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35TH ANNUAL MEETING - SEPTEMBER 2013

Terms of Reference of the proposed Joint Fisheries Commission-Scientific Council Working Group on Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries Management

At the 34th Annual Meeting, the Fisheries Commission adopted the proposal to establish a Joint FC-SC Working Group on the Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries Management (FC Doc 12/28, FC Doc 12/31). The proposal was in response to the recommendation of the FC Working Group of Fishery Managers and Scientists on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (FC WGFMS-VME) in 2012 to expand the Terms of Reference of the WG to include broader aspects of the Ecosystem Approach Framework as part of future dialogue between Scientific Council and Fisheries Commission.

Following the adoption of the proposal detailed in FC Doc 12/28, FC tasked the FC Chair to draft in collaboration with the Chairs of SC and other relevant WG the Terms of Reference of the proposed joint WG.

The draft ToR has been presented at the WGFMS-VME at its meeting in April 2013 and at the Scientific Council meeting in June 2013 for feedback and comments. The draft ToR was also circulated to the Contracting Parties in May 2013 for review. Feedback and comments received are already incorporated in the attached draft ToR.

The draft ToR of the *Joint Fisheries Commission-Scientific Council Working Group on Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries Management* (attached) is hereby presented to the Fisheries Commission for consideration and adoption.

Terms of Reference
Joint Fisheries Commission-Scientific Council Working Group
on Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries Management

Structure:

The Working Group on Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries Management reports to both the Fisheries Commission and Scientific Council; considers the advice of Scientific Council; and provides recommendations to Fisheries Commission.

The Working Group shall be comprised of fishery managers and scientists from Contracting Parties supported by experts and advisors. The work form may be an open forum/dialogue at the discretion of the chairs of the working group and with the consent of Contracting Parties.

Recommendations to Fisheries Commission shall be developed through formal sessions of official delegations.

The Co-Chairs shall be selected from participating fishery managers and scientists with both a fishery manager and a scientist represented in the two positions.

Accredited observers may attend meetings of the working group. Participation will be subject to the *NAFO Rules of Procedure*.

If a Contracting Party so requests, particular agenda items of the meeting, or parts thereof, shall be restricted to delegates representing Contracting Parties and Scientific Council. A total of up to two persons per non-governmental organizations that have been given the right to participate as observers shall be permitted.

Objective:

The main objective of the Working Group is to make recommendations to the Fisheries Commission and feedback to Scientific Council on the development and effective implementation of ecosystems approaches to fisheries management.

Specific Duties:

In responding to requests for advice and recommendations from the Fisheries Commission, considering the associated advice of Scientific Council, the Working Group shall:

- Provide input/ guidance on the development and application of the Ecosystems Approach to Fisheries (EAF) Roadmap, including defining objectives and establishing priorities, by:
 - Recommending appropriate ecosystem-based management areas,
 - Considering ecosystem status, functioning and dynamics of NAFO marine ecosystems, including species interactions,
 - Considering the effect of activities other than fishing that may impact the stocks and fisheries in the NAFO Area,
 - Analyzing the way other RFMOs address the need to conserve biodiversity and advise on a possible strategy for biodiversity.

- Make recommendations on mitigation strategies and measures to avoid significant adverse impacts of bottom fishing activities on vulnerable marine ecosystems, including the evaluation of associated risks, by:
 - Reviewing area closures and other measures outlined in the NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures (NCEMs) with specific timelines.
 - Collaborating with Scientific Council on the assessment/ reassessment of NAFO bottom fisheries.
 - Providing recommendations to Fisheries Commission in relation to requests to conduct exploratory bottom fishing and/ or evaluation of previously authorized exploratory fishing activities.
 - Providing recommendations for updating the NCEMs in relation to EAF including the text in Chapter II (Bottom Fisheries in the NAFO Regulatory Area) and any associated Annexes (e.g. the Exploratory Protocol - Annex I.E), as necessary.

Meetings:

Meetings may be held at the request of the Fisheries Commission or the Scientific Council, in consultation with Contracting Parties and the NAFO Secretariat. Timing should be decided on a case by case basis.

The working group shall communicate regularly through teleconferences and electronically, as required.

Reporting

The Working Group will issue a written report to the Fisheries Commission and the Scientific Council.

An oral update can be provided to both SC and FC during the annual meeting.