SYMPOSIUM ON:
APPLYING THE ECOSYSTEM APPROACH TO FISHERIES MANAGEMENT IN ABNJ

11–13 March 2025

Sheik Zayed Conference Centre, FAO HQ, Rome, Italy

Draft Programme

Day 1 – Scientific aspects of EAFM

Day 1 will focus on scientific studies that result in scientific advice to managers. In an RFMO context, this would normally be undertaken in scientific working groups with the outputs being reviewed by the RFMO scientific committee, followed by the advice being drafted. The draft programme is envisaged as follows:

Opening ceremony

Introduction to Symposium and Day 1

This will explain the purpose of the symposium, including identifying scope and long-term objectives of EAFM by scientists and managers.
Keynote speaker: "An introduction to EAFM" (ICES)

Retained species

This session will examine the ecosystem effects of removals of commercially valuable fish and shellfish that are destined to markets and are usually subject to management measures. Examples of ecosystem effects to be discussed include:

- Change in size distribution / age structure
- Change in biomass and food webs
- Change/switching in dominant species

Discarded and vulnerable species

This session will examine the effects of impacts on taxa that are discarded or otherwise impacted during fishing operations. These taxa may or may not be protected by management measures. For example:

- Vulnerable marine ecosystems
- Deepwater sharks, rays and skates and other vulnerable fish species
- Seabirds and marine mammals

Ecosystem effects

This session will look at changes in ecosystem productivity and function either caused by fishing or from external factors affecting fisheries. For example:

- Ecosystem productivity and bentho-pelagic coupling
- VMEs as essential fish habitat (functional significance of VMEs)
- Habitat and species connectivity and resilience
- Environmental variability and climate change

Day 2 – Management aspects of EAFM

Day 2 will focus on the management aspects of EAFM and include the science-management interface, requesting and uptake of advice, and the development and adoption of measures in RFMOs.

Introduction to Day 2

Keynote speaker: "Ecosystem approach to fisheries management – FAO's work and its uptake by RFMOs" (FAO)

Retained species

This session will identify how deep-sea RFMOs have implemented EAFM on their targeted and retained fish stocks. For example:

- TACs and gear controls
- spatial/temporal restrictions
- long-term management plans and reference points

Discarded and vulnerable species

This session will examine management requirements and decisions affecting discards and vulnerable species. For example:

- impact and risk assessments
- mitigation
- monitoring

Ecosystem effects

This session will examine the fisheries management decisions that take into account ecosystem status and productivity. For example:

- Monitoring and VMS
- ecosystem-level management measures (including gear bans)
- biodiversity conservation

Day 3 – Implementation of EAFM

RFMOs, through their Contracting Parties, are responsible for the management of fisheries and their impacts in the ABNJ. Some also provide advice to coastal states to support fisheries management in their national waters.

This final day aims to conclude with a discussion on global guidance needed to support the implementation of EAFM by deep-sea RFMOs (but realising this is a work in progress and will form the basis for further development and support).

Introduction to Day 3 (including lessons learnt from Days 1 & 2)

Keynote speaker: Ecosystem overfishing and participatory processes "The development of the NAFO EAFM roadmap" (NAFO)

EAFM implementation

This session describes the current status of EAFM implementation in the ABNJ, so as to provide background to the development of guidance in the afternoon. For example:

- EAFM implementation by tuna RFMOs
- Gap analyses in deep-sea RFMOs
- EAFM implementation by deep-sea RFMOs

Spatial fisheries management and biodiversity conservation

This session aims to show the spatial nature of fisheries management in the ABNJ and how it integrates with biodiversity conservation. For example:

- The spatial nature of fisheries management – mapping fisheries measures
- Reducing impacts from fisheries
- Cross-sectoral interactions and trade-offs

Keynote speaker: Introducing guidance on EAFM Implementation to deep-sea RFMOs

Guidance for EAFM implementation

This session aims to develop global guidance that will assist States and deep-sea RFMOs in implementing EAFM. The session will be split into the three main considerations from Days 1 and 2:

- Retained species
- Discarded and vulnerable species
- Ecosystem effects

Open discussions will be facilitated as required, to develop guidance.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

NAFO

ICES CIEM

Proposed Daily Timetable

08:00 Registration (Day 1 only)

08:45 Opening ceremony (Day 1 only)

09:00 Introduction to day

09:05 Keynote presentation (and guest chair for the day)

09:30 Panel session 1

11:00 Coffee

11:30 Panel session 2

13:00 Lunch

14:30 Panel session 3

16:00 Coffee

16:30 General discussion

17:00-18:30 Poster session

Each panel session (1½ hour):

- Facilitator presentation (10 minute introduction)
- Three presentations (each 20 minutes)
- Discussion (20 minutes)