

Concept note - IMPAC4 Symposium: *Protecting Vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) in the high seas from bottom fishing impacts*

Time and venue

Wednesday 6 September 2017 at 11:30-13:00 hrs in Salon Bahía 3

Symposium organisers

The symposium is jointly organised by the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department and the IUCN Fisheries Expert Group (CEM-FEG) and EBCD

Introduction

Following the adoption of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 61/105 in 2006, and subsequent supporting resolutions, many States and regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements (RFMO/As) have developed processes to identify Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem (VMEs) and adopted management measures to protect them from significant adverse impact of bottom fishing in the high seas. The FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas ([FAO Deep-sea Fisheries Guidelines](#)) elaborate and provide guidance on key concepts such as what constitutes a VME or significant adverse impact. The Guidelines are used by RFMO/As in the development of their measures to protect VMEs and sustainably manage bottom fisheries in support of relevant UNGA resolutions.

Further information on such regional measures can be found in the [FAO VME DataBase](#), which presents all the current and historical measures to protect VMEs adopted by RFMO/As, as well as maps and fact sheets. The 2016 publication [Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems: Processes and Practices in the High Seas](#) catalogues the processes and practices that have been developed by RFMO/As with a mandate to manage deep-sea fisheries in the high seas, and to adopt measures that reduce or eliminate the impact of bottom fishing gears on VMEs.

This symposium on *Protecting Vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) in the high seas from bottom fishing impacts* will present a general overview of how VME are used as an area-based management measure to protect vulnerable ecosystems in the high-seas. It will discuss the challenges and opportunities faced by RFMO/As in designating and managing VMEs.

Symposium format

The symposium will take the form of a panel and include presentations and panellist and open discussions. It will draw on the contents of the recently published FAO work on fisheries and VMEs, in particular the technical paper [Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems: Processes and Practices in the High Seas](#) and experiences from RFMOs responsible for the management of bottom fisheries in the high seas.

Programme

Time	Agenda	Responsible
11:30-11:35	Welcome	FAO, Alessandro Lovatelli (RLC) Facilitator: Serge Garcia, IUCN-FEG
11:35-11:45	Background and introduction to VMEs	Jessica Sanders, FAO
11:45-11:55	Deep sea fisheries and VMEs	Tony Thompson, FAO
11:55-12:05	VMEs in the SPRFMO area	Mauricio Galvez, SPRFMO
12:05-12:15	Evaluating trawl impacts	Michel Kaiser, IUCN-FEG
12:15-12:55	Open and panellist discussion Panel: Joe Appiott, CBD Mauricio Galvez, SPRFMO Michel Kaiser, IUCN-FEG Jessica Sanders, FAO Tony Thompson, FAO	Facilitator: Serge Garcia, IUCN-FEG
12:55-13:00	Closure	