



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food
and
Agriculture
Organization
of
the
United
Nations

Organisation
des
Nations
Unies
pour
l'alimentation
et
l'agriculture

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

Extraordinary Session

St. Julians, Malta, 19 – 23 July 2004

HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMISSION

INTRODUCTION

1. The headquarters is the administrative hub and, in principle, the arena for sessions, meetings and other activities of the Commission. The selection of the headquarters is critical in that this choice will affect both the overall cost of operating the Commission and its operational efficiency. As a matter of principle, staffing within the headquarters of the Commission should be structured to be as cost effective as possible, this primarily because of the need to minimize the level of Members' contribution.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES TO BE CONSIDERED

2. With the above consideration in mind, the following general principles should be taken into account in determining the Commission's headquarters:¹

- It should be located where the cost of supporting the operations of the Commission are reasonable.
- It should be easily accessible by Members, consultants, and staff who are required to travel to sessions/meetings or to undertake work on behalf of the Commission away from its headquarters. This accessibility pre-supposes that the headquarters is centrally located in the region and that it is well served by regional and international airlines.

¹ It is recognized that other consideration, perhaps of a political nature, may play a role in determining the headquarters of the Commission. However, for the purposes of this document, only considerations of a financial and efficiency nature are taken into account.

- It should have good communication network (internet connection facilities, telephone, fax, etc.) and other services, for example electricity which are reliable. These services should be available at reasonable cost and not require the Commission to invest in some stand-by facilities in order to have access to 24 hours services.
- It should be endowed with appropriate basic services and facilities such as medical services together with primary and secondary schools of international standard. The availability of such services and facilities would serve to reduce staff turn over. In this connection, it should be pointed out that the retention of secretarial staff is an important issue because recruitment and repatriation of staff are costly. In addition, personnel changes result in loss of staff work-time and the lack of continuity of service. Both of these issues affect the operational efficiency of an organization.
- Due consideration should be given to the possibility of establishing and maintaining synergies with other organizations and institutions carrying out activities of interest to the Commission.
- Due consideration should be given to the availability of social and economic conditions in a country, as these would affect the cost of doing business (e.g. the need for security services), the recruitment and retention of staff, and the personal security of delegates attending meetings.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

3. In addition, the host country should be willing to provide adequate premises and appropriate secretarial facilities for the Commission and supporting staff. Such facilities should also include meeting rooms to ensure Commission sessions and other activities by the Commission or its subsidiary bodies are held in the most optimal conditions.

4. The host country should be committed to provide to FAO and the Commission, its property, funds and assets, its official and to the persons performing services on its behalf, the provisions of the Convention on privileges and immunities of the specialized agencies.

5. The Government should be willing to deal with any claims brought by third persons against FAO and the Commission, their personnel or other persons performing services on their behalf, in connection with GFCM, except when it is agreed by the parties that such claims arise from gross negligence or wilful misconduct of such persons.

6. If there is competition for the headquarters among (potential) Members, and this matter cannot be resolved through consensus, the governments interested in hosting the Commission could be requested to make a case justifying why the headquarters should be located in their respective countries. This justification should include, inter alia, the nature, scope and extent of facilities and services to be provided, free of charge, to the Commission. Such a justification should be made by each interested government before a final decision is made concerning the selection of the headquarters. In any event, the country selected to host the Commission should disclose full details of the facilities and services to be provided to the Commission so as to avoid any misunderstandings at a later stage.

HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT

7. A headquarters agreement for the Commission should be negotiated by FAO with the host country. The agreement should provide for unrestricted activities by FAO and the Commission and their staff to enable them to carry out their functions effectively.²

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMISSION

8. The Commission is invited to review the above criteria, general principles and considerations and, as appropriate, provide guidance to the Secretariat to continue work on this issue.

² The headquarter agreement should provide for, inter alia: provision of premises and their maintenance, free of charge, by the host government, and the inviolability of those premises, provision of privileges, immunities and facilities accorded to FAO and the Commission and their staff and dependents; provision of privileges, immunities, and facilities accorded to States, inter-governmental organizations, experts and consultants, while attending sessions/meetings; exemption from direct taxes, cost of excise duties and value added tax; exemption from restrictions and prohibitions on imports by FAO and the Commission; exemption from currency and exchange restrictions, freedom of communication; and unrestricted importation of publications and information for use by FAO and the Commission.