



LDRAC Recommendation on the Kobe Process

Brussels, 23rd June 2011

Status: approved by the Executive Committee

Draft in English

Reference: R-01-11/WG1

The LDRAC considers that the RFMOs are the proper organizations for the management of tuna and associated species fisheries, and strongly supports the Kobe process which is seen as a way to improve the functioning of tuna RFMOs and harmonizing the rules applying to tuna fisheries.

The LDRAC reiterates its request to the European Union to continue to actively participate at the research and management activities of the RFMOs and the Kobe process. There are indeed several possible ways to improve the efficiency of RFMOs. The LDRAC considers that several issues addressed within the framework of the RFMOs, such as compliance, the improvement of scientific data and advices or the management of capacity, should benefit from the work of the Kobe process. Therefore, looking for practical solutions, the LDRAC is making the following propositions in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of the tuna and tuna-like fisheries.

1. Data collection and science:

The RFMOs should endorse and adopt a calendar for the implementation of the recommendations made by the Barcelona Kobe workshop.

Moreover:

Scientific data is essential to establish the status of stocks, to define levels of fishing mortality which would ensure that stocks remain or recover above levels capable of producing MSY and therefore to elaborate robust and clear advices which must be the base for the design of management measures. It is also essential to establish an equitable allocation of fishing rights, which ensures the long term environmental sustainability as a prerequisite for achieving socio-economic sustainability.



All the RFMOs have a system to collect data (catch, effort and size), however there are often deficiencies with the quantity and quality of some fisheries statistics, mainly those related with the activities of several fleets. For that reason this issue has to be a priority for the RFMOs.

The LDRAC considers that the EU data collection framework and catch documentation scheme should be considered as a template for similar schemes implemented by the RFMOs. The LDRAC urges the EU to look for some agreements with other major actors (in terms of production or market) to promote such schemes.

Regular tagging programs should be encouraged and the sharing of means for these programs could help.

In addition, EU could contribute to the design of adequate sampling and observer programs for artisanal fisheries. The Kobe III should seek for formal engagements in capacity building for data collection for developing countries (identify the needs, the funding and the implementation calendar).

Each Contracting Party has the obligation to provide the fisheries data in certain form and time, so they should be available for the annual evaluation of the stocks. The non-compliance of this obligation should entail sanctions.

In spite of the fact that there are differences in the scientific structures of the RFMOs, all of them deal with similar topics, so the cooperation between them must be strengthened.

Special inter-RFMOs workshops should be organized every year to address the common uncertainties existing in the current stock assessment process such as natural mortality, growth, maturity, steepness, etc.

In addition, the implementation of the Kobe process could be improved by setting clear agendas to RFMOs to discuss, endorse and report on the implementation of the recommendations made by the Kobe process. In the same line, the performance review process should be continuous.



In order to valorize the scientific works done within the RFMO scientific process, a common tuna RFMOs scientific publication should be created (some RFMOs have already looked into this direction and sharing the efforts would facilitate such process).

Likewise, scientific research capacity as well as participation of scientists from developing countries must be encouraged and supported through RFMOs and other relevant instruments such as the UN Fish Stocks Agreement Assistance Fund.

2. Management systems

- Fishing Capacity

The LDRAC considers that it is necessary to find a balance between all the actors involved, and that access to tuna fisheries should be analyzed through a system of transparent and non-discriminatory criteria determining the responsible aspirations of stakeholders such as capacity to control the fleets/history of compliance, employment created/working conditions, environmental impact, etc.

Management of fishing activities, both on the high seas and within EEZs, must abide by International Law and all relevant legal instruments and the objective of long term sustainability.

- RFMOs Organization

The RFMOs should analyze their current structures, modifying or removing non effective working groups, as well as establishing mechanisms for exchanging good practices in horizontal issues, common to all of them.

Overcapacity is a symptom of broader management problems, so every RFMO has to take measures with the aim to ensure that the all stocks of tunas and associated species are maintained at sustainable levels through science-based efficient and adapted measures.

Therefore, as it is done in the ICES framework, the RFMOs could envisage the creation of technical working groups back to back to the scientific committees in order to provide advises on ways to translate the scientific advice into management measures.



The format of scientific advices should be harmonized. The detailed scientific data should be made available to all scientists in order to be able to carry out any stock assessment. These advices should be systematically peer-reviewed by independent scientists. Scientific advices should be divided into a short term and a long term advices and explanation should systematically be given on the changes of the advice from one year to another.

The Kobe process should encourage the elaboration of long-term management plans incorporating the precautionary approach and an ecosystem approach.

Decision making should allow progressive implementation of the measures wherever possible (not as a will to slow down or delay the implementation of measures but as a way to make measures more sustainable for the fishermen and then more efficient).

3. Control and Compliance.

Compliance has to be considered high-priority, since its non-observance compromises the long term sustainability of the resources.

Every RFMO should implement a MCS scheme which shall include:

- a) Global Record of fishing vessels. Pending the FAO process, the LDRAC supports the immediate introduction of a Unique Vessel Identifier, such as the IMO, and a Unique Tuna RFMO ID for those vessels that do not have an IMO number. Moreover, this Global Unique Register should be fully documented with at least the activity status of the vessel and the identification of the beneficial owners of the active vessels.
- b) A process for mutual recognition of tuna IUU lists and therefore the harmonization of procedures to list/delist vessels.
- c) Objective and transparent criteria to assess whether actions taken by flag states warrant delisting of vessels from a RFMO IUU list
- d) Catch Document Schemes (using harmonized catch certificate) such as that of the EU which has been recognized by several CPCs (both coastal and distant water nations) as an adequate model; it should apply to all species under the RFMOs competences.
- e) VMS system, to be compulsory on board active vessels of a RFMO ; this should be considered as a way to validate the active vessel RFMO list.



- f) Port state measures. Every RFMO should urge to their Contracting Parties to sign and to ratify FAO's Agreement.
- g) Dissuasive, equitable and transparent sanction systems

RFMOs should also think about some recognition for full compliance and rewarding scheme to encourage fishermen to adopt responsible and science-cooperative practices.

Concerning the future of the Kobe process

The LDRAC would like to support the Kobe process but thinks that a Kobe meeting every four or five years should be enough.

To reduce the financial issue raised by the organisation of the meeting, the LDRAC support the idea to organize the Kobe meeting back to back with the COFI meeting.