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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)**

**Thirteenth Session**

**Marseille, France, 7-11 February 2011**

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

**St. George's Bay, Malta, 29 November - 2 December 2010**

## 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 2010 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, AdriaMed, CopeMed II including ArtfiMed, EastMed, MedFisis and MedSudMed are presented in document GFCM:SAC13/2011/Inf.22. 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 review of the national reports of SAC Members (document GFCM:SAC13/2011/Inf.11).

## ACTIVITIES OF THE SAC DURING THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD

3. At its Thirty-fourth Session (Greece, 12-17 April, 2010), GFCM agreed upon the programme of work of SAC for the intersession<sup>1</sup>. SAC had six months within which to implement its programme and held all the meetings approved by the Commission between June and December 2010 (see list below).

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Thirty-fourth Session, paragraphs 74-76.

- Ninth Session of the **CMSC**; FAO Headquarters (FAO-HQ), 9–10 June 2010
- **Transversal Workshop** on red coral; Italy, 16–17 September 2010
- First **Expert Meeting** on the status of elasmobranchs in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea; Tunisia, 20–22 September 2010
- **Transversal** workshop on European Eel; Tunisia, 23–24 September 2010
- **Transversal** workshop on Fishing Capacity; FAO Headquarters (FAO-HQ), 27–28 September 2010
- **SCSI** workshop on data collection methods applied to all segments of the fleet and their coherence with the requirements of the GFCM Task 1; FAO Headquarters (FAO-HQ), 29 September– 1 October 2010
- **SCMEE** workshop on algal and jelly fish blooms; Turkey, 6–8 October 2010
- **SCSA** Working Group on stock assessment of demersal species; Turkey, 18–23 October 2010
- **SCESS** workshop on monitoring recreational fisheries in the GFCM area; Spain, 20–22 October 2010
- **Transversal** workshop on selectivity improvement, bycatch reduction and alternative gears; Egypt, 25–27 October 2010
- **SCSA** Working Group on stock assessment of small pelagic species; Italy, 1–6 November 2010
- Session of the **SCSA**; Malta, 29 November–2 December 2010
- Session of the **SCESS**; Malta, 29 November– 2 December 2010
- Session of the **SCSI**; Malta, 29 November – 2 December 2010
- Session of the **SCMEE**; Malta, 29 November – 2 December 2010
- **SCMEE** workshop on alien species and their interaction with fisheries (back-to- back with the SCMEE meeting); Malta, 29 November 2010
- 10th Session of the **CMSC**; Malta, 3 December 2010

## **Sub-Committees, Working Groups and Workshops**

4. The reports of the Working Groups and Workshops held during the 2010 intersessional period are available in documents GFCM:SAC12/2011/Inf.12 to Inf.21. 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) The SCSI coordinated the transversal workshop on fishing capacity to develop elements for a regional plan of action on the management and monitoring of fishing capacity in the GFCM Area. The Sub-Committee also held the workshop on data collection methods with specific reference to data collection and data submission within the framework of Task 1. The eleventh Session of the SCSI reviewed the outcomes of these workshops and focussed on the current situation of data submission, the status of development and management of GFCM databases and information systems, data confidentiality and data access policy, the implementation of the GSA compatible STATLANT 37A reporting scheme, the review of Task 1 data parameters and definitions, as well as on pilot exercises carried out by experts on catch weight thresholds in logbook reporting. The GFCM Secretariat made further progress in the development and management of GFCM databases and information systems especially with respect to fleet-based databases and the Task 1 Regional Information System (T1-RIS) which is geared with a preliminary set of automatic data processing and display features. The draft Task 1 Statistical Bulletin (reference year 2008), an output from the T1-RIS, has also been produced. In addition, work on Task 1 data exchange protocols (XML-based and CSV-based) has been undertaken and the related documentation has been reviewed by the SCSI. The report of the SCSI is included in GFCM:SAC13/2011/Inf.6

The Sub-Committee on Economic and Social Sciences (SCESS) held a workshop on the monitoring of recreational fisheries in the GFCM Area, the results of which were reviewed during the eleventh Session of this Sub-Committee. Focus was directed towards the definition of recreational fisheries, licensing systems for recreational fishing and the monitoring and management of recreational fishing activities. In addition, the Sub-Committee discussed the development of a common and harmonised scientific monitoring protocol for recreational fisheries and identified a preliminary set of data parameters required for the estimation of indicators for different segments and modalities of recreational fisheries. Further to the discussions held during the gear selectivity workshop (Alexandria, Egypt, 25-27 October, 2010), the SCESS reviewed the results of case studies related to the economic impacts of the implementation of the 40mm square mesh codend. The SCESS welcomed the project “LaMed” dealing with fisheries regulations in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, initiated in 2010 through the GFCM Secretariat. The definitions for the economic variables related to Task 1.3 were also reviewed by the Sub-Committee. The report of the SCESS is included in GFCM:SAC13/2011/Inf.7.

The Sub-Committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE) led the workshop on “Algal and Jellyfish Blooms” and contributed considerably to the three Transversal Workshops held during September-October 2010 dealing with “Red coral”, “Elasmobranch species” and “Selectivity Improvement and Bycatch Reduction”. The main outcomes of those workshops were discussed during the different sessions of the SCMEE meeting and agreements

were reached that can be consulted in document GFCM:SAC13/2011/3. During the meeting of the Sub-Committee, a special session was devoted to “*Alien Species*”. Concern was expressed in relation to the impact of these species on the fisheries. Its presence is particularly abundant in Eastern Mediterranean. The SCMEE endorsed the proposal on a *new FRA* in seamounts in the Balearic archipelago area. The SCMEE noted the significant progress made in selected subjects under its direct following up during the intersession, namely: Implementing the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF), the relevance of fry fishery in regards to the conservation of sensitive habitats, particularly for the sustainability of coastal pelagic resources and, strongly emphasized on the need of updating information on fishing activities carried out on the FRAs. The report of SCMEE is quoted GFCM:SAC12/2011/Inf.5.

The Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment (SCSA) convened the meetings of the two Working Groups on stock assessment of demersal and small pelagic species, including practical assessment sessions. During its 11th Session, the SCSA reviewed 32 technical papers on demersal species and 11 technical papers on small pelagics. Out of those 43 stocks studied, a total of 34 were considered to be complete assessments and validated by the Sub-Committee. The total coverage was 14 GSAs for the demersal species and 7 GSAs for small pelagic species. The species studied were: *Merluccius merluccius*, *Mullus barbatus*, *Mullus surmuletus*, *Nephrops norvegicus*, *Parapenaeus longirostris*, *Boops boops*, *Pagellus bogaraveo*, *Solea solea*, *Spicara smaris*, *Pagellus erythrinus*, *Aristeus antennatus*, *Corallium rubrum*, *Engraulis encrasicolus*, *Sardina pilchardus* and *Trachurus trachurus*. The SCSA contributed considerably to the three Transversal Workshops held during September-October 2010 dealing with “European eel”, “Elasmobranch species” and “Selectivity Improvement and Bycatch Reduction”. The main outcomes of those workshops were discussed during the different sessions of the SCSA meeting and agreements were reached that can be consulted in documents GFCM:SAC13/2011/Inf.8 as well as in document GFCM:SAC13/2011/3. Furthermore, the SCSA reviewed, approved and added additional sheets related to direct methods into the set of Stock Assessment Forms. It also agreed on the adoption of  $F_{0.1}$  as technical Target Reference Point and  $F_{max}$  as Limit Reference Point for the assessment of demersal species. On the use of BRP in small pelagics the absence of an agreed assessment was evidenced Nevertheless, the Sub-Committee suggested to explore, in the next small pelagics WG, a multi-criterion empirical approach.

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:SAC13/2011/3.

### **Coordination Meeting of the Sub-Committees (CMSC)**

7. The 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:SAC13/2011/Inf.10. Some of the outcomes are highlighted below: . :

- Initiatives such as the Masters programme on “Fisheries Economics and Management”, conducted in the past, could help increase expertise in the field in the GFCM Area.

- Experimental case studies, in relation to the implementation of the minimum mesh size in codends, should be undertaken to assess effects on landing value, landing weight, discard weight and cost of fishing per vessel day.
- The subject of eco-labelling and its impact on the economic value of fisheries products in the GFCM Area should be addressed.
- The option of adopting a single fleet submission (fleet register) should be considered in order to reduce the number of submissions of fleet-based datasets.
- The Secretariat should coordinate efforts and explore the possibility to provide assistance to countries in term of fishery statistics, to ensure continuity of assistance to the countries and to strengthen the capacity of GFCM in handling the numerous data exchange processes.
- The SCSA should identify the biological parameters for which data should be submitted by species and gear for each Operational Unit and for given fishing periods. Following this, a transversal workshop could be held to elaborate on the data collection, data submission and data processing mechanisms either within the current Task 1 framework or through the establishment of a Task 2 structure.
- The Task 1 statistical bulletin and other general statistical outputs should be available to the public by default. The SAC should discuss the options of the modality of data access presented by the SCSA.
- The trial period for the GSA-compatible STATLANT 37A form should continue until a data flow (Task 1) can replace it without losing the historical series.
- The SAC should discuss whether there is sufficient evidence, from the studies presented during the SCSA, to set up a weight in relation to catch reporting through logbooks.
- Bycatch of elasmobranchs, gelatinous zooplankton and algae, as well as on red coral could be included in the Task 1 data submission framework (task 1.4).
- The mitigation measures, proposed by the workshop on selectivity, aiming at reducing bycatch of unwanted species of conservation concern, along with other specific selectivity measures should be investigated through case studies.

8. On the strategy for the implementation of the SAC programme of work and on the functioning of the Sub-Committees the CMSC concluded that:

- The assessment of elasmobranchs should be given importance in 2011 and that an age reading training course within the framework of the Mid Term Working Programme for Elasmobranchs should be organised.
- FAO Regional Projects are solicited to contribute to the execution of the SAC's programme of work and continue supporting countries through training and capacity building programmes so that they would be in a better position to participate and contribute to activities of SAC subsidiary bodies and to implement GFCM's management objectives.

- Particularly in subjects concerning elasmobranches, European eel, bycatch reduction and selectivity, close collaboration between SAC and RAC/SPA should be maintained for the benefit of maximizing the outputs of SACs endeavours.
- During Sub-Committee meetings, the time available for individual presentations should be restricted and Coordinators should review the contents prior to the meeting in order to give priority to those which are mostly relevant to the subject matters being discussed.

### **SUGGESTED ACTION**

9. The Committee is invited to review the intersessional activities of its subsidiary bodies, in general, and to discuss options for the enhancement of coordination in order to ensure the production of sound integrated scientific and technical advice for fisheries management.

10. 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.