



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



GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

Thirty-fourth session

Athens, Greece, 14-17 April 2010

**INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES
OF THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR 2009**

INTRODUCTION

1. This document provides an outline of the work undertaken by the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) together with its subsidiary bodies during the intersession period. The outcome of the Transversal Workshop on the assessment, management and monitoring of fishing capacity in the GFCM Area, which has not been reviewed by the SAC, is reported in document GFCM:XXXIV/2010/Inf.10.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

2. The twelfth session of SAC, held in Budva, Montenegro, between 25th and 29th January 2010, was attended by delegates from 19 Members of the Commission as well as by observers from the *Confédération internationale de la pêche sportive* (CIPS), Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Area United Nation Environment Programme Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP-MAP-RAC/SPA), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF). The report of this session is contained in document GFCM:XXXIV/2010/Inf.9.

3. The intersession activities were carried out in accordance with the programme of work agreed upon by the thirty-third session of GFCM (March 2009). All the approved meetings of SAC were convened as listed below:

For reasons of economy, this document is produced in a limited number of copies. Delegates and observers are kindly requested to bring it to the meetings and to refrain from asking for additional copies, unless strictly indispensable.

Meetings

- **SCSI/SCSA** Transversal Workshop on the GFCM Logbook; Rome, Italy, 29 June–1 July 2009;
- **SCMEE/SCSA/SCCESS** Transversal Workshop on Selectivity Improvement and Bycatch Reduction; Tunis, Tunisia, 23–25 September 2009;
- **SCSA** Working Group on Stock Assessment of Demersal Species; Ancona, Italy, 19–23 October 2009;
- **SCSA** Working Group on Stock Assessment of Small Pelagic Species Ancona; Italy, 26–30 October 2009;
- Session of the **Sub-Committee on Economics and Social Sciences (SCCESS)**; Malaga, Spain, 30 November–3 December 2009;
- Session of the **Sub-Committee on the Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE)**; Malaga, Spain, 30 November–3 December 2009;
- Session of the **Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment (SCSA)**; Malaga, Spain, 30 November–3 December 2009;
- Session of the **Sub-Committee on Statistics and Information (SCSI)**; Malaga, Spain, 30 November–3 December 2009;
- **Coordination Meeting of the Sub-Committees (CMSC)**; Malaga, Spain, 4 December 2009
- Twelfth Session of the **Scientific Advisory Committee**; Budva, Montenegro, 25–29 January 2010
- Transversal Workshop on assessment, monitoring and management of fishing capacity in the GFCM Area; Rome, Italy, 17 - 19 February 2010.

Main outcomes and activities of SAC subsidiary bodies

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

The *Transversal Workshop on the GFCM Logbook* drew up a draft format of the GFCM logbook and defined a list of parameters to be included therein. The workshop suggested that the GFCM logbook should consider both effort and catches of GFCM priority species exploited by Operational Units operating in the Mediterranean and Black Sea fishing area.

The *Transversal Workshop on the Assessment, Management and Monitoring of Fishing Capacity in the GFCM Area* reviewed information submitted by Members¹ through a questionnaire, purposely prepared by the Secretariat and a consultant. In particular, it appraised the strengths and weaknesses of national fishing fleets and existing national mechanisms to control and manage fishing capacity. In the light of the discussions held, the Workshop drew up a list of main considerations, specific areas for action and possible options for the way forward on the management and monitoring of fishing capacity in the Region, for deliberation by the Commission.

¹ A total of fourteen questionnaires were completed and submitted to the GFCM Secretariat by 17th February 2010.

The ***Transversal Workshop on Selectivity Improvement and Bycatch Reduction*** addressed the issue of bycatch and discards in Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries and, in this context, drew up a number of general and specific proposals related to the monitoring and management of fisheries. Furthermore, the workshop identified key elements for a standard protocol for the collection of information on bycatch of species of conservation concern. Studies on mitigation measures for bycatch reduction, namely that of seabirds and turtles, were also reviewed.

The Sub-Committee on Statistics and Information (SCSI) reviewed the outcome and proposals of the Workshop on the GFCM Logbook and discussed issues related to its implementation. In addition, the SCSI evaluated the Task 1 XML data exchange protocol and Task 1 data entry software developed by the Secretariat, which are to be used by Members to submit Task 1.1, 1.2 and 1.4 data by February 2010 and the complete Task 1 datasets thereafter. The SCSI also evaluated the STATLANT37A capture production data submission system on the basis of the ongoing three-year trial period, focusing on the relevance of this system, as well as on options for its replacement or amendment.

The Sub-Committee on Economics and Social Sciences (SCESS) addressed the development of “Non Professional Commercial Fishing” and “Recreational Fisheries”. The SCESS discussed the undertaking of socioeconomic studies in connection with the improvement in gear selectivity and identified the need for information on the impacts on the resources and their potential to recover as a pre-requisite for specific analyses to be undertaken. It also discussed the increase in fuel prices and the added pressure on the fishing industry to decrease CO2 emissions, stressing the urgent need for data collection of economic information in order to allow for reliable predictions and adaptation in the economic and social dimensions.

The Sub-Committee on the Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE) revised the criteria for the identification of sensitive habitats with a view to presenting a completed document on the subject including the list of identified sensitive habitats for each GFCM priority species at the eleventh session of the SCMEE. It also discussed the establishment of a detailed form, as an additional component to the Task 1 system, for data collection on the by-catch of endangered species. In addition, the SCMEE drew up a draft project on elasmobranch species and addressed other subjects such as the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF), Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), Fisheries Restricted Areas (FRAs), the improvement of selectivity and by-catch reduction, the use of artificial reefs in the Mediterranean, as well as the monitoring of the alien species and their impact on fisheries.

The Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment (SCSA) reviewed the outcomes of the practical sessions conducted by the two working groups on stock assessment, together with 29 technical papers on demersal species and 17 technical papers on small pelagic species. The species studied were: *Merluccius merluccius*, *Mullus barbatus*, *Mullus surmuletus*, *Nephrops norvegicus*, *Parapenaeus longirostris*, *Boops boops*, *Pagellus bogaraveo*, *Solea solea*, *Aristomorpha foliacea*, *Aristeus antennatus*, *Engraulis encrasicolus*, *Sardina pilchardus* and *Sardinella aurita*. The Sub-Committee also reviewed the list of priority species and shared stocks and improved the stock assessment forms by including additional sheets related to direct methods, together with a summary table for all the parameters used as inputs in the analyses.

The Coordination Meeting of the Sub-Committees (CMSC) reviewed the main conclusions and recommendations drawn up by the Sub-Committees and the Transversal Session, and provided consolidated advice to the Scientific Advisory Committee. It also evaluated the functioning of the SCSA and its assessment Working Groups and proposed a revised working strategy to improve it.

The CMSC underlined the need to address the topic of increasing fuel prices and the related impact on the fishing industry. It also called for the fine-tuning of the criteria to identify sensitive habitats for priority species, further studies on alien species and their impact on fisheries, together with the implementation of a working programme on elasmobranchs. In addition, the CMSC stressed on the importance of the submission of data and information by GFCM Members in order for SAC to fulfill its work and proposed that a specific data policy should be developed for the Task 1 dataset as well as all other GFCM-managed datasets.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMISSION

5. The Commission is invited to review the activities carried out by its subsidiary bodies during the intersession period and to provide guidance on any follow-up that may be required as well as on the working strategies to be adopted.