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



GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Twelfth Session

Budva, Montenegro, 25-29 January 2010

**REVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY THE
COMMITTEE DURING THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD**

INTRODUCTION

1. This document provides an overview on the activities of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) during the 2009 intersessional period. In particular, it reports on the work carried out by the SAC through its Sub-Committees, their Working Groups and Workshops, as well as other activities.
2. The achievements of the FAO regional projects supporting the SAC activities, namely: CopeMed II including ArtfiMed, AdriaMed, MedSudMed, and EastMed are presented in document GFCM:SAC12/2010/Inf.15. Additional information on activities of relevance to SAC that are carried out by other national or regional projects are to be presented under agenda item four which deals with the integrated review of the national reports of SAC Members (document GFCM:SAC12/2010/Inf.10).

ACTIVITIES OF THE SAC DURING THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD

3. At its Thirty-third Session (Tunis, Tunisia, 23–27 March 2009), GFCM agreed upon the programme of work of SAC for the intersession¹. SAC had eight (8) months within which to implement its programme. All the meetings approved by the Commission were convened (see table below). The Workshop on Fishing Capacity is scheduled to be held in Rome, Italy, from 17 to 19 February 2010.

¹ Report of the Thirty-third Session, paragraphs 102–107.

- **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 **SCCESS** Malaga, Spain , 30 November–3 December 2009;
- Session of the **SCMEE** Malaga, Spain, 30 November–3 December 2009;
- Session of the **SCSA** Malaga, Spain, 30 November–3 December 2009;
- Session of the **SCSI** Malaga, Spain, 30 November–3 December 2009;
- **CMSC** Malaga, Spain 4 December 2009

Sub-Committees, Working Groups and Workshops

4. The reports of the Working Groups and Workshops held during the 2009 intersessional period are available in documents GFCM:SAC12/2010/Inf.11 to Inf.14. The outcomes of these technical meetings were reviewed by the concerned Sub-Committees and by the Transversal Session of the Sub-Committees as appropriate.

5. During the intersession, the Sub-Committees focused on a number of themes as described below.

The Sub-Committee on Statistics and Information (SCSI) coordinated the organization of the Workshop on the GFCM Logbook and reviewed the outcome and proposals arising during its Tenth Session. In connection with the implementation of the Task 1 data submission framework, a data exchange protocol based on XML together with a data entry software have been developed along with related documentation. These have been developed with the support of the Secretariat and are expected to be used by Members to submit Task 1.1, 1.2 and 1.4 data before February 2010. The data entry software was evaluated by SCSI experts and tests using the XML schema for data transmission were initiated by some national institutions. The SCSI 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 SCSI contributed to the updating of the glossary by proposing the revision of some definitions with those already proposed in one of its expert meetings, the revision of some definitions which were currently inappropriate with new ones drawn up by the

SCSI participants, as well as the addition of terms and their definition used in the data fields of various GFCM datasets. The report of the SCSI is included in GFCM:SAC12/2010/Inf.6

The Sub-Committee on Economic and Social Sciences (SCESS) addressed the development of “Non Professional Commercial Fishing” and “Recreational Fisheries” and drew up definitions for these terms. SCESS discussed the viability of undertaking 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 report of the SCESS is included in GFCM:SAC12/2010/Inf.7

The Sub-Committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE) dealt mainly with the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF), Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), Fisheries Restricted Areas (FRAs), sensitive habitats, the improvement of selectivity and by-catch reduction, the use of artificial reefs in the Mediterranean, a medium working programme to improve knowledge and assess the status of elasmobranchs in the Mediterranean and the Black sea and the monitoring of the alien species phenomenon mainly in relation to fisheries. The SCMEE revised 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. The Sub-Committee led and contributed considerably to the Transversal Workshop on Selectivity Improvement and Bycatch Reduction. It also considered 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, which includes the review and preparation of a document on available information, the organization of an expert meeting in 2010, the organization of a training course on age and growth parameters in 2010, as well as the holding of an expert meeting in 2011 on stock assessment of selected elasmobranch species. The report of SCMEE is quoted GFCM:SAC12/2010/Inf.5.

The Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment (SCSA) convened the meetings of the two working groups on stock assessment of small pelagic and demersal species, including practical assessment sessions. During its 11th Session, the SCSA reviewed 29 technical papers on demersal species and 17 technical papers on small pelagics. Out of these, a total of 31 were considered to be complete assessments covering 10 GSAs and 6 GSAs for the demersal species and small pelagic species respectively. 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 agreed on the inclusion of *Pecten jacobaeus* in the priority species and shared stock list. Furthermore, the SCSA 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 Sub-Committee agreed on the establishment of an expert team to review and contribute to the draft glossary. The report of SCSA is quoted GFCM:SAC12/2010/Inf.8.

6. The conclusions and suggestions of the Working Groups and Workshops as endorsed by the respective Sub-Committees, as well as the advice and proposals put forward by each Sub-Committee are summarized in document GFCM:SAC12/2010/3.

Coordination Meeting of the Sub-Committees

7. The Coordination Meeting of the Sub-Committees (CMSC) reviewed the main conclusions and recommendations drawn up by the Sub-Committees and the Transversal Session. The report of the CMSC is contained in document GFCM:SAC12/2010/Inf.9. The following are the main conclusions and proposals emanating from the meeting:

- The CMSC shared the opinion of the SCESS on the need to address the topic of increasing fuel prices and the related impact on the fishing industry; and proposed the inclusion of the field “fuel consumption” in the logbook drawn up by the transversal workshop on this subject including the need to set up a specific data policy should be developed for the Task 1 dataset as well as all other GFCM-managed datasets;
- The CMSC felt that the criteria to identify sensitive habitats for priority species were still too broad and needed to be further narrowed down and fine tuned;
- The CMSC considered the subject of alien species and their impact on fisheries to be important and suggested that a working strategy should be adapted in accordance with the guidance SAC may wish to deliver at its next session;
- The CMSC agreed that in the short term, assessments on the stocks of elasmobranch species should be promoted and delivered as soon as possible and endorsed the proposal relating to a medium term working program on elasmobranches;
- The CMSC stressed on the overlying importance of the submission of data and information by GFCM Members in order for SAC to fulfill its work;
- The CMSC acknowledged that the exponentially increasing SAC activities has put a heavy burden on the Secretariat and agreed that there is an urgent need to strengthen it in terms of technical human resources;

8. To improve the functioning of the SCSA and its assessment Working Groups the CMSC suggested the following:

- No assessments will be reviewed directly by the SCSA.
- The submission of completed stock assessment forms, at least one week before the Working Group meeting should be mandatory.
- The submission of stock assessment-related documents, at least one week before the Working Group meeting must be mandatory
- The Working Group meetings should be extended by three days in order to allow time for both the customary practical session and the review of other assessments presented to take place.
- Only validated assessments will be forwarded by the Working Groups to the SCSA which will make review of the diagnosis and related management advice as submitted by the Working groups. All documentation used by the Working Groups will be passed on to the SCSA for reference.
- The agendas of the meetings of the Working Groups and of the Sub-Committees will each include an item on the “admissions of assessments and documents”.

- In view of the fact that the EU Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries is possibly analyzing some stock assessments works conducted within the GFCM framework, the GFCM Secretariat will investigate on this issue and report back the relevant information to the SAC.

NOMINATION OF THE SUB-COMMITTEES COORDINATORS

9. The Sub-Committees nominated their respective coordinators as follows:

- **SCSA : Mr Fabio Fiorentino (Italy)**
- **SCESS: : Mr Vahdet Unal (Turkey)**
- **SCMEE : Mr Federico Alvarez (Spain)**
- **SCSI : Mr Joel Vigneau (France)**

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE

10. The Committee is invited to review the intersessional activities of its subsidiary bodies, in general, especially in relation to the need to further promote coordination of inputs and outputs and the production of integrated scientific and technical advice for fisheries management.

11. The Committee is also invited to take on board the conclusions and proposals emanating from the CMSC and to provide guidance for further action accordingly.