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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 (SAC)**

**Twelfth Session**

**Budva, Montenegro, 25-29 January 2010**

**Report of the 8<sup>th</sup> Coordinating Meeting of the Sub-Committees (CMSC)  
Malaga, Spain, 4<sup>th</sup> December 2009\***

**\* Only available in English**

**Opening of the meeting**

1. The Coordinating Meeting of the Sub-Committees (CMSC) was opened by Mr. Henri Farrugio, Chairman of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), who welcomed the members (see list in Annex II). He stated that he was satisfied with the work carried out that week by the four sub-committees together with the transversal session and stressed the importance to review their outcomes and to develop concerted outputs to be presented during the forthcoming session of Scientific Advisory Committee in January 2010.
2. The Executive Secretary a.i., Mr. Abdellah Srour, recalled the mandate of the CMSC and introduced the main issues to be addressed by the meeting. He also commended the excellent work carried out by the Coordinators of the Sub-Committees and thanked them for their value contribution to the organization and success of Sub-Committee meetings.
3. The agenda was adopted by the CMSC with some changes. The amended agenda is given in Annex I.

**Review of the main conclusions and recommendations of the Sub-Committees including the outcome from the transversal session.**

**Sub-Committee on Economics and Social Sciences (SCESS)**

4. The SCESS Coordinator Mr. Ramon Franquesa presented the proceedings and outcomes of the SCESS meeting as summarized below:
  - The SCESS agreed on the need to provide definitions for the terms: “Non Professional Commercial Fishing” and “Recreational Fisheries”
  - SCESS underlined its interest in completing socioeconomic studies related to improvement in gear selectivity, however it stressed that information on the impacts on the resources and their potential to recover is a pre-requisite for specific analyses to be undertaken.
  - The SCESS discussed the increase in fuel prices and the added pressure on the fishing industry to decrease CO2 emissions. Thus it agreed that more focus should be given to this reality and highlighted the need to accelerate the data collection of economic information in order to allow for reliable predictions and adaptation in the economic and social dimensions.
  - The workplan drawn up by the SCESS includes analyses on the fishermen social structure across all Mediterranean countries, analyses on the impact of changes in the cost of energy inputs, collection and comparison of the relevant legal changes in the national fisheries legislations, together with the initiation of a quantitative and qualitative collection of information on the four segments of Recreational Fisheries and on the “non professional commercial fishing”. The SCESS also suggested holding a workshop on the potentialities and conflicts of recreational and non professional fisheries in the Mediterranean.
5. The CMSC took note of the outcome of the meeting and noted the particular importance given by the SCESS to the issue of non-professional commercial fishing and recreational fishing and the need to explore such activities in depth in view of their interaction and possible impacts on professional commercial fishing.
6. On the subject of the improvement of fishing gear selectivity, the CMSC noted the comment raised by SCESS that socio-economic studies can only take place if sufficient technical information on gear selectivity and related impacts on fisheries resources are available. The CMSC agreed that this information would be available through the Task 1 framework when fully implemented, however, it suggested that, in order to take immediate action, a practical workshop on the subject could be organized whereby experts would furnish the necessary information and some preliminary analyses could be undertaken.
7. In relation to data collection schemes and the implementation of the Task 1 data framework, the CMSC was informed that AdriaMed will hold a workshop in January 2010 on these

subjects, including economic data collection, and will be extending the invitation to the GFCM Secretariat to participate in this workshop.

8. 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. It also concurred with the suggestion to include analyses on the social structure of fishing communities within the workplan of the SCESS.

#### **Sub-Committee on Statistics and Information (SCSI)**

9. The SCSI Coordinator Mr. Joel Vigneau presented the main issues raised by the SCSI meeting as summarized below:

- The SCSI reviewed the outcome of the workshop on the GFCM logbook and considered the comments raised during the Transversal Session. The SCSI suggested that Member countries could launch fishermen awareness campaigns in order to help them to better accept the idea of a GFCM logbook. The Committee addressed several issues such as the 'fuel consumption' and the question related to the species to be included in the logbook.
- The Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/3 requiring the submission of Task 1.1, 1.2 and 1.4 by February 2010 was central to the overview of current development of national collection and statistical systems.
- SCSI stressed that a specific data policy for the use and access of Task 1 datasets would need to be defined.
- With regards to the future of the STATLANT37A data submission system, it was agreed to evaluate in 2010 the relevance of replacing or amending this system at the end of the current 3-year trial period.
- 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 (e.g. fleet register).

10. The CMSC noted the requested from SCSI to proceed to translate the fields' description in the Task 1 data entry software into French before February 2010 and a full translation into French of the software at a later stage.

11. On the GFCM regional logbook, the CMSC discussed the option of including a new field on fuel consumption in the GFCM regional logbook proposed by the transversal workshop on

the GFCM regional Logbook (Rome, July 2009). The CMSC suggested that this field should be added since the pros for including it outweigh the cons.

12. The members of the CMSC also agreed that further evaluation should be made on the option to introduce a catch reporting threshold as opposed to the adoption of a restricted species list for which no catch reporting threshold would apply. The meeting noted the suggestion made by the SCSI aimed to adopt the format of the GFCM regional logbook at its next session and make reflection on the above, as well as on the size of vessels to be included in this scheme, before its implementation, it also took note of the issue of fishers' illiteracy in some countries was also addressed by the CMSC and considered it to be a significant constraint for the effective implementation of a logbook system.
13. Moving to a discussion on the reference year for data submissions in Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/3, the CMSC took note of the SCSI proposal to consider 2008 as the reference year for the next data submission (by February 2010) and agreed that the subsequent annual submissions should report on the most recent year for which information is available, without limiting the possibility of GFCM Members to submit data of any preceding years.

#### **Sub-Committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE)**

14. The SCMEE Coordinator, Mr. Mohammed Nejmeddine Bradai, presented the main issues raised by the Sub-Committee as summarized below:
  - The main topics raised during the meeting, focused on the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF), Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), Fisheries Restricted Areas (FRAs), sensitive habitats, the improvement of selectivity and bycatch reduction and the use of artificial reefs in the Mediterranean. A medium working program 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 were also addressed.
  - Concerning the FRA in the Eastern Gulf of Lions, the SCMEE proposed to the SAC to ask relevant Member Countries to provide information, including from Vessel Monitoring Systems on the number of vessels fishing, and their respective number of fishing days, in 2008 in the zone delineated by the FRA in the Gulf of Lions. This information on fishing activity is very important to map the spatial distribution of the fishing effort within the FRA in order to formulate further management advice.
15. The CMSC acknowledge the progress on the implementation of the GEF project on the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries in the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystem was welcomed. It recalled that the GFCM should be involved in the execution and activities of the project as originally decided.

16. On the definition and identification criteria for sensitive habitats of priority species proposed by the SCMEE, the members of the CMSC felt that they were still too broad and would qualify most of the habitats within the Mediterranean and Black Sea ecosystems as sensitive. In this respect, the CMSC suggested that these should be further narrowed down and fine tuned. It also highlighted the need to clearly distinguish between essential fish habitats and sensitive habitats.
17. The CMSC noted the strengthened collaboration between GFCM and MAP-RAC/SPA and acknowledged the contribution of the latter to the work of the SCMEE. The need to identify a clear procedure for collaboration between GFCM and RAC-SPA, with regards to SPAMIs that could also have potential implications for fisheries management was stressed.
18. The CMSC remarked that extra-budgetary funds should be made available to the SAC to address all of the priorities identified, in particular, for the proposed program on elasmobranch research, for which donors and collaboration with other international organizations and regional projects would be essential. Nevertheless, the CMSC agreed that in the short term, assessments on the stocks of elasmobranch species should be promoted and delivered as soon as possible.
19. On the subject of artificial reefs and their effect on fisheries and ecosystems, the CMSC welcomed TechnoMed's availability to contribute to this topic. However, it questioned whether this field should be a priority of the SCMEE and suggested that this matter should be revisited at the next SCMEE meeting along with a review of new data and information on the subject.
20. The CMSC took note of the preliminary discussions within the SCMEE on alien species and their impact on fisheries and considered the issue to be important. Nonetheless, it suggested that the working strategy in relation to this subject should be adapted in accordance with the guidance that SAC may wish to deliver at its next session.
21. Although the CMSC concurred with the proposal by SCMEE to hold a workshop on fishing gear selectivity, it was agreed that the SCMEE Coordinator would draw up draft Terms of Reference on the basis of the discussions held and will present them directly to the SAC for endorsement.
22. With regards to the reporting of data on bycatch of species of conservation concern, the CMSC took note of SCMEE's proposal to develop a data sheet which would link up to the Task 1 framework. It suggested, however, that coordination with the SCSI on this matter was of utmost importance.
23. Finally, on the Sub-Committee's proposal to focus on the assessment of sponge fisheries, the CMSC took note of the proposal. The CMSC stated that this topic should not be a priority for the time being.

### Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment (SCSA)

24. The SCSA Coordinator, Ms Costantina Karlou Riga, presented the proceedings and outcomes of the SCSA meeting as summarized below:

- 29 technical papers on demersal species were presented, of which 20 were considered as assessments, 6 as preliminary (Table 1) and 3 as assessments related. The assessments covered 10 GSAs. This year assessments came also from the eastern Mediterranean (GSA 25, GSA 26) and 1 assessment related (GSA 24). Among the 29 technical papers, 12 were presented during the working group for demersals (Ancona 19-23 October 2009) of which 9 were considered as assessments. Alternative approaches were done for the assessments inside the WG and were discussed in plenary. The majority of the stocks were assessed as overexploited. The species studied were: *Merluccius merluccius*, *Mullus barbatus*, *Mullus surmuletus*, *Nephrops norvegicus*, *Parapenaeus longirostris*, *Boops boops*, *Pagellus bogaraveo*, *Solea solea*, *Aristomorpha foliacea*, *Aristeus antennatus*
- 17 technical papers on small pelagic species were presented, of which 11 were considered as assessments (Table 2), 2 as preliminary and 4 as assessment related. The assessments covered 6 GSAs. This year's assessment (including those preliminary) came from the Eastern Mediterranean countries. The species studied were: *Engraulis encrasicolus*, *Sardina pilchardus* and *Sardinella aurita*.
- Regarding the establishment of regional protocols for surveys at sea, the Secretariat was requested to further investigate whether additional protocols existed in national institutions. It was agreed that June 2010 would be the dead line for reaction from the institutions.
- The Sub-Committee was agreed on the inclusion of *Pecten jacobaeus* in the priority species and shared stock list.
- The assessment forms were improved by the inclusion of additional sheets to accept the inputs and results of direct methods. The SCSA also agreed on the inclusion in the assessment forms of a table which will summarize all the parameters used as inputs in the analyses. The SCSA finally found the diagnosis sheet restricted in some cases and it was agreed to review this sheet.

25. The CMSC highlighted the importance of the availability of effort data for the same reference year for which assessments are carried out. Thus, it stressed the need of having Task 1 data submitted in a timely manner with the reference year for the annual submission being the preceding year.

26. Referring to the proposal by the SCSA to organize a workshop on age reading, the CMSC suggested that more reflection is required on the specific needs of this subject and that the objectives of workshop, whether it is training, inter-calibration or methodology, should be more clearly defined. In this context, Mr. Henri Farrugio and Mr. Enrich Arneri, volunteered to carry out a review of the current knowledge on age reading in the GFCM area, which will

be presented at the next SCSA meeting in 2010. This review would allow the SCSA to better define related activities for 2011.

27. The CMSC commended the four Sub-Committees for the excellent work carried out and acknowledged the effort and progress being made by the Secretariat to support their work.

### **Inputs from the FAO Regional Projects to the Sub-Committees**

28. The CMSC noted the significant contribution made by the FAO Regional Projects to the work of the Sub-Committees. A summary of the technical inputs of each Project is given below (see details in relevant reports):

#### **CopeMed II project:**

The project supported the participation of 4 experts and presented 2 documents during the transversal session on the following subjects:

- Progress in the implementation of the ArtFiMed Project in Morocco and Tunisia;
- Progress on the pilot project to implement the 40 mm square mesh in the bottom trawls fleets in the CopeMed II Countries

#### **AdriaMed project:**

AdriaMed supported the participation of 8 experts from the Adriatic area and coordinated the production of two documents on:

- Stock assessment of small pelagics (anchovy and sardine) in GSA 17 (North and Central Adriatic);
- Stock evaluation of Norway lobster in Central Adriatic using Underwater Television Survey.

#### **MedSudMed project:**

MedSudMed supported the participation of an expert from Tunisia and produced one document on:

- Preliminary results of the MedSudMed and CopeMed II Working Group on *Parapenaeus longirostris* in the Projects' area (Malta 5-7 October 2009). This was the result of the first joint assessment exercise carried out in the area by the INSTM (Tunisia), MCFS (Malta) and IAMC-CNR (Italy).

#### **EastMed project**

Since its launching in September 2009, EastMed project supported the participation of an expert from Egypt to the SCSA/Working Group of Demersals in Ancona and of 3experts to the SCSA, SCSA and SCME

### **Strategy for implementing the preliminary 2010 workplan of SAC**

29. The CMSC reiterated the need for the Sub-Committees to set priority activities for their respective workplan and referred to the GFCM rolling Reference Framework for SAC, stressing the need to better reinforce the coherence and integration of activities. The ongoing work to prepare a medium-term strategic action plan was mentioned as the frame for developing future activities of SAC.
30. The meeting reviewed the proposed activities as suggested by the Sub-Committees. However, it questioned the organization in 2011, in stead of 2010, of the GFCM/ICCAT joint Workshop on small tuna fisheries in the Mediterranean.
31. The CMSC stressed once again, the importance to maintain regular provision of requested data through the Task 1 framework. It called on SAC to urge countries, which had not yet done so, to submit data by no later than one week before the SAC meeting, i.e. 15 January 2010.
32. The CMSC stressed the importance of the support given by FAO regional project to the SAC activities and called for more coordination with other sub-regional activities, particularly those dealing with stock assessment in the Mediterranean. It invited the FAO regional projects to continue supporting countries to develop and enhance national data collection schemes and information systems in order to comply with GFCM-SAC data requirements.

### **Issues related to the functioning of the SAC Sub-Committees and Working Groups**

33. The CMSC noted that the strategy adopted this year in relation to the functioning of the stock assessment Working Groups and the SCSA resulted in some inconvenience, since the SCSA was overburdened with having to review an unexpected high number of assessments and related works in a limited amount of time. The CMSC suggested the following to improve the functioning of SCSA and its Working Groups:
  - 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.

### **Review of the GFCM publications**

34. The Secretariat informed the CMSC that besides the publications of meeting reports and related documents, the foreseen publications in the coming months are those related to alien species and their impact on fisheries and ecosystems, the Task 1 Statistical Bulletin, the revised SAC glossary, the Compendium of GFCM decisions as well as the review of the SAC framework. Moreover, the publication on the use of socio-economic indicators in fisheries management is envisaged as a joint action between GFCM and CopeMed II.

### **Progress on updating the reference frame and defining a Medium Term Strategic Plan for the SAC**

35. The meeting was informed of the current progress made by the consultant, Mr. Jean Jacques Maguire, to review the SAC framework. Mr. Maguire confirmed that his presence at the Sub-Committee meetings allowed him to observe the undertakings and working approach closely and that he now had sufficient information to enable him to complete his evaluation.

### **Progress on updating the glossary**

36. The CMSC acknowledged the progress made on the updating of the glossary by the recruited consultant, Mr. Jordi Lleonart. It also noted the efforts being made by each Sub-Committee in contributing to this task and trusted that further material would be submitted by the agreed deadline of 29<sup>th</sup> December 2009.

### **Any other matters**

37. The question of the role and current standing of FAO Backstopping Officers was raised. It was noted by the CMSC that although during the present session of the Sub-Committees a considerable effort was made by the FAO subregional projects officers to accomplish this task, the FAO backstopping support had considerably diminished in recent years, in particular for SCESS, SCMEE and SCSI, due to other commitments of the concerned FAO officers. It was suggested that the Secretariat should follow up the matter internally at FAO.

38. Finally, 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. Specific technical needs were identified in the fields of stock assessment and scientific editing.
39. The CMSC invited the Secretariat to provide to next SAC session more details on requirements for possible new positions within the Secretariat.

**Annex I****Agenda**

- 1. Opening and arrangement of the meeting, adoption of the agenda**
- 2. Review of the main conclusions and recommendations of the Sub-Committees including the outcome from the transversal session**
- 3. Strategy for implementing the preliminary 2010 workplan of SAC.**
- 4. Issues related with the SAC/Sub-Committees and Working groups functioning**
- 5. Role of the FAO Back Stopping Officer**
- 6. Review of the GFCM publications**
- 7. Progress on updating the reference frame and defining a medium term strategic plan for the SAC**
- 8. Progress on updating the glossary**
- 9. Input from regional projects to the Sub-Committees meetings**
- 10. Any other matters**
- 11. Closure of the meeting**

**Annex II****List of Members**

**Henri Farrugio**, SAC Chairman

**Othman Jarboui**, SAC first Vice Chairman

**Constantina Karlou-Riga**, SCSA Coordinator/Coordinator of EastMed project

**Ramon Franquesa** , SCESS Coordinator

**Mohamed Nejmeddine Bradai**; SCMEEC Coordinator

**Joel Vigneau**, SCSA Coordinator

**Abdellah Srour**, GFCM Executive Secretary a.i

**Matthew Camilleri**, GFCM Biostatistician

**Jean Jacques Maguire**, GFCM Consultant

**Pedro Barros**; FAO FIMF Officer

**Juan Antonio Caminas**, FAO-CopeMed and ArtFiMed Projects Coordinator

**Mathieu Bernardon**, FAO-CopeMed project Officer

**Enrico Arneri**, FAO-AdriaMed and MedsudMed projects Coordinator

**Nicoletta Milone**, FAO -AdriaMed project Officer

**Luca Ceriola**, FAO-MedsudMed project Officer