

TORRES STRAIT HAND COLLECTABLES WORKING GROUP	Meeting No. 10 3 November 2016
PRELIMINARIES Adoption of the Agenda	Agenda Item No. 1.2 For Discussion and advice

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Working Group consider and adopt the Agenda.

TORRES STRAIT HAND COLLECTABLES WORKING GROUP	Meeting No. 10 3 November 2016
PRELIMINARIES Declarations of interests	Agenda Item No. 1.3 For discussion and advice

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Working Group **DISCUSS** and **PROVIDE ADVICE** on members' potential or direct conflicts of interest.

KEY ISSUES

1. Consistent with the Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) Fisheries Management Paper No. 1 (FMP1), which guides the operation and administration of PZJA consultative forums, members are asked to disclose and declare any conflicts of interests.

DISCUSSION

2. FMP1 recognises that members are appointed to provide input based on their knowledge and expertise and as a consequence, may face potential or direct conflicts of interest. Where a member has a material personal interest in a matter being considered, including a direct or indirect financial or economic interest; the interest could conflict with the proper performance of the member's duties. Of greater concern is the specific conflict created where a member is in a position to derive direct benefit from a recommendation if it is implemented.
3. When a member recognises that a real or potential conflict of interest exists, the conflict must be disclosed as soon as possible. Where this relates to an issue on the agenda of a meeting this can normally wait until that meeting, but where the conflict relates to decisions already made, members must be informed immediately. Conflicts of interest should be dealt with at the start of each meeting. If members become aware of a potential conflict of interest during the meeting, they must immediately disclose the conflict of interest.
4. Where it is determined that a direct conflict of interest exists, the forum may allow the member to continue to participate in the discussions relating to the matter but not in any decision making process. They may also determine that, having made their contribution to the discussions, the member should retire from the meeting for the remainder of discussions on that issue. Declarations of interest, and subsequent decisions by the forum, must be recorded accurately in the meeting minutes.

TORRES STRAIT HAND COLLECTABLES WORKING GROUP	Meeting No. 10 3 NOVEMBER 2016
PRELIMINARIES Actions Arising	Agenda Item No. 1.4 For Noting

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Hand Collectable Working Group (HCWG) **note** the progress against Actions Arising from its 9th meeting held on 20-21 June 2016.

KEY ISSUES

Meeting record

1. A draft meeting record of the 9th Hand Collectable Working Group (HCWG) was circulated to all HCWG members on 12 October 2016 with the comment period closing on 21 October 2016.
2. Minor comments were received and were incorporated into the meeting record.

Actions arising

3. Progress against the Actions Arising from the 9th Working Group meeting is listed in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Progress against Action items from HCWG No. 9

#	Action Item	Who	Due	Status
1.	AFMA to review the size limits set for the Torres Strait Beche-de-mer Fishery taking into consideration the size limits in place in Queensland and the Commonwealth Coral Sea Fishery.	AFMA	-	Ongoing.
2.	AFMA to provide conversion ratios used for estimating the weight of processed Beche-de-mer product.	AFMA	-	Complete. The report by Dr Tim Skewes "Conversion ratios for commercial beche-de-mer species in the Torres Strait" provides the most recent conversion ratios. Conversion ratios are not available for all species. Further work will be required to agree on weight conversion ratios for the species required.

3.	AMFA to convene a workshop including HCWG members and up to two fisheries representatives from Erub, Masig, Ugar, Mer lama, Prouma and Warraber to discuss immediate options to improve catch reporting. TSRA to support this approach through a cost sharing arrangement.	AFMA	-	Completed AFMA supported representatives attending an open industry meeting on Erub on 18 October 2016 followed by a workshop held on 19 October 2016. Outcomes to be reported at agenda item 3.
4.	Noting the increase in Beche-de-mer catch seizures from illegal foreign fishing vessels but also recognizing the priority on compliance functions, the HCWG recommended AFMA to investigate the feasibility of seized catches to be used in research or re-stocking.	AFMA	-	Ongoing. Further discussions are to be had with AFMA Compliance (international) and Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol (domestic).

TORRES STRAIT HAND COLLECTABLES WORKING GROUP	Meeting 10 3 November 2016
MANAGEMENT Overview of Commonwealth Harvest Strategy Policy	Agenda Item No. 2.1 For discussion and advice

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Working Group:

5. **NOTE** the provided overview of Commonwealth Harvest Strategy Policy.

KEY ISSUES

1. At its meeting on 30 April 2015 (meeting 9), the Hand Collectable Working Group recommended that a strategic management approach be developed to guide any future expansion in the fishery based on, among other things, a harvest strategy.
2. CSIRO are being engaged by AFMA to conduct a project to develop a harvest strategy for the Beche-de-mer Fishery.
3. AFMA's preference is that the Working Group focus on providing advice to CSIRO to aid in developing a harvest strategy designed to guide fishery-level Total Allowable Catch decisions. Community based harvest strategies like those proposed through the work of *Tawake et al*, could then operate within the fishery limit.

DISCUSSION

1. The *Commonwealth fisheries harvest strategy policy and guidelines 2007* (**Attachment A**) provides a framework to develop harvest strategies for Australia's Commonwealth managed fisheries. Harvest strategies provide a higher degree of confidence that fisheries are being managed for long-term sustainability and economic profitability.
2. Harvest strategies set out a pre-agreed decision making framework to control fishing intensity (catch and/or effort) in order to achieve defined biological, and economic objectives of the fishery. In the case of Torres Strait Fisheries a harvest strategy will also have regard to maintaining the traditional way of life and livelihood of Traditional Inhabitants.
3. Harvest strategies can provide two key benefits to industry:
 - a. improved management certainty around total allowable catch or effort decisions. This is important for business planning and investment; and
 - b. a tool to better assess the potential return on investments in research and data collection. It is open to industry to invest directly in research and data collection

4. A harvest strategy should be easy to understand, unambiguous, make sense and precautionary. The key elements of a harvest strategy are:
 - a) Objective
What you want to achieve. For example keeping the fishery sustainable and profitable
 - b) Reference Point
Benchmarks for achieving your objective. Includes both target and limit reference points. The Commonwealth Harvest Strategy Policy default TARGET reference point is to keep stock biomass at a level that results of Maximum Economic Yield or a biomass level that is 48 per cent of its agreed pre-fished levels. The policy LIMIT reference point (beyond which commercial harvesting for the species would be stopped) is to a stock level below 20 per cent of its agreed pre-fished levels.
 - c) Indicator
What you measure to determine where the fishery is compared with the reference points. For example Catch Per Unit Effort derived from fisher records or estimates of biomass derived from stock surveys (many other variants may be used).
 - d) Performance measure
Used to measure progress against (management) objectives, and is a measure of where an indicator (such as stock size) sits in relation to a reference point.
 - e) Decision Rule
Management response required to maintain or track towards the target reference point. For example increase or decrease the catch.
 - f) Meta Rule
A rule that provides guidance for dealing with exceptional circumstances (when the unusual happens). For example reduce the catch if certain indicators showing unusual trends.

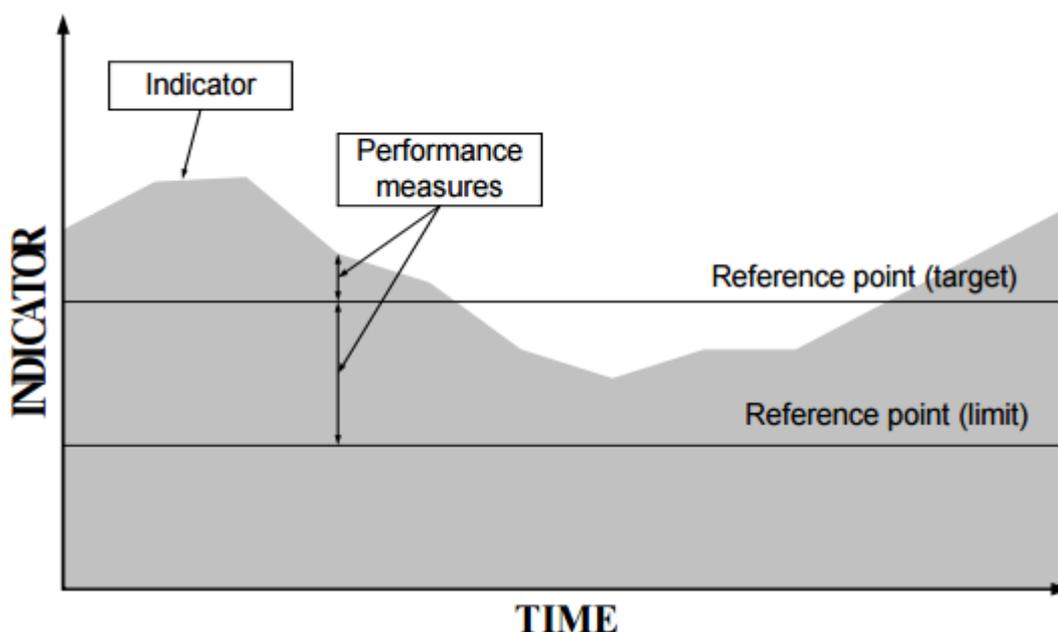


Figure 1. The relationship between indicators, reference points and performance measures.

Attachments

Attachment A – *Commonwealth fisheries harvest strategy policy and guidelines 2007*

TORRES STRAIT HAND COLLECTABLES WORKING GROUP	Meeting No. 10 3 November 2016
HARVEST STRATEGY Industry aspirations and objectives for the fishery	Agenda Item No. 2.4 For discussion and advice

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Working Group **DISCUSS** and provide preliminary **ADVICE** on industry aspirations and objectives for the beche-de-mer sector noting this may include:

- the influences that various industry-related factors (e.g. market forces) may have on a beche-de-mer harvest strategy.

KEY ISSUES

4. As discussed under agenda item 2.1, a key element of a harvest strategy is its objective. Objectives may vary but must have regard for the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984* (TSFA) and Government policy.
5. The overarching objective of the Commonwealth harvest strategy policy is the sustainable and profitable use of Australia's fisheries. To meet this objective the Commonwealth harvest strategy policy seeks to maintain target fish stocks at the size (or biomass) required to produce maximum economic yield.
6. Having regard for the TSFA, stakeholders may wish for harvest strategies in the Torres Strait fisheries to provide more explicit consideration of social objectives. For example maintaining a larger stock size to increase availability for traditional fishing.
7. In developing a harvest strategy, preliminary advice is sought from the Working Group on industry aspirations or objectives for the fishery. It may assist Working Group members to consider the following factors:
 - a. how market forces have changed over time and whether they are likely to remain stable;
 - b. whether targeting practices for various beche-de-mer species have changed over time and whether these practices are likely to vary in future;
 - c. how areas of the fishery which are fished are likely to change in the future – is harvesting to remain locally focused or is there potential for broader harvesting?; and
 - d. are recent catch rates considered sustainable both in terms of business and stock condition?

TORRES STRAIT HAND COLLECTABLES WORKING GROUP	Meeting No. 10 3 November 2016
Black Teatfish Erub Workshop Outcomes	Agenda Item No. 3 For Noting and Discussion

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Hand Collectable Working Group (HCWG) **NOTE** the outcomes of the Black Teatfish Workshop held on Erub Island on 19 October 2016.

KEY ISSUES

1. Noting the 2015 TAC overcatch of black teatfish and risk of a future overcatch, at their 20-21 June meeting the HCWG **recommended**:
 - a. that the fishery not be opened until measures are in place to improve reporting;
 - b. AFMA, with support from TSRA, convene a workshop including HCWG industry members and up to two fisheries representatives from Erub, Masig, Ugar, Mer lama, Poruma and Warraber to consider immediate options to improve catch reporting;
 - c. the workshop to consider the preliminary short and medium/long term management options to improve catch reporting as detailed in **Table 1** (below)
2. The draft workshop outcomes are at **Attachment A** for the HCWG to **NOTE**.
3. AFMA is awaiting the community submissions and will present them to the HCWG once received.

Table 1. Possible short-term and medium/long-term management options for improving catch reporting for black teatfish suggested by members and observers

Short term or medium/long term	Management tool	Description
Short-term	Mandatory Fish Receiver System	Make it a requirement for fishers to land to a licenced fish receiver and for fish receivers to report landings daily to AFMA. One possible option suggested was for landing reports to be made at 9am each day with all catches to be landed to a buyer onshore, not to carrier vessels.
	Landing restrictions by location	Restrict landings to the four eastern communities (Erub, Masig, Mer & Ugar).

	Change season dates to reduce potential effort	Change season dates to coincide with the open season for the TRL/Kaiar Fishery to reduce the number of fishers participating in the fishery.
	Prohibition on carrier boats	Do not permit carrier boats to operate in the fishery. The fishery should instead be a small boat fishery with fishers working from the community.
	Close fishing of all Beche-de-mer for 1 month after the closure	This means the Torres Strait Beche-de-mer Fishery (i.e. all species) closes for on month once black teatfish is closed. This would assist compliance but not necessarily address catch reporting issues.
	Reduce TAC to 10 tonnes	This adds further precaution to the TAC, however based on 2015 catch rates the TAC is likely to be exceeded within 3 days.
	Limited opening time to 3-4 days	The maximum daily recorded catch during the 2015 season was 4341kg. After allowing for a 10% increase in participants the total catch expected over 3 days would be around 14 tonnes.
	Limited entry	Access only developmental permit
Medium to longer-term	Mandatory logbook reporting by fishers	Make it mandatory for fishers to report catches. (would require a legislative amendment which will take over 12 months).
	Community catch share allocations	Allocate catch shares to communities to provide community flexibility to develop catch reporting arrangements. (requires a dedicated consultation process)
	Penalties for misreporting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For example: reporting performance could be reflected in subsequent year's allocation if a community allocation was to be introduced. (requires a dedicated consultation process) 2. Fisheries Infringement Notices