The CFP and the eco-system approach to fisheries management

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This paper consists of the Commission's staff working document concerning the role of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) in implementing an ecosystem approach to marine management.

Two recent research projects on the development of indicators to support the CFP (Anon, 2006, 2007) and two STECF SGRN meetings (SGRN 05-03 and SGRN 06-01) have focused on the development of indicators that might underpin the implementation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries.

This document synthesises and builds on the outputs of these projects and meetings to propose a preliminary set of indicators and to describe the data requirements needed to operationalise them. The document also identifies other indicators that will need to be introduced and the research and data requirements associated with their introduction.

In these projects it was decided that two types of indicators were needed to support the environmental integration process:

1. indicators of the state of the marine environment;

2. indicators of the pressure that affects state.

The state indicators should cover a broad range of ecosystem features and the pressure indicators should cover the most important aspects of how fishing impacts the ecosystem.

For the current preliminary set of indicators those indicators for which there was sufficient scientific justification were preferred, but in case there was no agreed "best" indicator for a particular ecosystem state or fishing impact a pragmatic choice was made for the indicators they deemed most informative. A prerequisite for selection was that the indicators could be quantified based on existing or proposed monitoring programmes, if needed after a slight modification or expansion.

A summary table distinguishes operational indicators (tabulated as 'operational immediately') from those that required additional data or research before they could be made operational.

The section relating to operational indicators provides precise specifications for indicators that are considered to be operational or can be made operational if small changes are made to existing data collection procedures. A table summarises these specifications and they are more comprehensively described in supporting appendices relating to each indicator. The table and appendices provide a recommended name for the indicator, define the indicator, list the data required for calculation of indicator values, describe how the indicator should be calculated, describe the expected precision of supporting data, describe the existing availability of data collected under the DCR and list **any issues that need to be considered by the EC before the indicator is introduced**.