



Secure Fisheries
Secure Futures



CHIMAERA PORTAL VALIDATION WORKSHOP

Flic en Flac - Mauritius



REPORT/RAPPORT: SF-FAO/2014/32

Chimaera portal validation workshop

Flic en Flac
Mauritius

GCP/RAF/466/EC SmartFish Project

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Executive summary

The Chimaera Validation Workshop was organized to present stakeholders with the final version of the Chimaera Regional Fishery Portal prototype.

The portal prototype was developed based on the recommendations of the 4th Scientific Committee (SC) of the South West Indian Ocean Fishery Commission (SWIOFC) and Harmonization Workshop (Flic en Flac, Mauritius, 2 - 4 July 2012).

The Chimaera Validation Workshop, held at the Pearle Beach Hotel, Flic en Flac, Mauritius on 23 and 24 January 2014, brought together potential Regional Fisheries Portal users, including fishery experts, marine biologists, fishery management experts, socio-economic experts and statisticians. The three source information systems data managers (FIRMS, WIOFish and StatBase) were also brought to the workshop to provide knowledge of the fisheries information structure in the region.

Thanks to the very active and collaborative work carried out by the group, the workshop achieved its objectives: validation of the current version of the prototype and identification of possible solutions for improving both the layout and content. Some major recommendations arose during the workshop, such as the necessary review of the fisheries management domain, enrichment of the portal with more on-line help, and review of the need to run several searches for a preselected list of results. Very interesting contributions for the new domains were also collected.

Issues on sustainability were also discussed to identify the best scenario to launch the portal on the Internet to make it accessible to the public.

Résumé exécutif

L'atelier de validation Chimaera a été organisé pour présenter aux parties prenantes la version finale du prototype du Portail Régional des Pêches (PRP) Chimaera.

Ce prototype du portail a été conçu en réponse aux recommandations du 4^{ème} Comité scientifique de la commission des pêches de l'Océan Indien du Sud-Ouest et l'atelier d'harmonisation (Flic en Flac, Ile Maurice, du 2 au 4 Juillet 2012).

L'atelier de validation Chimaera , qui s'est tenu au *Pearle Beach Hotel*, Flic en Flac , Ile Maurice, les 23 et 24 Janvier 2014, a réuni les utilisateurs potentiels du Portail régional sur les Pêches (PRP), des experts des pêches, les biologistes marins, des spécialistes de la gestion de la pêche , des experts socio-économiques et des statisticiens. Les gestionnaires des données des 3 systèmes d'information (FIRMS, WIOFish et StatBase) ont été également associés à l'atelier, apportant leur connaissance des structures d'information halieutique dans la région.

Grâce aux travaux très actifs et collaboratifs menés par le groupe, l'atelier a atteint ses objectifs : la validation de la version actuelle du prototype et l'identification de solutions possibles pour améliorer son organisation et son contenu. Les travaux de l'atelier ont identifié des recommandations majeures telles que la nécessaire révision du domaine de gestion des pêches, l'enrichissement du portail avec plus d'aide en ligne, le besoin d'exécuter plusieurs recherches successives imbriquées. Des contributions très intéressantes pour la définition du contenu des nouveaux domaines ont été collectées.

Enfin, la question de la durabilité a été discutée pour identifier le meilleur scénario pour un déploiement du portail sur Internet afin de le rendre accessible au public.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

CPUE	Catch Per Unit of Effort
ESA-IO	Eastern and Southern Africa – Indian Ocean
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAO/FI	FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department
FIRMS	Fishery Resources Monitoring System
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IOTC	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
NGO	Non-government Organization
PRP	Portail régional sur les Pêches
REC	Regional Economic Community
RFB	Regional Fishery Body
RFP	Regional Fisheries Portal
RIS	Regional Information System
SC	Scientific Committee
SWIOFC	South West Indian Ocean Fishery Commission
WIOFish	Western Indian Ocean Fisheries Database

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The SmartFish programme offers an opportunity for participating countries of the Indian Ocean and related RECs, RFBs and NGOs to receive support from FAO for the implementation of a Regional Fishery Strategy for the Eastern and Southern Africa - Indian Ocean Region. The programme assists participating countries to strengthen national and regional fishery/aquaculture policy and strategy frameworks and to acquire additional knowledge on fisheries management for use in planning and monitoring. The programme is funded by the European Union and supports participating countries to fulfill international commitments towards responsible fisheries and to improve food security.

Under Result 1 of the SmartFish programme, component 1M3 aims to “*improve knowledge and information in support of fisheries management processes*”. Amongst all initiatives, one key activity will lead to the development of a Regional Fisheries Information System prototype, gathering and centralizing information and data from existing international and regional systems (FIRMS, WIOFish and StatBase).

2. Workshop objective and expected outputs

The Chimaera portal was presented during the stakeholder meeting in Flic-en-Flac, Mauritius on 23 and 24 January 2014.

The objectives of the workshop were as follows:

- Day 1: validating the proof of the concept (portal with web semantics tools, not a new system but a complementary one), validating activities on the prototype, validating the current prototype to prepare the ground to move the prototype into the production phase, gathering comments on possible improvements of the current portal;
- Day 2: seeking content enhancement/improvements: assessment of the current content and collecting of propositions to improve the current content and content development by potentially getting proposals for other systems to be indexed. Discussion of the interest and relevance of similar tools at the national level.

Expected outcomes of the workshop were as follows:

- Validation of the proof of concept and agreement to proceed in the same direction;
- List of propositions to improve the design/features/usability;
- List of additional content to be indexed/annotation from the existing systems for new domains such as ‘fishing activities’ and ‘socio-economic indicators’. Propositions for new domains and related competency questions answered;
- Assessment of interest at the national level for a similar tool.

3. Workshop activities and findings

3.1 Participants welcome, presentation, election of a Chairperson/rapporteurs

Yann Laurent (YL) welcomed the participants on behalf of FAO and the SmartFish programme. He recalled the context of the creation of the Chimaera portal and thanked participants for their work during the previous test phase in December 2013.

The agenda was presented by Elena Balestri (EB). No comments or remarks were made, and the agenda was adopted (see Annex 2 for the full agenda).

YL then asked the participants to introduce themselves to the group.

The Chairperson, Bernadine Everett, was then elected and 2 co-rapporteurs volunteered to assist the FAO team to take notes for the final report, which would be drafted and released to the participants as soon as possible after the end of the workshop for their comments and validation.

YL summarized the proceedings of the workshop: the Chimaera portal was described as an achievement of an assessment process initiated by SWIOFC recommendations to harmonize existing information systems and is considered to be an innovative technical solution to integrate information in a non-intrusive way. The portal would be assessed, both in terms of functionalities and content, and later validated.

3.2 From recommendations for a regional information system to the development of the Chimaera portal

EB presented the context and background of the development of the Chimaera portal.

The Harmonization Workshop

Under project activity 1M3.2.1, a 'Harmonization Workshop' aimed to address harmonization issues between four main information systems or approaches containing data of interest to management plans supported by the project (StatBase system, Fishcode-STF approach, FIRMS and WIOFISH systems) was held in Mauritius, from the 02 - 04 July 2012.

The meeting's main objectives were:

- To identify common concepts shared across the systems/approaches, including common reference data and classifications as common standards for a regional information system;
- To identify needs for mapping concepts, defining gateways between incoherent concepts and reference data between the four systems;
- To look at a previous analysis and propose options for a regional information system.

The main outcomes of the meeting were:

- A draft design for the regional information system in the form of a Regional Fisheries Portal (RFP) with embedded web semantic tools;
- A clear picture of the harmonization issues to be solved to obtain effective results;
- A road map (short, medium and long term deadlines) for the development of the RFP and its presentation to stakeholders.

During the "Third working party on fisheries data and statistics (WPFS)" that was held from 24 to 27 July 2012 in Mombasa (Kenya), the conclusions of the Harmonization Workshop were presented and discussed. The participants agreed to be part of the prototypes tests.

Prototype 1

The first prototype of the RFP was implemented using simple web technologies embedding web semantics to facilitate access to source information systems in a non-intrusive way. This proof of concept from the July 2012 Harmonization Workshop recommendations was successful and validated early 2013. As a starting point, documents from WIOFish (pdf) and StatBase (Excel tables) were manually indexed and made available for the web semantic tools. FIRMS pages were directly accessed through existing FIRMS web-services and indexed. User browsing data in RFP will be brought back to the different source systems to access the data, i.e. in this version to the WIOFish pdf files.

Visibility of the WIOFish website will also be improved if the RFP user could be sent directly to the WIOFish page through the website as it is currently possible with FIRMS.

Prototype 2

The Chimaera portal (the new name for the RFP portal validated by the SmartFish team) user experience was improved by a capacity to clearly answer identified user needs and requirements.

Looking at the structure of prototype 1, competency questions were formulated for each thematic corner, in order to simulate the needs of the RFP's potential users. The implementation of such competency questions took into consideration the potentiality of the three systems, including type and richness of data disseminated and technologies already used for categorization and dissemination.

The Chimaera portal now allows the following actions:

- Free search tool, facilitated with an automatic fill, which anticipates data availability from the three systems supporting the portal;
- Thematic corners where research is guided through maps or pre-arranged queries. The thematic sections that are already up and running are:
 - State of Marine Resources;
 - Status of Marine Species;
 - Fisheries Management.

The web semantic tools expressed their full potential under the following conditions:

- Directly accessing the published data for indexing, in order to minimize maintenance activities, mitigate related risks of error and address the overall issue of sustainability of the system by implementing automatic procedures;
- Enriching current published pages with unique identifiers to improve the accuracy of the indexing (hidden elements in HTML pages).

In order to fulfill these conditions, the SmartFish programme decided to support the WIOFish and StatBase systems.

Towards the Chimaera validation workshop

A test phase was planned for a few weeks before the Chimaera validation meeting in order to test and validate developed functionalities and to collect propositions for functional and content improvement.

Feedback was collected by means of a questionnaire testing the comprehension and usability of the portal. Eight results from five different countries were received within the given deadline and some extra time has been allocated to be able to receive others.

The test phase gave good results evidencing a good functionality of the prototype. Improvements will be necessary to produce the final version and these will be discussed during the meeting.

The group will be asked to further test the live prototype and to propose solutions for major problems that arise.

Possible main points to be discussed could be, for example:

- The need of better explain the functionality of a specific section of the tool with an informative box;
- Better structuring of the section on management;
- Possible inclusion of other sources of information (IOTC, etc.);
- Possible addition of other domains (Regional News and Events, Ecosystems, Media Components, etc.).

Some questions on the sustainability of the portal and the three systems were raised. Some clarifications were given but the discussion was postponed to day two after all the presentations and discussions.

3.3 Chimaera as an innovative solution to integrate information for three remote information systems

'Breaking systems boundaries without breaking the systems'

Claudio Baldassarre (CB) presented technical elements that led to the design of the Chimaera portal.

Integration of information coming from various sources can be done in several ways:

- Portals over databases;
- Portals mashing-up data;
- Portals leveraging knowledge.

Each solution has pros and cons, with the last one (portals leveraging knowledge) selected as the technical solution for the Chimaera portal - real data integration through meaningful relationships and unobtrusive solutions.

The foremost requirement for Chimaera is that it should be non-intrusive with respect to the source systems (FIRMS, StatBase and WIOFISH). Based on this constraint a technical solution was found that captures the information from the three source systems in an external product that integrates the information from the three sources. The lifecycle of this product was then managed, namely the Chimaera knowledge base, as well as the front-end capabilities based on the knowledge base content. The knowledge base is in fact the pivot that creates a degree of freedom for the source systems to evolve according to their lifecycle workflows (i.e. data management and publication), and for the portal front-end to exhibit behaviour leveraging the integration of information from the three sources, as it is condensed within.

In creating the portal, challenges lay in tracking the provenance of information, from their original systems, and presenting it to the users, as part of a rich and accurate set of metadata. A customised retrieval mechanism was set up for the user categories envisioned for Chimaera: the search engine, a fishery domain explorer, and a GIS-based document retrieval system.

Finally the challenges and recommendations for the sustainability of Chimaera were listed. A model for the active participation of the three systems to sustainably update the Chimaera knowledge base was recommended. Active participation in expanding the model of knowledge of Chimaera, supported by fishery experts in the user community was recommended. How to move through stable new releases of Chimaera implementing user feedback at every evaluation phase was also recommended.

3.4 Presentation of test phase results and main outcomes

YL presented the summary of the test phase results, from tests that were conducted in December 2013.

Participants were requested to test the portal directly in the test server (<http://smartfish.d4science.org/v2/index.php>) without any support or initial training. A standard form was provided to guide them in the test process. The goal was to test usability, user-friendliness and content.

The test phase gave good results evidencing good functionality of the prototype.

No major common comments were raised from the test phase, showing that no major problems were faced during this phase. Some improvements for different parts of the portal (functionalities, design, layout, content) were suggested and were discussed during the meeting.

3.5 Discussion on the RFP layout and new features

EB presented mock-ups showing possible options to improve the layout based on the results of the test survey. The participants were then divided into three working groups to run a new set of tests, provide feedback and propose improvements to the current Chimaera layout. This working session allowed the few participants that were not able to test the portal in December to provide feedback, and for the others to provide more detailed feedback.

A discussion on possible improvements on the layout followed. The main outcomes are reported below. The complete list of recommendations is given in section 4.1

One general recommendation raised from the discussion was that functionalities should be enriched with more visible help (text/tooltip/on-line help).

For the home page, participants suggested improving the graphic design and text content. It was also suggested that the login section be removed until it is operational.

The search results page should be enriched with the possibility to run a new search for the selected results (for instance, a first search is made on a given species, a second search should be possible to search for a stock status on the result of the first search).

The filtering options in the 'advanced search' (should be renamed) should automatically update according to the filter already applied.

More recommendations were made by the participants on several other aspects of the results page (see section 4.1).

On the Status of Marine Species page, participants suggested that it would be better to see the species status immediately after a species selection.

Participants clearly stated that the tag cloud in the Fisheries Management domain was not immediately clear. It was recommended that it be replaced by a different approach based on drop down menus. The tag cloud is interesting and could be used to run a second-level search in the current selection.

Participants made some comments on the use of certain terminology, such as avoiding the possible confusion between 'state' and 'status'.

Finally a more technical general recommendation was made to ensure compliance of the portal with all browsers, as the current prototype is experiencing issues with Internet Explorer 8 and previous browsers.

3.6 Discussion on the RFP content and improvements: towards a RFP public release.

EB gave a presentation of the portal explaining the concepts of scenarios and competency questions. Competency questions were the backbone of the portal design, defining how the content is organized to facilitate data access to the users. As in the previous working session on the layout, three working groups were created to analyse the actual content of the domains, to propose content for new domains and possibly propose additional domains.

A discussion on possible improvements on the layout/content followed. The main outcomes are reported below. The complete list of recommendations is given in section 4.3.

For the State of Marine Resources, participants recommended to add an entry point for species (the question of merging Marine Resources and Marine Species should be discussed). The use of standard terms as an entry point was also suggested as well as getting information from the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC).

Regarding the Status of Marine Species, the unique recommendation was to offer the possibility to enrich results with additional information on gear, vessels and number of fishers once a species is selected. This goes in the same direction as the possibility to reuse the tag cloud to launch a secondary search.

As stated in the section on functionality, participants recommended replacing the tag cloud with drop down menus with the following title propositions:

- State of Marine Resources;
- Measures;
- Management type;
- Management methods;
- Production system.

For those domains still to be completed, suggestions on how to organize the content are presented in section 4.3.

It should also be mentioned that most of the socio-economic indicators are available in WIOFish. Some statistical indicators are also available in StatBase.

Finally, participants proposed two additional domains: one on Fisheries Governance, which should provide access to content on laws, regulations at national, regional and international levels (could be an entry point to FAOLEX as suggested by Yann Laurent), and one domain on Climate Change, which appears to be a bit more complicated to implement given that no content is available yet and no alternative sources were proposed.

3.7 Discussion on sustainability

Claudio Baldassarre (CB) presented the challenges of Chimaera sustainability.

The sustainability of Chimaera cannot be detached from the question of the sustainability of each of the three source systems, which is now being addressed at a higher level in the region.

CB presented the options for the integration of Chimaera updates and maintenance in three scenarios: full delegation, semi-delegation and no delegation.

The semi-delegation model for the implementation of Chimaera within the network of a SWIO Fisheries Information System was recommended, i.e. allowing the three source information systems the authority to decide what to index and when to index the content of their systems, using tools providing by Chimaera.

4. Workshop recommendations

4.1 Summary

The participants expressed the need for more help with the system to enable them to understand the content and the available functions of the system better (how to use functions to explain various content such as IUCN status).

Participants provided their expertise for the enrichment of existing domains and the creation of the new domains, especially for the Fisheries Management domain, for which the proposed tag cloud was found to be not user-friendly enough. Most of the socio-economic indicators are available in WIOFish. Some statistical indicators are available in StatBase, raising the need to better explore the content of the statistical database from the portal (improvements are in progress with support from SmartFish).

Finally, a new domain was recommended in order to access content on fisheries laws and regulations. This could be implemented first as a gateway to FAOLEX resources.

The semi-delegation model for the implementation of Chimaera within the network of a SWIO Fisheries Information System was recommended, i.e. allowing the three source information systems the authority to decide what to index and when to index the content of their systems, using tools providing by Chimaera.

4.2 Portal functionalities improvements

Home page:

- Improve the graphics of the banner to make it easier to read;
- Build static images including the three systems with a banner for Chimaera below;
- Improve the readability of the text, clearly distinguishing explanatory text and instructions (enhance font size of some instructions);
- Remove the login section until needed.

Search interface:

- Better explain the possibility of selecting more than one option for the given lists;
- Refine the lists within the 'Advanced Search' section according to criteria already selected elsewhere.

Results page content and functionalities:

- Automatic opening of the results page or better evidencing of it;
- Find a solution for having the map and list of the results on the same page (possible mock-up proposed);
- Add the possibility to run a new search on the actual results page;
- Add a utility for saving or printing search results;
- Hyperlink publication titles in the results list;
- Possibly group results by source (FIRMS, WIOFish or StatBase);
- Change the title 'Advanced Search' to better reflect that is a refinement of a previous search (e.g. 'Refine your search').

Status of Marine Species page:

- Directly display the status of a marine species once selected and then link to source documents.
- IUCN Status should be clearly enumerated to be used as entry points.

Fishery Management page:

- Find an easier and more auto explicative way to be used as an entry point (possibly drop down menus).
- Tag cloud could be used to refine the search adapting the list of keywords to the evolution of the search.

Terminology:

- The use fishery resources instead of marine resources should be clearer;
- Find a way to avoid confusion between *Status* of Marine Species and *State* of Marine Resources.

Technical improvements:

- Ensure the compatibility of the portal with all browsers.

4.3 Portal content improvement

The working sessions provided recommendations for the existing domains for which content is already available and for the domains for which content needs yet to be defined.

1. Improvement of existing domains:

State of Marine Resources:

- Use standard terminology for the state as an entry point (e.g. underexploited, fully exploited, etc.);
- Use the species as an entry point (add a button);
- Get information from IOTC (start with updates of IOTC data reported in FIRMS);
- Update RFMO's state (update SWIOFC data in FIRMS).

Status of Marine Species:

- Use Species list as an entry point and then enrich results with information on gear, vessels, number of fishers, etc.

Fisheries Management:

The main recommendation is to replace the tag cloud with a drop down menu:

- State of Marine Resources;
- Measures;
- Management type;
- Management methods;
- Production system.

2. For those domains still to be completed, suggestions on how to organize the content were as follows:

Fishing Activities:

Retrieve and display information on:

- IUU fisheries;
- Foreign vessels/distant fleets fishing within the EEZ of a country;
- MSC information (fees);
- Type of fisheries/Exploitation form (recreational, etc.);
- Type of boat (size, capacity, power, building material, etc.);
- Ownership of boats or rental fees;
- Fishery areas (inside/outside lagoons, reefs, etc.);
- List of fishing activities per year per country;
- Add two sub-domains:
 - Fishing areas (per country and per species)
 - Fishery type (exploitation form - per country and per species)
- Post-harvest:
 - Markets;
 - Commodities;
 - Export ratio.

Catch Statistics:

- Total catches/landings per species/total per country;
- Percentage of by-catch;
- Catch values;
- Data on fishing effort;
- Catch data from surveys;
- CPUE values per species;
- MSY;
- Total production;
- Information on industrial fleet: flag, registration number, etc.

Socio-economic indicators:

Fishery assessment from a socio-economic point of view including:

- Contribution of fisheries to country GDP;
- Fisher folks' revenue or income;
- Post-harvest use and commodities;
- Ratio of goods sold on national or international markets;
- Percentage of exports;
- Number of fisher folks;
- Number of people working in the fishery sector but not on board vessels;
- Crew information (number, ethnic groups, etc.)
- Ownership of the vessels;
- Migration flows related to fisheries and mobility;
- Diseases;
- Age and gender ratio of people working in the fishery sector;
- Producer/consumer/export prices;
- Taxes/subsidies;
- Alternative activities during closed seasons;
- Operational costs;
- Educational level of fishermen;
- Price of fuel;
- Direct added value;
- Sector contribution to: GDP, country revenue, trade balance, employment, consumption per capita;
- Exportation product quotation to different countries (there is no global quotation system as in agriculture for main crops).

5. Conclusions

The workshop was successful as participants were proactive and provided very interesting feedback on both functionalities (design) and content (layout).

The current prototype is considered validated in its current design and content with the recommendation to change the Fisheries Management domain approach to a drop down menu.

Recommendations will be carefully studied as some can be implemented immediately in the course of the deployment of the system i.e., publicly available via the Internet, however most of them will require more time to be implemented (new content for instance).

These recommendations should now lead to the definition of a roadmap for the deployment of the system, and a roadmap for a version to implement some of these recommendations. These roadmaps will be then submitted to the SmartFish for validation and support.

Annex 1. Workshop Agenda

Day 1

Morning:

1. Opening of the session and welcome address
2. Goals of the meeting
3. Election of chairperson and rapporteurs
4. Adoption of the agenda
5. Presentation of SmartFish RFP background and objectives (Elena Balestri)
6. Presentation of SmartFish RFP achievements and how the community was involved (Elena Balestri)
7. Presentation of the SmartFish portal itself, the concept of web semantics and issues on sustainability (Claudio Baldassarre)
8. Presentation and discussion of the results of the test phase (*improvements in terms of user interfaces, search refinement, navigation across domains, addition of new features in terms of CMS for news/publication management, etc.*)

Afternoon

1. Discussion on the FRP layout for improvements and new features
2. Assessment of the actual content of the portal through a live test
3. Live test on the portal and group discussion to evidence gaps, needs for improvement and competency questions (*Proposal for new solutions to get other information. Is the information available, if yes, where?*)

Day 2

Morning

1. Toward a RFP public release (*Collection of competency questions for the three empty domains and proposal for other possible thematic corners and their related concepts and competency questions.*)
2. Presentation and discussion on sustainability of the RFP

Afternoon

1. Assessing the interest of the community for more visibility of existing regional systems (*How can we promote this portal to bring more visibility to existing systems? How can we involve the community/experts to enrich RFP content?*)

2. Assessing the interest of the community for more visibility of national systems (*How much the community would be interested to benefit from some of the FRP features for their own national systems? Is there interest at the national level for such functionalities to exploit information available in the different institutions/ministries?*)
3. Conclusions and recommendations, wrapping up the 2 working sessions (*A presentation of the main outcomes of the working session of day 1 and 2 will be delivered.*)
4. Roadmap

Annex 2. List of participants

Country	Name	E-mail
Comoros	Nashime Mohamed Soifine	nashimohamed@gmail.com
Comoros	Ibrahim Mohamed Tohir	toihyr@gmail.com
Kenya	Harrison Ong'anda	gokemwa@kmfri.co.ke
Tanzania	John Komakoma	jkomakoma@gmail.com
Tanzania	Lillian Ibengwe	lilyibengwe@gmail.com
Tanzania	Kayanda Robert	bobkayanda@yahoo.com
Madagascar	Ranaivoson Samueline Vololoherimandimby	samranaivo@gmail.com
Madagascar	Rakotosoa Rado Aime	observatoire.economique@moov.mg
Madagascar	Roginah Rafidison	rogirafidi@yahoo.fr
Mauritius	Sunil Panray Beeharry	sbeeharry@mail.gov.mu
Mauritius	Dharmendra Degambur	nehan24@live.com
Seychelles	Elisa Socrate	esocrate@sfa.sc
Seychelles	Vincent Lucas	vlucas@sfa.sc
South Africa	Bernadine Everett	bernadine@ori.org.za
FAO	Elena Balestri	elena.balestri@fao.org
FAO	Claudio Baldassarre	claudio.baldassarre@fao.org
FAO	Yann Laurent	yann.laurent@fao.org

SmartFish is a regional fisheries project managed by the Indian Ocean Commission, funded by the European Union and co-implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. SmartFish, which operates in 20 countries throughout the East and Southern Africa - Indian Ocean region, focuses on fisheries governance, management, monitoring, control and surveillance, trade, and food security.

With the aim of improving knowledge and information in support of fisheries management processes, SmartFish is providing support for the development of a Regional Fisheries Information System prototype that will gather and centralize information and data from existing regional and international systems.

This report provides the details of the Chimaera Validation Workshop that was held in Mauritius in January 2014 to present stakeholders with the final version of the Chimaera Regional Fishery Portal prototype.



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