Preliminary results of BIOFAD project: testing designs and identify options to mitigate impacts of drifting Fish Aggregating Devices on the ecosystem

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Abstract

The EU project BIOFAD was launched in August 2017. This 28-months EU project is coordinated by the Consortium comprising three European research centers: AZTI, IRD (Institut de recherche pour le développement) and IEO (Instituto Español de Oceanografía). The International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) is also actively collaborating providing the biodegradable materials needed to test biodegradable FADs. Following IOTC, along with other tuna RFMOs, recommendations and resolutions to promote the use of natural or biodegradable materials for dFADs, this project is seeking to develop and implementing the use of dFADs with both characteristics, non-entangling and biodegradable, in the IOTC Convention Area. However, there are no technical guidelines on the type of materials and FAD designs to be used. The main objectives of the project are: (1) to test the use of specific biodegradable materials and designs for the construction of dFADs in real fishing conditions; (2) to identify options to mitigate dFADs impacts on the ecosystem; and (3) to assess the socio-economic viability of the use of biodegradable dFADs in the Purse Seine tropical tuna fishery. Following the above, this document shows the preliminary results regarding the effectiveness of around 550 BIOFADs deployed, in terms of tuna aggregation, drift, materials' durability, etc. in comparison to currently used NEFAD. For that the project counts on the whole EU purse seine tropical tuna fishery and recently Korean purse seine fleet has joined as well.