



# Resource management and conservation

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## Objectives:

The main goal of the Work Package is to advance the science-management-policy interface and develop tools for improved resource management and understanding of deep-sea sponge ecosystems from regional to international levels across the Atlantic.

The Work Package will provide decision-makers with the scientific knowledge necessary to achieve efficiency and sustainability in the conservation and use of deep-sea sponge grounds and to improve biodiversity conservation and to guide sustainable use of marine resources in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ).

The following objectives will be addressed:

- Facilitation of the uptake of new scientific information into existing management regimes;
- Translation of scientific results of the project to all relevant actors and competent authorities, managers and decision makers;
- Achieve improved management and thus reductions in adverse impact on vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) and enhanced conservation and management of ecologically or biologically significant areas (EBSAs); and
- Facilitate knowledge transfer throughout the Atlantic region through a capacity building workshop and the development and dissemination of tools in support of management.

## Focus

Using the scientific investigations and results of the project we will promote dialogue with stakeholders such as managers and policy-makers to provide knowledge and capacity building and develop options for better risk assessment and management of the vulnerable marine deep-sea sponge ecosystems.

## Why is this important?

Enhanced scientific knowledge about the economic value and important ecological role of sponge grounds is necessary for mitigating human induced impacts on these habitats. This, in turn, informs management and conservation efforts and improves implementation of international commitments.

## What are the key knowledge gaps to address?

There is a major gap in knowledge about the economic value and services provided by deep-sea sponges. Moreover, further knowledge development about the sensitivity of and threats to sponge grounds are needed for improved management and protection of these important vulnerable components of the sea.

## Expected major outputs

Enhanced knowledge of competent authorities, managers and decision-makers about sponge ecosystems leading to sound, science based





Participants at the 1<sup>st</sup> SponGES Round-Table Session in Dakar, Senegal on 10 November 2016 (P. Claus Hagebro/FAO).

management decisions for the conservation and sustainable exploitation of deep-sea sponges.

### Results achieved so far

A scoping study on economic linkages and options for ecosystem valuation has been developed. This study revealed that there is little quantitative information on ecosystem services associated with deep-sea sponge grounds or their economic value. A next step is to develop and apply methodologies for incorporating ecosystem valuation into the planning and appraisal of policies, investments and plans.

**The EU-funded SponGES project** will contribute to the sustainable management of deep-sea fisheries, and the protection of sponge-dominated vulnerable marine ecosystems in the North Atlantic through the collection of data and the development of knowledge on the vulnerability and threats as well as protection measures leading to a sustainable use of the deep-sea areas.

A meeting with stakeholders at the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF) identified capacity development needs, the need for enhanced knowledge transfer to stakeholders and members of this region, and highlighted the importance of gaining more knowledge on deep-sea sponge grounds in support of the development of management and conservation measures for their protection. Also, the meeting provided useful input to the project as regards specific issues and needs.

### What methods/technologies/ approaches are you using

This work package will draw on results from other Work Packages of the SponGES project and the ABNJ Deep Sea Fisheries project led by FAO and UNEP.



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