



منظمة الأغذية
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GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Seventh Session

Rome, Italy, 19-22 October 2004

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

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This document is the summary of the activities of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) covering the intersessional period 2003-2004. It briefly describes the work of SAC, its Sub-Committees and Working groups as well as other activities conducted upon guidance from GFCM. At its Twenty-seventh session (Rome, Italy, 19-22 November 2002), the Commission agreed that the activities of the Committee will draw mainly from the priorities embodied in the "Reference framework for the mandate of SAC for the period 2003-2004"¹, and incidentally from the detailed work plans of its subsidiaries deriving from Reference framework. At its Twenty-eighth session (Tangiers, Morocco, 14-17 October 2003), the Commission provided further guidance on the implementation of the Reference Framework for 2004.

2. The intersessional activities reported below refer only partially to many other relevant undertakings that were carried out by the FAO regional projects: CopeMed, AdriaMed, MedSudMed and MedFisis. The review of those activities carried out directly in support to SAC is enclosed in the respective reports of the subsidiaries of the Committee. Complementary reporting on major activities of these regional projects is provided in document GFCM:SAC7/2004/4. Additional information on activities of relevance to SAC that are carried out by other national or regional projects, are expected to be presented under agenda item four of this session through the review of the National reports of SAC Members.

¹ Report of the 27th Session, Appendix H.

II. ACTIVITIES OF THE SAC DURING THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD

Overview of SAC achievements

3. At its Twenty-seventh Session, the Commission² instructed the Chairperson of SAC to determine priority activities within the Reference Framework, based on available inputs and results achieved in the precedent year. At its Twenty-eighth session, GFCM reviewed the report of the Sixth session of SAC (GFCM:SAC7/2004/Inf.5) and endorsed the Programme of work of the Committee for 2004. SAC had eleven months within which to implement its programme.

4. The work of the SAC, its four Sub-Committees and Working groups during the period under review was as intense as in 2003, as shown by the number of documents produced³ and meetings organized (seventeen). With the exception of two Workshops, respectively on the GFCM Glossary and on the Measurement of Fishing effort and the third joint GFCM/ICCAT Working group on Sustainable Tuna Farming, all the meetings approved by the Commission were convened, as *per* the table below. In addition, a Workshop on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in the Mediterranean was held in June 2004. It identified principles, priorities and options for addressing IUU fishing. Results will be reported directly to the Twenty-ninth session of the Commission.

5. Overall, the number of experts participating in meetings increased compared to previous years although the number of GFCM Members represented remained extremely limited. Experts from the Black Sea region seldom participated. Once again, the Sub-Committees alluded to this concern and stressed the potential negative impact of such a situation on their scientific advice. With support from MedFisis, an increased participation of scientists from the Eastern Mediterranean was acknowledged with satisfaction.

6. At its Twenty-eighth session, the Commission endorsed the composition of the new Bureau of SAC. During the intersession, the Coordinators of the Sub-committees and Facilitators of Working Groups collaborated actively with the Chairperson of SAC and the Secretariat. This included drawing up agendas, holding meetings and liaising with the SAC National focal points and the various experts participating in the networks of the Sub-committees. The Commission also acknowledged the importance of the Coordinating Meeting of the Sub-committees (CMSC)⁴ as well as the need for elaborating specific terms of reference for the SAC Bureau to be agreed upon by the Commission⁵. During the intersession, the CMSC met twice, following the Plenary of GFCM (see GFCM: SAC7/2004/Mad.7) and after the meetings of the Sub-committees (see GFCM: SAC7/2004/Mad.8). Draft terms of reference for the Bureau of SAC were prepared and endorsed by the CMSC at its second meeting. Additional suggestions were made in relation to the functioning of the subsidiaries of SAC, on the basis of the report of the *ad hoc* meeting of experts on the independent appraisal of the achievements of the Scientific Advisory Committee since its inception in 1999 (GFCM:SAC7/2004/ Inf.6), as detailed in paragraphs 8 and 9 below.

² Report of the 27th Session, paragraphs 78 and 88.

³ In addition to producing Reports of meetings, six monographies have been printed or will be published in the GFCM *Study and Reviews Series* (SR) before the end of 2004. They covers the following topics: Socio-economic data sampling (SR No 73); Impact of fishing gear on biodiversity and marine habitats (SR No74); Comparative analysis of Fisheries Legislations (SR No75); IUU fishing in the Mediterranean (SR No 76); Inventory of GFCM scientific and technical publication since 1952 (SR No 77); Biological Reference Points (SR No 78). An update of the macro-economic parameters of Mediterranean fisheries is also under preparation.

⁴ Paragraph 16 of the Report of the 28th Session.

⁵ Paragraph 19 of the Report of the 28th Session.

7. Furthermore, as noted by GFCM⁶, since a growing number of issues tended to be cross-sectional among the Sub-committees and Working groups, CMSC addressed the need for stronger interface between the respective activities of the subsidiaries. Consequently, the meetings on Reference points and on Operational Units favoured multidisciplinary exchanges of views. The promotion of greater capacity for liaising and networking as well as of enhanced accountability of national institutions was considered, including through a comprehensive identification of national Focal points for Sac and related Correspondents for each Sub-committee.

Meetings of SAC subsidiary bodies

	Title	Date (2004)	Place	Coordinator/ Facilitator	Experts⁷/Country Participation
Stock Assessment	Annual Session	10-12 May	Malaga, Spain	P.Oliver/K. Karlou-Riga	15 / 8
	Working Group on Demersal Species	6-7 May	Malaga, Spain	E. Arnieri	21 / 7
	Working Group on Small Pelagic Species	6-7 May	Malaga, Spain	I. Palomera	15 / 5
	Workshop on Biological Reference Points	20-21 April	Rome, Italy	P. Lembo	60 / 7
Statistics and Information	Annual session	10-12 May	Malaga, Spain	M. Camilleri	20 / 13
Economic and Social Sciences	Annual Session	10-12 May	Malaga, Spain	M. I. Malouli	16 / 10
	Working Group on Socio-economic Indicators	15-17 March	Barcelona, Spain	R. Franquesa	8 / 5
Marine Environment and Ecosystems	Annual Session	10-12 May	Malaga, Spain	A. Garcia	20 / 7

⁶ Report of the 27th Session, paragraph 23.

⁷ GFCM Secretariat and FAO regional projects staff excluded.

Meetings of the Scientific Advisory Committee

Title	Date	Place	Coordinator/ Facilitator
Seventh Session	19-22 October (2004)	Rome, Italy	C. Piccinetti
3rd Joint GFCM/ICCAT Working Group on Sustainable Tuna Farming	1-3 December (2004)	Rome, Italy	A. Lovatelli
Coordination of the four Sub-Committees	13 May (2004)	Malaga, Spain	C. Piccinetti
7 th Joint GFCM/ICCAT Working Group on Large Pelagics	13-14 May (2004)	Malaga, Spain	V. Restrepo
2 nd Joint SAC-CAQ/ICCAT Working Group on Sustainable Tuna Farming	15-17 December (2003)	Izmir, Turkey	V. Restrepo
Joint SCIS/SCES/SCSA Group of Experts on Operational Units	2-3 December (2003)	Madrid, Spain	M. Camilleri
SAC/CAQ AdriaMed Consultation on the Interaction between Aquaculture and Capture Fisheries	5-7 November (2003)	Rome, Italy	F. Massa
Coordination of the four Sub-Committees	18 October (2003)	Tangiers, Morocco	C. Piccinetti
Meeting of Experts on the appraisal of SAC achievements since 1999	27-28 August (2003)	Rome, Italy	M. Camilleri

Review of main activities of the subsidiary bodies

8. A Meeting of Experts on the appraisal of SAC achievements since its inception was held in August 2003, following up on a recommendation of the Committee made at its Sixth session. The Report of the experts was presented to the Twenty-eighth session of GFCM. The appraisal comprised summaries of SAC's major achievements, strengths and weaknesses and suggested options for improving the efficiency of its *modus operandi*. Emphasis was on: (a) a task-oriented advisory process driven by GFCM management objectives; and (b) an enhanced capacity to formulate management advice in conformance with an ecosystem approach to fisheries. Guiding principles were identified, together with proposals for related working mechanisms and methodological approaches. The report also suggested that the current mode of operation did not encourage the integration of disciplines, especially for the formulation of sound management advice. The Commission agreed that problem-solving and task oriented approaches should be promoted. It acknowledged that the report would form a useful basis for further discussions within GFCM when endowed with an autonomous budget and that sufficient time was required for throughout examination prior to taking further decision⁸.

⁸ Report of the 28th Session, paragraphs 30 to 34.

9. The CMSC followed up on the views expressed by the Commission and the suggestions of the Group of experts which evaluated SAC achievements. It reviewed some of the functional procedure of the subsidiaries of SAC, especially on issues such as improving the formulation of multidisciplinary management advice, rationalising the organisation and integration of activities and securing the participation of experts, and promoting the publication of scientific outputs. These issues were, among others, presented to the Extraordinary Session of GFCM (St Julians, Malta, 19-22 July, 2004), which, after a very preliminary exchanges of views, agreed to consider them more thoroughly during its next Ordinary session⁹.

10. As was provided in the 2003 Work Programme of SAC and CAQ, AdriaMed organized an Expert Consultation on the Interaction between Aquaculture and Capture Fisheries. The Consultation was held in November 2003 (see GFCM:SAC7/2004/Mad.9). It defined a matrix synthesizing interactions and identified related indicators using a systemic approach (ecology, economy, governance and legal framework). The outcomes of the Consultation were presented at the Fourth session of the Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ), in June 2004. CAQ highlighted that a similar approach should be considered in other areas of the Mediterranean taking into account the impact on biodiversity, restocking, space competition, marketing and the role of local fishing communities. CAQ further agreed that priority should be given to these issues and that the experience should be extended with due consideration to the peculiarity of the two sub-sectors at national and regional levels.

11. With regard to the Sub-Committees, the reports of the Workshops and *ad hoc* Working Groups were discussed during the meeting of the respective Sub-Committees. Following a meeting held in December 2003, a multidisciplinary group of CopeMed experts formulated the pilot study on Operational Units (OUs) of small-pelagic fisheries in the Alboran Sea. The activities of the cross-sectional Working Group on OUs, including progress made through the AdriaMed pilot study on the Adriatic, were discussed as a joint agenda item of the relevant Sub-committees, under the *aegis* of the Sub-committee on Statistics and Information (SCIS). Substantial progress were also achieved for harmonizing Catch and Effort Assessment Survey (CAS) in order to comply with data requirements of the Operational Unit Scheme, with the support of these regional projects as well as of MedFisis in the Eastern Mediterranean.

12. The four Sub-committees held their session in parallel in May 2004. The conclusions and recommendations of each Sub-committee will be presented by the Coordinator under the corresponding agenda item and on the basis of document GFCM:SAC7/2004/3. The respective reports of the Sub-Committees, which include the main results of their Working groups, are made available as documents GFCM:SAC7/2004/Mad. 1, 2, 3 and 4. The outputs of the Sub-Committees are therefore not dealt with here.

13. The Seventh session of the GFCM/ICCAT Working Party on Large Pelagic species was organized by the ICCAT/SCRS back to back to the meetings of the Sub-committees. The meeting focused on the review of the biological knowledge and data available on small-tunas, billfish and albacore. The report of the Working Party is quoted as document GFCM:SAC7/2004/Mad.5. The status of the Working Party, within the framework of SAC Subsidiaries as well as the lack of proper terms of reference for this body were questioned by the CMSC.

Pending issues

14. The Joint GFCM (SAC/CAQ)/ICCAT Working Group on Sustainable Tuna Farming, held its second meeting, in December 2003 and reviewed summaries covering capture fisheries, farming and marketing of bluefin tuna based on the completed and collected survey reports

⁹ Report of the Extraordinary Session, paragraph 47.

(document GFCM:SAC7/2004/Mad.5). At the time of preparing this document, the Third meeting of the Working group was tentatively scheduled to take place from 1 to 3 December 2004, to discuss and finalize the draft guidelines produced for addressing the sustainability of this activity.

15. There were no tangible follow-up to the Workshop on responsible fisheries in the Black Sea and Azov Sea and Evaluation of Demersal Resource (Istanbul, 15-17 April, 2003). Scientists from this region did not participate to SAC activities. However, the UNDP-GEF Black Sea Ecosystem Recovery Project (BSERP) sent a representative to the SCSA Workshop on biological reference points. There is therefore still a need to strengthen the involvement of Black Sea scientists within the work of SAC, as expressed by the Committee at its Sixth session.

16. At its Twenty-eighth session, the Commission noted that little progress had been made by the Joint EIFAC/GFCM *ad hoc* Working Party on the Management of Sturgeon¹⁰. The Working Party which was established in 2001, met during the Twenty-third session of EIFAC (Wierzbica, Poland, 26 May – 2 June 2004). The low response to the questionnaire sent to selected countries on the status of the stocks and their level of exploitation was noted with concern. EIFAC however recommended that the Working Party: i) gather missing information; ii) evaluate existing results for the River Danube; iii) formulate an action plan on sturgeon management as a basis to seek for EU funding¹¹ for implementation. It could be noted that GFCM, at its Extraordinary Session did not earmark funds in its 2005 budget to support the Working Party. In view of present SAC workload and priorities, the Committee may wish to reassess the rationale for maintaining GFCM scientific involvement in this Working Party.

III. SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE

17. The Committee is invited to review and discuss this report on the intersessional activities, together with the conclusions and recommendations of the Sub-Committees (document GFCM:SAC7/2004/3), *inter alia*, with the view to better integrating scientific outputs as well as enhancing coordination of proposed activities of its subsidiaries, as suggested in the Provisional Reference Framework for 2005-2006 (document GFCM:SAC7/2004/5).

18. The Committee may also wish to provide inputs and formulate recommendations for the attention of the Commission on the various issues raised in relation with the *modus operandi* of its subsidiaries, including the suggestions made during the appraisal of the SAC achievements and those expressed by the Coordinating Meeting of the Sub-committees.

¹⁰ Report of the 28th Session, paragraph 13.

¹¹ Report of the 23rd Session of EIFAC, paragraphs 20 and 21.