



**GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION
FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN
COMMISSION GÉNÉRALE DES PÊCHES
POUR LA MÉDITERRANÉE**



GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

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INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

INTRODUCTION

1. This document is a summary on the work of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and the Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ) together with their subsidiary bodies. The inputs from the FAO Regional projects in support of the SAC are summarized in document GFCM:XXXIII/2009/Inf. 9. Fisheries management related advice emanating from SAC is dealt with in document GFCM:XXXIII/2009/4. The outcomes of the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) as a Monitoring, Control and Surveillance tool, organised within framework of the Compliance Committee, are also reported.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

2. The eleventh session of SAC, held in Marrakech, from 1 to 5 December 2008, was attended by delegates from 18 Members of the Commission as well as by observers from the Agreement on the Conservation of the Cetaceans in the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Areas (ACCOBAMS), the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the WWF Mediterranean.

3. The intersessional activities were carried out in accordance with the programme of work agreed by the thirty-second session of GFCM (February 2008). All the approved meetings of SAC were convened as listed below:

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Meetings

- First meeting of the Coordination Meeting of the Sub-Committees; FAO HQs Rome (Italy), 11 March 2008
- SCSI Ad Hoc Workshop on regional fleet register; FAO HQs, Rome (Italy), 12-14 May 2008
- Second Working Group on Stock Assessment Methodologies, on basic methods and protocols to undertake assessments with direct methods; Tripoli, Libya, 2-4 June 2008;
- Eighth session of the Joint GFCM/ICCAT Working Group on large pelagic species; Malaga, Spain, 5-9 May 2008;
- SCSA Training courses on methodologies for stock assessment; Cairo, Egypt, 22-26 June 2008;
- SCME/SCSA/SCSS Transversal Working Group on selectivity; Sete, France, 2-4 July 2008;
- SCME/SCSA transversal Working Group on by catch/incidental catches; Rome, 15-16 September 2008;
- SCME meeting of ByCBAMS project (jointly with ACCOBAMS); Rome, Italy, 17-18 September 2008;
- SCSA Working Group on Demersal Species, including joint stocks assessments; Izmir, Turkey, 15-19 Sept. 2008;
- SCSA Working Group on Small Pelagic Species, including joint stocks assessments; Izmir, Turkey, 22-26 Sept. 2008
- Tenth Session of the SCSA; Antalya, Turkey, 13-16 Oct. 2008;
- Ninth Session of the SCSS; Antalya, Turkey, 13-16 Oct. 2008;
- SCSS/SCSA Working Group on Recreational Fisheries (back to back to the SCSS session); Antalya, Turkey, 13-16 Oct. 2008;
- Ninth Session of the SCSI; Antalya, Turkey, 13-16 Oct. 2008;
- SCSI/SCSS/SCSA Workshop to refine the fleet segmentation (back to back with the SCS); Antalya, Turkey, 13-16 Oct. 2008;
- Ninth Session of the SCME; Antalya, Turkey, 13-16 Oct. 2008;
- Second meeting of the CMSC; Antalya, Turkey, 17 Oct 2008;
- Eleventh Session of the Scientific Advisory Committee; Marrakech, Morocco, 1-5 December 2008.

Main outcomes and activities of SAC subsidiary bodies

4. The main outcomes of the work of the SAC Sub-Committees, their Working Groups and Workshops, as well as the conclusions of the Coordination Meeting of the Sub-Committees (CMSC), as endorsed by SAC, are summarized below:

Second meeting of the Working Group of Stock Assessment Methodology on basic methods and protocols to undertake assessments with direct methods suggested that two methods using exclusively trawl survey data be considered for future assessment works: the non equilibrium biomass dynamic model and the composite model. Methods using survey and commercial data should also be used. Furthermore it urged national scientists in charge of surveys at sea, the FAO sub-regional projects as well as other projects such as Medits and Medias to communicate to the GFCM Secretariat their detailed protocols to be considered as reference to finalize the standard GFCM protocol to undertake surveys at sea.

The Workshop on the GFCM Regional Fleet Register agreed upon a list of fields, definitions, formats, codifications, data submission frequency and standards, and confidentiality issues in relation

to the GFCM Regional Fleet Register (RFR) which would contain information of “Any vessel, boat, ship, or other craft that is equipped and used for commercial fishing activity”. The introduction of a vessel unique identifier in both this register and the already established Authorised Vessels List was strongly recommended.

The Transversal Workshop to refine the fleet segmentation agreed that the names of the segments should clearly relate to the vessel and not to the gear, in order to avoid confusion, i.e. “Trawlers” instead of “Trawl”, “Purse Seiners” instead of “Purse Seine”, etc. In addition, acknowledging the fact that one must avoid classifying most of the vessels in one of the polyvalent segments, the Workshop agreed to adopt the rule which allocates a vessel to a segment on the basis of a dominance criteria, i.e. allocating more than 50% of its fishing time with a specific gear.

The Transversal Working Group on Recreational fisheries reviewed the existing legal, management and environmental frameworks, and intended to define an integrated framework for the collection and analysis of biological, ecological, environmental, and socio-economic data for use in recreational fisheries management. The meeting addressed the issue of definitions related to this sub-sector and suggested to classify it in: i) shellfish gathering; ii) shore based; iii) boat based and iv) underwater fishing.

The Transversal Working Group on Selectivity suggested to finalize a common framework for selectivity studies to support the implementation of the selectivity measures, as well as to urgently implement and enforce the use of a square mesh of at least 40 mm in the bottom trawl codend in accordance with GFCM regulations. In addition, it recommended to pursue the effort of the TechnoMed network, to develop a GFCM database on gear selectivity.

The Transversal Workshop on Bycatch/Incidental Catches agreed to pursue the work on population dynamics of protected species of conservation concern, interaction between fishing activities and cetacean, and the elaboration of a protocol for data collection on by-catch of species of conservation concern.

The Joint GFCM/ICCAT Working Group on Large Pelagic in the Mediterranean focused its work on small tuna fisheries in the Mediterranean (Spain, May 2008) notably to assess the status on knowledge on these fisheries. The Working group analysed the available studies and the outcome of the GFCM regional study on small tuna fisheries.

The Sub-Committee on Statistics and Information (SCSI) continued enhancing the GFCM Task 1 data entry tool and elaborated guidelines for data reporting, developed interactive tools via the web and other information such as the list of vessels authorized to fish in the GFCM area. The information was published as the first issue of GFCM Statistical Bulletin made available for the Sub-Committee Meetings. The Sub-Committee addressed the implementation of GSA compatible STATLANT 37A form, which requires reporting by both FAO divisions and GFCM GSAs. The SCSI also reviewed the GSA boundaries to make it consistent with those of the FAO and contributed to a joint action to refine the fleet segmentation. The SCSI also assessed some experiences regarding the logbook system in some country members.

The Sub-Committee on Economic and Social Sciences (SCESS) reviewed the legislative and socio economic status of the recreational fisheries in the Mediterranean and identified the relevant information and data to be collected to improve the knowledge on this sub-sector. It contributed to the joint activity aimed at refining the fleet segmentation and addressed the issue of the socio economic impact of the implementation of 40-mm square mesh in bottom trawls. The Sub-Committee underlined the lack of information and stressed the need to enhance this kind of work. It also reviewed contributions from the meeting on promoting the use of socioeconomic indicators in fisheries management. The SCESS worked on the topic of fleet capacity, and identified the option to

progress on it, through the convening of a transversal workshop on Assessment, Management and Monitoring of Fishing Capacity in the GFCM Area.

The Sub-Committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE) focused its work particularly on issues related to ecosystems and essential habitats. Specifically, the Sub-Committee reviewed options to identify criteria for the identification of essential habitats of relevance for the management of priority species by GSA. The SCMEE reiterated the importance to implement the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) through national and regional case studies, possibly with the support of the FAO regional projects and using the GEF project frame. The SCMEE reviewed and discussed a proposal for establishing a new GFCM Fishery Restricted Area (FRA), encompassing marine canyons in the Continental Slope of the Eastern Gulf of Lions (CoSEGoL).

The Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment (SCSA) carried out joint assessments of hake and associated species as well as of anchovy and sardine, using both commercial and surveys at sea data, considering also selected reference points and indicators. The Sub-Committee reviewed 32 assessments and identified management advice for consideration by SAC. The methods to perform assessments by the use of surveys at sea data were identified and a GFCM framework to standardize the various protocols to undertake direct assessments was produced. In addition, the SCSA addressed the issue of updating the priority species list and suggested to complete the current list with the following new species. The Sub-Committee also revised the functioning of its Working groups on stock assessment of demersal and small pelagic resources.

The Coordination Meeting of the Sub-Committees (CMSC) held two meetings: i) the first meeting was organized in March 2008, immediately after the 32nd Session of GFCM, with the aim to finetune the 2008 workplan and to translate it into operative activities; and ii) the second meeting was organized in October 2008, back to back with the Sub-Committees meetings (13-16 October 2008). It reviewed the main conclusions and recommendations emanating from the Sub-Committees together with transversal matters. The two meetings reviewed various topics and made suggestions for consideration by the SAC.

ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE (CAQ)

5. The sixth session of CAQ was held in Tirana, Albania, from 17 to 19 December 2009. It was attended by delegates from 11 Members of the Commission as well as by the observer from the World Conservation Union (IUCN).

6. The intersessional activities were carried out in accordance with the programme of work agreed at the thirty-second session of GFCM (February 2008). All the approved meetings of CAQ were convened as listed below:

Meetings

- Coordination Meeting of the Working Groups (CMWG); FAO HQs, Rome (Italy), September 2008;
- Working Group on Site Selection and Carrying Capacity (WGSC); Crete, Greece, 21 - 23 October 2008;
- Working Group on Sustainability of Aquaculture (WGAS), Workshop on the Selection of Indicators for the Sustainable Development of Aquaculture in the Mediterranean; Montpellier, France, 27 - 28 November 2008;
- The Tenth Session of the Information System for the Promotion of Aquaculture in the Mediterranean (SIPAM); Tirana, Albania, 15-16 December 2008;

- Sixth Session of the Committee on Aquaculture; Tirana, Albania, 17-18 December 2008;

Main outcomes and activities of CAQ subsidiary bodies

7. The main activities of CAQ and its subsidiary bodies as well as its supporting projects, are summarized as follows:

The Coordination Meeting of the Working Groups (CMWG) reviewed the activities of the 3 Working Groups and of SIPAM. It focused in particular on the status of formulation and implementation of the projects supporting the work of the Working groups (WGs). The CMWG recalled in particular the importance of sustainable indicators and related standard reference points, and the necessity to integrate the relevant outputs of the Working Groups in the SIPAM Data Banks. The CMWG agreed that SIPAM should concentrate on the Production Statistics database as a core priority for CAQ and should consider the Production Centres directory as useful for assessing the aquaculture production capacity of the Mediterranean countries.

The Project in support of the *CAQ Working Group on Marketing of Aquaculture Products* “Development of a Strategy for Marketing and Promotion of Mediterranean Aquaculture” (MedAqMarket) funded by the Spanish Government (Secretaria General de Pesca, Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación) became operational in April 2008. The project aims at increasing the understanding of the present situation of marketing of aquaculture products in the Mediterranean and in supporting Member countries in implementing a strategy for the development of the marketing of aquaculture products. Within the project activities, the structure for data collection including the template for an understanding of the present market situation of each Mediterranean country was finalised. The preliminary structure of a marketing database, including the parameters to be included in the SIPAM Information Technology System was prepared. Furthermore a technical document entitled “Market Study on Mediterranean Meagre (*Argyrosomus regius*)” was drafted.

The project ShocMed (*Developing siting and carrying capacity guidelines for Mediterranean aquaculture within aquaculture appropriate areas*) in support of the activities of the *Working Group on Site Selection and Carrying Capacity (WGSC)* and funded with the contribution of European Community (EC), became operational in October 2008. A meeting of the WGSC was convened (Greece, October 2008). The Working group focused its discussions on the parameters for monitoring aquaculture activities, on salient aquaculture impacts on the environment and on gaps concerning the legal framework for site selection. The Working Group considered that monitoring of marine finfish aquaculture is essential to evaluate the effects and impact of aquaculture on the environment and on aquaculture itself, and a minimum list of variables to be monitored were listed by the WGS. In addition, the Working Group formulated recommendations, notably for the implementation of a programme for monitoring the environment in relation to marine finfish aquaculture, the introduction of a procedure for carrying out Environmental Impact Assessments and the proposals for the limitation of new aquaculture installations in sensitive habitats such as on the Posidonia beds.

The project InDAM “*Selection of Indicators for Sustainable Development of Aquaculture and Guideline for their use in the Mediterranean*” in support of the activities of the *Working Group on Sustainability on Aquaculture (WGAS)* and funded with the contribution of European Community (EC), became operational in November 2008. The Workshop on the Selection of Indicators for the Sustainable Development of Aquaculture in the Mediterranean (France, November 2008) reviewed some recent experiences gained from research and cooperation programmes on the identification and development of sustainable aquaculture indicators. Discussion was raised on how principles, criteria and indicators should be selected, as well as on a common understanding of the terms used. Participants agreed on the necessity of common criteria and relative indicators to describe the level of sustainability of aquaculture in the Mediterranean and Black Sea areas. It remarked that meeting

economic, social and environmental demands with common sustainable reference systems is an essential condition for the responsible development of marine aquaculture in the GFCM regions. Participants selected a series of principles for each dimension (Economic, Environmental, Social and Governance) of Sustainable Aquaculture. It was agreed that in producing indicators for sustainable aquaculture and the involvement of the stakeholders is fundamental to harmonise the strategies for the management of the aquaculture. The follow-up of this activity was foreseen through organizing a second expert meeting (France, February 2009) with the aim to finalise the list of selected criteria and of sustainable aquaculture indicators. The WGSA suggested that, cooperation and synergy with the CAQ Working Groups on Siting and Carrying Capacity and on Marketing, as well as the proper acknowledgment of their outputs is fundamental.

The domain of the *Information System for the Promotion of Aquaculture in the Mediterranean (SIPAM)* has been installed and activated on the GFCM Server. A handing-over process of the Information Technology component of SIPAM to the GFCM Secretariat was initiated in April 2008. The Regional Centre in Tunis continued to have the overall responsibility for establishing contact and correspondence with the SIPAM National Coordinators (SNC). Moreover, the Tunisian Government was requested to provide an extension of the SIPAM Trust Fund until June 2009 to permit the finalization of the decentralization process from the Regional Centre in Tunisia to the GFCM Secretariat. Since July 2008 significant efforts have been pursued in undertaking technical maintenance and improvements of the SIPAM web-application, including the preparation of user guides and technical documentation. A server-side application has been developed to facilitate the management of the news, publications and events reported on the SIPAM portal. Particular attention was paid to the optimization of Production Statistics database and Production Centre database.

OTHER

The Ad Hoc Working Group on Vessel Monitoring System as a Monitoring, Control and Surveillance tool reviewed the issue of implementation of VMS within the GFCM Convention Area as requested by GFCM at its 32nd Session and revised the related draft Recommendation accordingly. It highlighted that the establishment of VMS is already implied in the text of some recommendations of the GFCM (eg Recommendation GFCM/2008/1) as well as selected ICCAT recommendations endorsed by GFCM (Recommendation GFCM/31/2007/3). The Working Group also identified various calls at international level concerning the establishment of VMS by RFMOs to improve MCS, including various UNGA resolutions on sustainable fisheries and the 2005 FAO Ministerial Declaration on IUU.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMISSION

The Commission is invited to review the activities carried out by its committees during the intersessional period and to provide guidance on issues of particular relevance expressed by concerned subsidiary bodies, including on any follow-up that might be deemed necessary.