection of VMEs and biodiversity in the NRA.



- In regard to the Scientific Support for the Roadmap,
 10. WG-EAFFM reaffirms its recommendation to the Commission to seek scientific resources through CPs to support SC's activities, including those on the roadmap.
 11. WG-EAFFM recommends that the Commission to better communicate the scientific work of the SC, to encourage greater interest in participation in SC activities.
- In regard to Chapter II, NAFO CEM,
 12. In relation to the review of Chapter 2, WG-EAFFM recommends that the Commission adopt the following edits to Articles 17, 23, and 24:

Article 17 - Area Restrictions for Bottom Fishing Activities

Contracting Parties are encouraged to the extent possible to record all ~~coral and sponge~~ VME indicator species catch in their annual government and/or industry research programs and to consider non-destructive means for the long-term monitoring of VME ~~coral and sponges~~ in the closed areas.

Article 23:

(1) The Commission will request the Scientific Council to

(a) identify VMEs, on the basis of best available scientific information and with the co-operation of Contracting Parties;

(b) map sites where these VMEs are known to occur or likely to occur; and

(c) provide such data and information to the Executive Secretary for circulation to all Contracting Parties;

(d) an assessment of Significant Adverse Impacts (SAI) as defined by the FAO guidelines for deep-sea fisheries; and

(e) conduct a risk assessment based on the outcome of these assessments

Article 24:

The provisions of this Chapter shall be periodically reviewed by the Commission at its Annual Meeting no later than 2022 in the year following the reassessments set out in Article 23, paragraph 2(a).
- In regard to the GEF ABNJ Deep Seas Fisheries Project,
 13. WG-EAFFM recommends that the Commission request the Secretariat to work with the FAO to explore the idea of a joint NAFO-FAO symposium on ecosystem production models in relation to fisheries management, as part of the ABNJ deep sea fisheries project.
- In regard to the Sargasso Sea Commission,
 14. WG-EAFFM recommends that the Commission support the finalization of an MOU between the NAFO and Sargasso Sea Commission Secretariats.