



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



SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

Fourteenth Session

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**Report of the 12th Session of the Sub-Committee on Statistics and
Information (SCSI)
FAO HQs, Rome, Italy, 23-26 January 2012**

OPENING, ARRANGEMENT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS

1. The Sub-Committee meetings of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC/GFCM), including the Transversal Session, were held at FAO HQs, Rome (Italy) from 23rd to 26th January 2012.
2. Mr Abdellah Srour, Executive Secretary of the GFCM, welcomed the participants and thanked them for their attendance acknowledging the effort deployed by their institutions in these difficult times that many countries in the Mediterranean are facing. He noted the increase in number of participants, compared to previous years evidencing the interest of the scientists on the GFCM advisory processes. He further drew the attention of the participants on the two new challenges the GFCM is facing and that will significantly empower the Commission, namely the Task force and the Framework Program. He thanked the EU for the support to the two workshops on VMS and on Elasmobranchs as well as to the FAO Regional Projects for their continuous support.
3. Mr Henri Farrugio, Chair Person of the SAC, also thanked the participants for attending the meeting and recalled the mandate of the SAC and its Sub-Committees. He acted as chair of the transversal session.

TRANSVERSAL SESSION: REVIEW OF TRANSVERSAL ISSUES

4. This session reviewed the outcome of the technical meetings held in 2011 and introduced some relevant issues such as the Small scale fisheries, Task Force and Framework Program:
 - 2nd Transversal Working Group on by-catch (in collaboration with ACCOBAMS) (by SCMEE coordinator)
 - Workshop on Red Coral (by SCMEE coordinator)
 - Follow up on Vessel Monitoring System issues (by GFCM Secretariat)
 - Specific actions for the Black Sea (by GFCM Secretariat)
 - GFCM Task Force and Framework Programme (FWP) (by GFCM Secretariat)
 - Small scale fisheries prospective (by GFCM Secretariat, FAO and FAO Regional Projects)
 - Bio-economic impact assessment of scenarios: hake fishery in the gulf of Lion (by IFREMER)

5. The meeting agreed that discussions and comments of the transversal session be included in the reports of each Sub-Committee under the agenda item corresponding to the review of the above mentioned activities.
6. Mr Federico Alvarez opened the series of presentations with the two summaries of the workshop on By-catch and on Red Coral. He firstly, on behalf of all the Subcommittees Coordinators thanked the GFCM Secretariat staff for having completed an excellent job in the previous months, he acknowledged the effort put to have all the reports on time.
7. ACCOBAMS congratulated the initiative of the Black Sea strengthening through this first WG, and offered their available information on By-catch from the ACCOBAMS member countries.
8. Tunisian experts informed that an initiative has been launched to create a Network of Research Institutes by the Maghreb countries to address fishery issues in a more collaborative way. Mr Srouf stressed that in fact other areas namely the southern countries are also being considered to be supported by the GFCM within the Framework Program.
9. After the presentation of the FAO Fisheries department, on the *FAO International guidelines on securing sustainable small-scale fisheries*, the role of fishermen on the data collection systems was highlighted. Mr Camiñas informed that under the ArtFimed experiences data collected by the fishermen, are of good quality and very reliable. Other subjects related to alien species, mammals interactions and the impact of some aggressive practices of SSF on the environment seem not to be included in the list of thematic areas of the FAO Guidelines and were suggested to be included. Mr Fuentevilla, FAO representative, insisted that a consultation process to improve the guidelines is open and they are always thanking and welcoming inputs from countries and from RFMOs.
10. After the Presentation by the Regional Projects on the sustainability of small scale fisheries Mr Farrugio stressed that the countries must continue using the tools developed by the regional projects even after those projects are finished as is the case of MedFiSis. The issue of interactions between artisanal and industrial fishery was also highlighted as of great interest.
11. A model based on a case studies of hake fishery of the Gulf of Lion covering various management and methodological contexts (data availability in particular) at short and long term was introduced by Ms Angélique Jadaud. Two Scenarios were tested (one month stop for French trawlers and transition to MSY from 2012 to 2015 by reducing number of days at sea by vessel by fleet or number of vessels by fleet. Constant fleet structure, strategy and catchability, Constant price per commercial grade). Considering the second scenario, while biological impacts are identical whatever the adjustment variable: number of vessels or number of days at sea, economic impacts are different.
12. The meeting congratulated the authors for their excellent work and welcomed this type of initiatives in order to assess the economic impact of management measures.

OPENING AND ARRANGEMENT OF THE MEETING

13. The Twelfth meeting of the Sub-Committee on Statistics and Information (SCSI) of the SAC was held in Rome (Italy) from 23rd to 26th January 2012. It was attended by experts from 10 Members (Albania, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco and Tunisia) as well as by representatives from the European Commission, GFCM Secretariat, FAO, FAO Regional and Sub-Regional projects (MedFisis and EastMed) and EUROSTAT. The SCSI Coordinator, Mr Joël Vigneau, was informed that Algeria could not attend the meeting. The list of participants is provided in Appendix A.
14. The Coordinator opened the meeting, welcomed participants and introduced the agenda. The

meeting unanimously elected Ms Francesca Gravino (Malta) and Mr Nicolò Tonachella (GFCM Secretariat) as rapporteurs. The agenda was reviewed (it was decided to add an item on the follow-up to the “Regional Plan of Action for the Management of fishing capacity in the GFCM Area” (RPOA) under the “any other matters” section) and adopted and it is reproduced under Appendix B.

OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT SITUATION OF DATA COLLECTION AND SUBMISSION

15. The Coordinator reviewed those decisions adopted by the Commission at its 35th session and explained how the GFCM took action on each of them. With the occasion, the meeting reiterated the need to strengthen the GFCM Secretariat in connection with the management of data flow and the assistance needed to Member countries in this area.

16. The SCSI took note in particular of recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1 on logbook where a 50 kilos threshold was set, including as a result of the inability of SCSI to suggest a better option for the threshold at its last session. The meeting hence reminded participants that the set threshold represents a minimum standard and that Members are not prevented from adopting a lower threshold, or no threshold at all, at national level which would allow a more accurate monitoring of the catches.

UPDATES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL DATA COLLECTION AND STATISTICAL SYSTEMS

17. Updates on the development of national data collection and statistical systems and the fulfilment of data submission requirements were provided to SCSI by experts from Albania, Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Montenegro, Morocco and Tunisia and are cursorily presented below.

Albania

18. Albania presented the fishing fleet register prepared with MedFisis support and announced that the Albanian VMS system is now functional. The blue box is installed in all fishing vessels 12 meters LOA. Albania is under preparation of the new legislation in data collection based on EC regulation 199/2008 and Commission Decision 93/2010.

Algeria

19. By a letter sent to GFCM Secretariat, Mr Badani, the Algerian director of statistics and prospective studies in the fisheries ministry, detailed the ongoing initiatives to improve the national fisheries information system. He explained that a lot of effort has been made in the recent years to gather reliable statistics. Today with more than 150 technicians in charge of daily data collection in the fishing harbours, an investment of several billions of dinars for developing the infrastructure, a homogeneous statistical grid over all the national territory, a software allowing real time online data submission, the equipment of 1000 VMS on vessels over 12 meters, the fisheries information system will constitute the solid basis for a rational and sustainable development of fisheries.

20. All this could only be achieved with the assistance of different world and regional bodies et the experiences of projects carried out worldwide, especially in terms of setting regional statistical standards. A special thank is given to all experts and financial providers for their effort in developing fisheries in the Mediterranean, namely GFCM and FAO through the sub-regional projects MedFisis and CopeMed II, without forgetting the European Union helping through various cooperation programmes.

21. Recently in Algeria was launched the project of Observatory on fisheries socio-economic and statistics, within the TCP project in cooperation with FAO. This observatory will act as a mechanism of multidisciplinary (biological, sociological and economical) monitoring of the fisheries, and as an advisor on socio-economic impacts of management options. The realisation of this project will follow four phases for a duration of 2 years, and currently the second phase has started and consist of training data collectors in statistical sampling and fisheries management. The third and fourth phase will consist on collecting data with the ARTFICH/WEB statistical tool with internet functionalities adapted to the specificities of national fisheries.

22. The follow-up and supervisory control of the project has been ensured, from the start, by the Marine and River Fisheries Service (FIRF) and the FAO sub-regional bureau in Tunis (SNEA), in collaboration with the national project coordinator and the two consultants which were employed specifically for the project.

Egypt

23. A pilot survey on Catch and Effort data which was started in June 2011 then followed by biological sampling protocol has been started in Egypt with the Support of the EastMed project. The aim of the protocol is to assist the data collection both in the field to conduct sampling during the pilot phase. The protocol contains guidelines on the routine collection of catch and effort data from the ports of Alexandria, Madiaa, Kafr-El-Sheikh, Damiette, Port Said and Al Areash. The second part of the document describes guidelines for the collection of biological data including length, weight, sex, sexual maturity, gonad weight and hard structures for age reading. It also includes guidelines on sampling frequencies and number of samples to be collected for both catch, effort and biological data. The protocol will also serve as a basis if Egypt intends to pursue a routine data collection system for stock assessment purposes.

Lebanon

24. Fisheries Data Collection in Lebanon, Contribution of FAO EastMed Project (by S. Majdalani): Thus far, the Lebanese Department of Fisheries & Wildlife – Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) has no information system and regular data collection scheme in place, aside from a manual relating to the issuing of fishing licenses. FAO EastMed Project is planning to help Lebanon to introduce a computerized web-based fishing licensing system that will also involve creating a dynamically updated Vessel Register, carry out socio-economic surveys and real time reporting of outposts' activities. An appraisal of the situation was completed and the conceptualization of the system is also underway. Draft TORs to be used in relevant bidding documents are being finalized. The objectives of the system are:

- Strengthening the technical capacity of MOA in the domain of web-based applications;
- Modernizing the issuance and monitoring of fishing licenses;
- Dynamic updating of fleet register and socio-economic indicators allowing MOA to meet its local, regional, and international data reporting requirements particularly GFCM Task 1;
- Facilitating the preparation of statistical reports needed for fleet, catch/effort and socio-economic studies;
- Daily reporting of outposts activities.

25. In addition, a pilot socio-economic survey is being prepared and is expected to be carried out in March 2012. Data collected through the licensing system are expected to be used in the planned countrywide catch assessment survey (CAS) to be launched in the second half of 2012 in collaboration with and thanks to the technical support of the Lebanese University of Balamand, which has been conducting CAS (for North Lebanon only) since 2005. EastMed will be collaborating/assisting the Lebanese National Council for Scientific Research to conduct biological data collection and, tentatively, trials on fishing gears.

26. EastMed Project supported activities are expected to:
- Enable the formulation of better Management Decisions;
 - Provide a better understanding of the role of the stakeholders so to serve them better in the future;
 - Have reliable information and reduce redundancies with a view of promoting the better utilization of MOA human resources;
 - Comply with local, regional, and international reporting requirements (e.g. Task 1);
 - Conduct pilot Socio-economic Survey;
 - Avoid costly vessel census;
 - Use data for CAS sampling.
27. A discussion followed this presentation where it was suggested that, as a first step, it would be important to quantify the running and maintenance costs for databases being developed. The security aspect was also highlighted. In this connection, representatives from GFCM Secretariat suggested that data should be stored in secure servers and following data entry and that secure data transmission should also be ensured.

Montenegro

28. The legislative framework covering fisheries information system includes:
- a law on Marine fishery and Aquaculture;
 - a secondary legislation.
29. The main updates carried out in 2012 are an amendment on Law on marine fishery and aquaculture and secondary legislation in accordance with the latest changes the Common Fisheries Policy CFP-EU. The fisheries Information System in Montenegro(FIS): At this moment FIS is not fully operated, because the programming of the sub-systems is ongoing. FIS will have several sub-systems:
- Vessel register;
 - Fisherman register;
 - Logbook & landings declaration;
 - Monthly report for vessels under 10m LOA;
 - Licenses management sub-system;
 - Common alarm system;
 - VMS – Vessel Monitoring System – Vessels over 10m LOA;
 - Electronic logbook;
 - GFCM Task 1 report – on click make report from FIS.
30. The expectations are that, by the end of 2012, a fully operated Fishery Information System will be in place with fully operational VMS on vessels over 10m LOA. Also, it is expected that Law and secondary legislation are totally harmonized with Common Fisheries Policy CFP-EU and GFCM recommendations.

Morocco

31. The SIH system was introduced in 2009 with the technical assistance of IFREMER in order to organize all fisheries data on a unique and centralized database for the institute. This initiative represent an important set of activities realized on this project and there are still future perspectives and planning in order to make this information system operational as from 2015.

Tunisia

32. Artisanal fisheries play a very important socio-economic role, which could be mentioned in term of employment (more than 70% of national fishermen), production (about 27% and 40% of quantity

and value of national production) and exportation for average 45% of national exportation. The system is operating based on three main sources of data:

- Direct collection of landings in ports for about 50% of artisanal captures;
- Logbook per trip for some units (more than 5 Tx);
- Transport document of fisheries products.

33. Failures on the Statistical system may be listed as follows:

- Incomplete coverage of all landing sites of fishery products due to lack of human, material and financial resources;
- Lack of harmonized methods for estimating production;
- Unreliability of information;
- No collection of information on fishing effort (by category of area/boat/gear/species);
- Low level of training for the majority of the vessels' crew.

34. FAO will participate to the improvement of the Statistical System of Artisanal/coastal fisheries of Tunisia (SSPAT) with :

- Support of the FAO CopeMed II (May/2011): Audit and evaluation of existing statistical system which recommended the sampling system for data collection of coastal/artisanal fisheries for the Tunisian context (economic effective, reliable, ability to include all variables especially those of fishing effort), this system could produce reliable outputs necessary for the proposal of management, planning, technical and scientific studies.
- Support of the sub-regional FAO bureau (FAOSNE) – Tunis (November 2011-avril 2012):
 - a) Starting a pilot phase for a system based on statistical sampling
 - b) Preparing a proposal for technical assistance for the generalization of the pilot phase to all Tunisian coasts and the implementation of SSPAT.

EUROSTAT

35. Out of the 27 EU Member States 9 are members of the GFCM and therefore concerned by fisheries data collection in Mediterranean. From an EU viewpoint, these 9 Member States (MS) have to send yearly data on their catches and landings related to FAO major fishing area 37 and its subdivisions. It's a compulsory exercise based on EU Regulations (laws) since 1991. From an EU MS viewpoint this means that similar data for area 37 have to be sent to the EU-European Commission (DG MARE and DG EUROSTAT), to the GFCM (TASK 1) and other regional fisheries or targeted organizations (ICCAT for instance) which means increasing workload often in a context of reduced resources. The EU MS asked for reducing their response burden, rationalizing and harmonizing these data transmission exercises. The main problem from EUROSTAT viewpoint is the transmission format of data to be sent to several receivers; indeed figures are sent using different formats or supports: CSV, EXCEL, TXT, ML, XML and based on different questionnaires (Statlant, Task 1, for instance).

36. eDAMIS Single Entry Point

Three years ago EUROSTAT launched a new initiative aimed at simplifying the current data transmission different exercises. Mainly, the eDAMIS single entry point (electronic data and metadata information system) and the SDMX statistical transmission and processing system (statistical data and metadata exchange). It has been mandatory to send data to EUROSTAT via single entry point since July 2008. In this way it can be automatically monitored, checked and delivered into the target production environment, with a set of common informatics tools. eDAMIS is an integrated set of tools for the transmission of statistics from EU MS to EUROSTAT via a single entry point.

37. SDMX-ML

(sponsored by BIS Bank for International Settlements, ECB European Central Bank, EUROSTAT, IMF International Monetary Fund, OECD, UN, World Bank)

It has been adopted as the data collection format for fisheries in EUROSTAT, in line with policy for all statistical domains covered the European Statistical System. As with other statistical domains, SDMX is being implemented with the aim of improving data handling which will allow more time to be spent on ensuring data quality and integrity than has been possible previously. The SDMX-ML has been adopted as the data collection format for fisheries in EUROSTAT, in-line with policy for all statistical domains covered by the European Statistical System. As with other statistical domains, SDMX is being implemented with the aim of improving data handling which allow more time to be spent on ensuring data quality and integrity than has been possible previously. It is also expected to deliver greater transparency of what data is collected for what purpose which may help in better targeting of data requests and reduced work for data providers where they are able to avoid sending the same data to different organizations. The SDMX format was successful used for collection of aquaculture statistics at the end of 2010 and 2011. Under the SEIF initiative (SDMX for EUROSTAT, ICES and FAO) EUROSTAT with FAO and ICES have developed common code lists and common data structure definitions (DSDs) which were used for collection of capture fisheries statistics in mid-2011. The DSDs and code lists developed are also intended to underpin the rationalization of EUROSTAT's statistical legislation.

38. eDAMIS and SDMX by MS bordering Fishing area 37 (Mediterranean and Black Sea)

Complete compliance by EU MS of sending fisheries catch and landings data by eDAMIS was achieved in 2011 except for a few MS which have to finalize their technical migration in the forthcoming weeks. The majority of MSs are using Excel templates to generate SDMX-ML files.

39. Extension of SDMX to GFCM reporting

In parallel with the SEIF initiative and in line with SDMX principles FAO have been developing and implementing "open" SDMX to underpin their own developments. It is intended (as a proposal) that SDMX becomes a feature of the new FAO FishStatJ J fisheries database and FAO have already implemented a "federated" fisheries SDMX registry ad data depository.

Following the successful implementing of joint DSDs for capture fisheries data collection, the SEIF initiative has been looking at the issue of data sharing using SDMX. This is scheduled to conclude in the first half of 2012. Development of joint DSDs for aquaculture was suggested as the next domain to address however it was agreed that development of a common aquaculture DSD should follow the redrafting of the CWP (Coordination Working Party) handbook chapter on aquaculture.

GFCM require the sending of XML and CSV format files using the GFCM Task 1 statistical matrix. GFCM and FAO might consider the merits of making the XML reports SDMX compliant in line with developments in FAO and Eurostat in the context of the SEIF cooperation. EUROSTAT would be ready to assist with this development if taken forward.

MEDFISIS

40. Ms Alicia Mosteiro delivered a presentation on the latest updates carried out by the MedFisis project during 2011 concerning the MedStat Fleet Register package. She informed that an updated version of the software and several documents are now available. The published documentation includes the "Census Design and Implementation" which explains the statistical data collection design and implementation methodologies, an "Operational Manual" for national field recorders, supervisors and managerial staff, and a "Supplement 0" to the Operational Manual, including the Questionnaire, Data Field Definitions and Reference System for the Mediterranean.

41. It was recalled that the fleet register software is a regionally-compatible system (FAO, EU and GFCM requirements) and is customizable. An Arabic version of the software is also available including the possibility of producing international reports in English. The software calculates fleet segments automatically and identifies operational units (except for economical data) and includes several built-in tools to check for consistency and integrity of the data but also data validation (GT-Length-Power) and checks for relationships. All these checks (plus the regional reference system built

in) guarantee that the information produced is reliable and consistent with national and international standards. The fleet register software produces automatic outputs for FAO (e.g. FishStat forms), EC (e.g. fleet register snapshot) and GFCM (eg. Task 1, regional fleet register), among others, as well as national reports of various types, all of which being in the required data transmission formats.

42. It was pointed out that the Fleet Register application constitutes the basis for several other systems (CAS, VMS, Licensing System, etc) and therefore it has a crucial role in the national statistical systems.

43. Ms Mosteiro also gave an insight on the technical assistance provided by MedFisis to Lebanon, Egypt and Albania. The objectives of the technical assistance to Lebanon were to review the Lebanese Fleet register, validate the census data, transfer historical data into the new software, customize the application according to Lebanese needs, and analyze the future development of a Licensing System linked to the Fleet Register (for automatic updating of the fleet register data). For Egypt and Albania, a review of the Questionnaire, Data Field definitions and Reference system and the customization of the application were carried out. This included an Arabic version for Egypt and transfer of historical data and testing for Albania.

44. The SCSI was informed that the project webpage is available online with information (www.faomedfisis.org).

45. In the ensuing discussions participants from Lebanon and Egypt pointed to the fact that bugs still infect the database system provided by MedFisis. Mr Rino Coppola, from MedFisis, provided information relating to recent constraints faced by MedFisis. In this connection, he explained that MedFisis was capable of customizing systems for Lebanon, Egypt and Albania in a few days. However, significant difficulties were experienced by MedFisis in receiving the feedback sent by States and providing timely backup due to a lack of administrative support.

46. Mr Srour, GFCM Executive Secretary, also intervened in the discussions to underline that data related tasks are an important component of the GFCM Framework Programme (FWP). Mr Srour asked the SCSI to identify the most relevant actions that could be covered, as a matter of priority, by the GFCM, including through the FWP. He also underlined that no actions will be undertaken if no results can be achieved afterwards. Further details can be found below in the section on transversal workshop on the processing and analysis of Task 1.3 data.

REVIEW OF THE CONCLUSION OF THE “WORKSHOP ON VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEM (VMS)”

47. Mr Nicola Ferri, from GFCM Secretariat, introduced the conclusions and recommendations adopted at the “Workshop on the Implementation of Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea” which was held in Zagreb on 28-30 November 2011. He underlined that since the adoption of recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7 “concerning minimum standards for the establishment of a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) in the GFCM Area” developments have occurred at both regional and national level in relation to monitoring, control and surveillance. There is presently more awareness among the fishermen on the need to utilize VMS, the costs of VMS are more affordable and progress has been made in both the collection and the analysis of data obtained through VMS. Mr Ferri then introduced three documents prepared by GFCM Secretariat where proposals on the possible way forward for the implementation of VMS in the GFCM area are made in connection with data formats, a roadmap to harmonize actions taken at national level and technical guidelines for a regional project on VMS.

48. In the ensuing discussions it was noted that the specificities of the GFCM might require a sub-regional approach to the implementation of VMS whereby the needs of groups of States in a similar

positions are jointly taken into account. In this respect, it was noted that instead of having a one size fits all action on VMS, it could be more appropriate that various actions are promoted so better account for existing priorities (e.g. in a given sub-region in the GFCM Area it might be worth considering to set up alternative monitoring system, such as boxes equipped with rechargeable batteries). Should this be the case, the GFCM could be regarded as the umbrella under which several targeted actions could be launched, including through the support of FAO regional projects. The opportunity to do this, in light of the need for adequate financial resources to provide Members with technical assistance and capacity building (e.g. equipment, infrastructure, ...), could be presented as soon as the consideration of VMS progress within the remit of GFCM.

49. Participants discussed whether or not the operationalization of VMS through the GFCM should be both a regional and a national matter. Although it was recognized that there could be significant benefits in involving the GFCM at national level, particularly through technical assistance, it was recognized that in the immediate future the priority should be on the regional level. After having acknowledged that the importance of VMS will continue to increase in the years to come, to the extent that it will be impossible not to take further action on its implementation within the remit of the GFCM, participants conceded that, as a first step, undertaking a costs-benefits analysis on VMS would be useful. Conscious of the entry into force of recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7 at the end of 2012, they also considered appropriate agreeing on a time frame in order to promote a catch up phase aimed at ensuring the even implementation of this recommendation. These actions could be launched as soon as the GFCM Framework Programme is in place. The delegate from Egypt requested the assistance of GFCM to implement VMS at national level.

50. Some participants expressed concerns that infrastructures needed to implement VMS could be too demanding in terms of human, technical and financial resources with regard to the size of their large scale fisheries. It was proposed that a centralized VMS system could be established so that the GFCM Secretariat could make up for constraints existing at national level.

“GSA-COMPATIBLE STATLANT 37A” REPORTING FORM

51. Mr Federico De Rossi (GFCM Secretariat) recalled that 2010 was the final year of the trial period agreed for the utilization of STATLANT 37A GSA-compatible form. He announced that 2009 and 2010 data will be processed shortly and consequently published within a few months. The submission of capture data relating to existing GSAs has been quite limited as most Members and other States concerned reported data on the basis of FAO-GFCM divisions.

52. It was agreed to continue using the STATLANT 37A reporting form until the completion of Task 1 which is not fully in place yet. Upon completion of Task 1, it is foreseen that an automatic export of data from Task 1 Regional System to the FAO database of Capture Production should be feasible.

TRANSVERSAL WORKSHOP ON THE PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS OF TASK 1.3 DATA (SCSI/SCESS)

53. A transversal workshop was held back to back with SCSI and SCESS sub-committees to discuss the processing and analysis of Task 1.3 data. Mr Vahdet Unal, SCESS Coordinator recalled, at the outset, the ToRs for this workshop. The workshop started with a presentation of the Task 1 data submission framework as well as of current degree of compliance with recommendation GFCM/33/2009/3, including the roadmap for data submission defined at the 35th session of the GFCM.

54. Mr Federico De Rossi (GFCM Secretariat) informed participants about the updates of data transmission exchange protocols for the communication of Task 1 data. These protocols are available on the GFCM website as of 2011. Mr De Rossi pointed out differences in data submissions - until

2009 and from 2010 onwards - which relied on group of species (at operational unit level) and are now based on the ISSCAAP divisions of ASFIS. As for by-catch data (at fishing period level), he noted that they were previously reported without taking into account the species whereas they are now reported by group of species. It was also reminded that the “GFCM Task 1 - Operational Units DB application”, originally intended for those Members who do not have a national information system in place, was valid for reference years 2008 and 2009 only, while from 2010 onwards the data transmission exchange protocols are CSV and XML.

55. A brief overview of resolution GFCM/35/2011/1 “on data confidentiality policy and procedures” was also provided in order to highlight in particular that web-based data access and reporting facilities for Task 1 will be envisaged. This action will enable the GFCM Secretariat to develop data consultation and analysis while ensuring, at the same time, the respect of basic security standards.

56. Participants were informed that 11 Members have submitted data for the reference year 2008, 4 Members for 2009 and 2 Members for 2010. It was noted that although some progress has been made by Members in submitting data for all the five sub-tasks, there is still possibility for improvement, particularly in relation to quality, quantity, consistency and completeness of submissions of data.

57. Members that managed to submit Task 1.3 data were asked for a feedback. However, in this connection, there is a need for more clarity on the definitions of the variables to the extent that the GFCM glossary should be updated. Requested variables were also examined in light of the fact that there is currently a mixture of basic and processed information (e.g. % salary share, total landings). Consequently, these variables may not be fit to carry out economic evaluations for management purposes.

58. In order to ensure a focused discussion on Task 1.3 data, the Coordinator arranged discussions in a manner that allowed every participant to express his/her views. An analysis of the strength, weaknesses, threats and opportunities (SWOT analysis) was undertaken accordingly. The summary output of this SWOT analysis is provided in Appendix C.

59. What is clear from the analysis is that reasons for non compliance are multiple and that the design of Task 1 is not a blocking factor. Nevertheless, weaknesses and threats need to be analyzed in depth and lessons should be learnt from the first years of Task 1 data submission process. SCSI would also like to put forward the need to build a system fit for the purpose once the objectives of the Task 1 database are clearly agreed. The opportunities the two sub-committees would like to highlight is the important potential of Task 1 for capacity building and structuring cost efficient data collection systems in Members. Eventually, some of the threats are beyond the competence of the sub-committees and need to be addressed by the Commission.

60. At the end of the exercise, Task 1 technical specifications will undoubtedly need to be reviewed. Mr. Abdellah Srouf (GFCM executive secretary) informed the group on the possibilities offered by the GFCM in the form of a dedicated workshop or consultancy with designated experts, and that in both cases precise terms of reference and roadmap should be proposed by the sub-committees. He also stressed the need to review other RFMOs data requirements system in order to benefit from other experiences in the same field. He also informed that extra funding could be available as part of the GFCM Framework Programme for, *inter alia*, improving data collection systems in countries. He acknowledged the effort made by regional projects and hoped that the remaining gaps could be addressed with these extra funds. The GFCM framework programme is meant to assist countries with difficulties, particularly in the Southern Mediterranean countries and in the Black Sea. It was highlighted the importance to determine which were the most important issues to take into consideration for priority actions, both for the short-term (2012) and medium term (2013 onwards). It was pointed the importance to address a list of comprehensive needs, and since there are already a lot of initiatives going on by several entities such as regional projects, care should be taken to find synergies and complementarities in order not to repeat what is already being done. The SCSI and

SCCESS therefore agreed to draft terms of references for a group of consultants (mixing experts in the field of fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea, economists, database and Information systems). They are provided in Appendix D.

TRANSVERSAL WORKSHOP ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TASK 2 DATA COLLECTION FRAMEWORK ON BIOLOGICAL INFORMATION (SCSI/SCSA)

61. In order to give some elements to start the discussion, the SCSA Coordinator did a summary of the type of data useful to do stock assessment, i.e.: catch and effort, size structure of the catch and stock, indices from scientific surveys and biological information.

62. The SCSI Coordinator presented a summary of the SWOT analysis did the previous day within the transversal session SCSI/SCCESS to express everyone's views on the Task 1 current design. He noted that some countries also have developed their National Systems based on GFCM Task 1 evidencing that the design should not be considered as a blocking factor. The table with the strengths, weaknesses threats and opportunities is shown as Appendix C.

63. It was noted that spatial dimension had not been considered among the data requirements presented and suggest to add this consideration either by GSA or by statistical cell. The provision of these data could be addressed by using VMS data and log books.

64. Some decisions have to be taken on the following issues: defining a list of priority species (by criteria others than the current ones) for which these biological information is needed and what data are required for specific stocks, ensuring the good quality of data. These and other issues about the definition of "group of target and main associated species" should be the object of an experts consultation within the SCSA. The possibility of using distribution areas of the stock other, and more flexible than strict GSA boundaries and how to enable the data collection system to fulfill the different levels needed would be the object of the Road map for the redesign of Task 1. (See SCSI report).

65. It was proposed that a Task 2 data collection concerning the biological structure of yearly catch should be implemented instead of task 1.5. About the aggregation level, it was stressed that was an important issue to be discussed some participants pointed out that it should be necessary to understand the effort level in order to make realistic stock assessment.

66. Some other comments about the compatibility of the concepts of Métier and operational Units were raised. The need of convergence of both concepts and well as the efforts already deployed by the GFCM Secretariat and the EC on this process were outlined.

67. The two Subcommittees agreed upon the idea to give the mandate to a group of experts or to a consultant with the elements arisen in this session to elaborate a design of the Task 2 module. This module should have a clear scope, be flexible enough to allow for different levels of information depending on the stocks selected. A road map was proposed and it is already in the report of the SCSI.

68. The FAO Regional Projects support was much appreciated for the assistance to the countries in facilitating the fulfillment of their obligation on data submission with the GFCM, special mention was done to the work done by finished project MedFisis which manuals have already been published and available at the web site. Projects coordinators stressed that the regional projects are currently working in this direction to deal with the shared stocks. Common database of the Adriatic is already developed. The political willingness is the high point to overcome for the full availability of data, the scientists work jointly in this direction.

THE CURRENT STATUS OF DATA SUBMISSION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF DATABASES AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS MANAGED BY THE GFCM SECRETARIAT

69. Mr Federico De Rossi (GFCM Secretariat) reported on the current status of data submission and the development and management of GFCM databases and information systems.

70. Coryphaena fishery: SCSI noted that Members involved in this fishery, namely Italy, Malta and Spain, generally submit the required data in a timely and appropriate manner.

71. IUU: Mr De Rossi informed SCSI that no information on vessels presumed to be involved in IUU fishing has been submitted to date and therefore no information system to manage such data has been put in place yet. Nonetheless GFCM website displays links for IUU lists of vessels from other RFMOs and EU.

72. Red Coral: SCSI was informed that a data submission tool to transmit data on red coral according to the recent recommendation GFCM/35/2011/2 “on the exploitation of red coral in the GFCM Competence Area” would have been released shortly.

73. Registered ports: SCSI noted that the submission of data related to national registered ports and inspections of foreign vessels is absent despite the entry into force of recommendation GFCM/32/2008/1 and the requirements to submit data in accordance with Annex E of this recommendation.

74. Vessel Records: Mr De Rossi informed SCSI about developments relating to resolution GFCM/35/2011/1 “on the submission of combined data on fishing vessels” aiming at optimizing the effort of Members in submitting various data on their fleet. This submission should be done on the basis of a single-fleet data format which combine four of the fishing vessel-related data submissions, namely: Fleet Register, Authorized Vessel List, Fisheries Restricted Area (Gulf of Lyons) and Minimum Mesh Size. The data exchange protocols (i.e. Excel, XML and CSV schema) for the transmission of these data have been already defined and released on the GFCM website. SCSI was also informed about the merging process of the four existing DBs related to the fleet into a unique database. In parallel, the design of the GFCM Vessel Records web application on the basis of the experience gathered with the AVL Data Browser is in progress.

75. Following the presentation, it was obvious that compliance remains an issue, which needs to be analysed for a better understanding. In this respect, the lack of adequate legal frameworks a national levels in some cases was noted by the meeting. SCSI stressed that this lack of compliance undermines the use of regional information as basis for sound fisheries advice.

76. Participants underlined the importance of having dynamic charts available on GFCM website, such as the AVL statistical summary, with the aim of providing preliminary information about the regional fleet. Mr De Rossi concluded by stressing the relevance of keeping updated the information collected through the Vessel Records since this is an indicator of the active capacity of the fleet in the GFCM Area. In the ensuing discussions, suggestions were made to GFCM Secretariat to display vessel-related data using GIS and initiate historical series of capacity indicators.

ANY OTHER MATTERS

77. The Regional Plan of Action for the Management of Fishing Capacity (RPOA-Capacity) in the GFCM area which was drafted during a workshop held in September 2010 still needs to be finalized. Two options were considered, one being to employ a consultant to finalize this plan of action, the other was to finalize the RPOA through a dedicated workshop. The SCSI participants supported the idea to have a consultant to finalize this Plan of Action as soon as possible with the objective to have a

plan to be agreed upon by SAC and by the Commission.

78. The Secretariat informed participants about the collaboration with the FAO Fisheries department, namely the Fishery Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS). Thanks to this, information on fishery marine resources as well as GFCM Capture Production based on data collected through STATLANT 37A are available online.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

79. The SCSI drew up and agreed on the following conclusions and recommendations regarding Task 1 and other data submission requirements:

- Reiteration on the need to strengthen the GFCM Secretariat to manage the data received and provide assistance to Member countries;
- Reminder that Member countries may apply a lower or no threshold for their national implementation of the Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/1 on logbooks;
- Suggestion to explore all alternative monitoring systems in complement of the VMS to comply with recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7. Proposal that a centralized VMS system could be established so that the GFCM Secretariat could make up for constraints existing at national level;
- Agreement to continue using the STATLANT 37A reporting form until the completion of Task 1 which is not fully in place yet. Upon completion of Task 1, it is foreseen that an automatic export of data from Task 1 Regional System to the FAO database of Capture Production should be feasible;
- Suggestion that GFCM Secretariat should display vessel-related information using GIS means and begin initiating basic capacity indicators to monitor historic trends;
- Proposal of Terms of References for consultants on the revision of Task 1 are as follows:
 - Proceed to a comparative analysis of Data Collection systems in other Regional Fisheries Management Organisations;
 - Analyse the relevant subcommittee and SAC reports, the GFCM performance review, documents and work done by FAO sub-regional projects in relation to data collection and data submission to Task 1;
 - Revise the purpose of Task 1 and possible extension towards a Task 2, including the need to standardise the methodologies for the collection and reporting of data;
 - Taking into consideration (i) the SCSI/SCESS analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities, (ii) the SCSI/SCESS discussion of a possible new Task 2, (iii) the national potentialities, (iv) the need to keep memory of the data already submitted and (v) the need to build a cost effective system, define the structure of a refined Task 1 and a possibly a new Task 2 to hold all the information;
 - Consider the time frame in which the data must be collected and submitted in order to serve the purposes identified *supra*.
- Proposal of a roadmap to finalise a Task 1 and 2 including a round of consultation with national experts and test cases in different countries after the consultation process, followed by a workshop which could be held before the summer 2012. The Terms of Reference for such a workshop would be:
 - Review the work done by the consultants and agree upon the final structure and definitions of Task 1 & 2;
 - Propose actions to address, if needed, the remaining work to be done in order to have all variables included in Task 1 & 2 fully described and relevant agreed protocols for data collection and submission;
 - Propose actions within the GFCM Framework Programme to address the gaps and deficiencies in national fisheries information systems, together with FAO regional projects.
- Agreement on the use of a consultant to finalise the RPOA on fishing capacity.

2012 SCSI WORKPLAN

80. The SCSI agreed on the following activities for 2012:
- Launch a consultation phase for reviewing Task 1 data submission framework;
 - Organise a workshop for finalising the new Task 1 & 2 data submission framework and define a plan of action for improving member countries capacity to collect and submit relevant data;
 - GFCM Secretariat to display on the GFCM website information on fishing capacity using GIS and other user friendly interface.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

81. Date of the meeting will be confirmed in the future.

NOMINATION OF SCSI COORDINATOR

82. Mr. Joel Vigneau was reappointed as SCSI coordinator unanimously for a period of one year.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

83. The report was unanimously adopted on 26 January 2012, at 13:26.

Appendix A

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Appendix B**Agenda**

- 1. Opening and arrangement of the Sub-Committee meetings**
- 2. Transversal session: review of transversal issues (chaired by the SAC chairperson)**
- 3. Introduction to the SCSI meeting and adoption of the agenda**
- 4. Overview of the current situation of data collection and submission (by national experts)**
- 5. Review of the conclusion of the “Workshop on Vessel Monitoring System (VMS)”**
- 6. “GSA-compatible STATLANT 37A” reporting scheme**
- 7. Transversal workshop on the processing and analysis of Task 1.3 data (SCSI/SCCESS)**
- 8. Overview of the Task 1 framework and options for its improvements**
- 9. Transversal workshop on the establishment of Task 2 data collection framework on biological information (SCSI/SCSA)**
- 10. Nomination of SCSI Coordinator**
- 11. Current status and the future development of databases and information systems managed (by GFCM Secretariat)**
- 12. Overview of the current situation of data submission by Members (by GFCM Secretariat)**
- 13. General conclusions and recommendations**
- 14. 2012 SCSI workplan**
- 15. Any other matters**
- 16. Date and venue of next session**
- 17. Adoption of the report and closure of the meeting**

Appendix C

Task 1.3 SWOT Analysis

Strength	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seen as an international agreement • Designed for multidisciplinary analysis • Structured for database development in Members states (Task 1 is not designed incorrectly) • Some Members have succeeded in fulfilling Task 1 • Totally recognized for shared and straddling stock 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not exactly fit for the purpose (which needs to be clearly defined) • Quality issue (internal coherence, need for more clear definitions of variables) • Quantity issue (too complex and stratified) • Lack of Compliance (reasons must be sought, Member by Member) • No example of use so far • Difficulties of feedback from Members when encountering a problem • Some inconsistencies (between variables of the subtasks, e.g. landings per species and total landings) • Contains not only basic data, sometimes processed data is required (% salary share, ...)
Threat	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some Members are not in the position to collect the relevant data (human and financial issues) • The concept of Operational Unit is questioned • Is it utopia to get all this data one day? • Reluctance to provide data from some countries • Lack of confidence in the use by GFCM of these data • Lack of expertise in some Members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other regional databases are used for international management • Compatibility with other Data collection frameworks (EU DCF, ICCAT data systems, ...) • GFCM tool for building management plans • Submission of basic official fisheries statistics (catches by GSA, dynamic fleet characteristics) • Standardization/homogenization • The approach has the potential to enable capacity building (training of targeted people, assistance to countries on data collection in a cost efficient framework, ...) • Data provision to Expert meetings if data available in due time • Memory keeping of the data used and of the data already submitted

Appendix D**Terms of Reference for the processing and analysis of Task 1 data**

The proposed terms of references for consultants on the revision of Task 1 are as follows:

- Proceed to a comparative analysis of Data Collection systems in other Regional Fisheries Management Organisations;
- Analyse the relevant subcommittee and SAC reports, the GFCM performance review, documents and work done by FAO sub-regional projects in relation to data collection and data submission to Task 1;
- Revise the purpose of Task 1 and possible extension towards a Task 2, including the need to standardise the methodologies for the collection and reporting of data;
- Taking into consideration (i) the SCSI/SCESS analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities, (ii) the SCSI/SCESS discussion of a possible new Task 2, (iii) the national potentialities, (iv) the need to keep memory of the data already submitted and (v) the need to build a cost effective system, define the structure of a refined Task 1 and a possibly a new Task 2 to hold all the information;
- Consider the time frame in which the data must be collected and submitted in order to serve the purposes identified *supra*.

The roadmap to finalise a Task 1 and 2 proposal should include a round of consultation with national experts and test cases in different countries after the consultation process, followed by a workshop which could be held in 2012 involving the 4 sub-committee coordinators. The terms of reference for such a workshop would be:

- Review the work done by the consultants and agree upon the final structure and definitions of Task 1 & 2;
- Propose actions to address, if needed, the remaining work to be done in order to have all variables included in Task 1 & 2 fully described and relevant agreed protocols for data collection and submission;
- Propose actions within the GFCM Framework Programme to address the gaps and deficiencies in national fisheries information systems, together with FAO regional projects.