



**GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR
THE MEDITERRANEAN**

**COMMISSION GÉNÉRALE DES PÊCHES
POUR LA MÉDITERRANÉE**



Fifth Session of the Committee on Administration and Finance (CAF)

FAO HQ, Rome, Italy, 19-24 May 2014

**Report of the fourth session of the Committee on Administration and
Finance (CAF)
Split, Croatia, 13 May 2013**

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The Committee on Administration and Finance (CAF) of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) held its fourth session in Split, Croatia on 13 May 2013. The session was attended by delegates of 21 GFCM Members as well as observers from non GFCM Member nations (Russian Federation) and from intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.
2. The meeting was called to order by Mr Aleksandar Joksimovic, first Vice-Chairperson of CAF, who welcomed the participants and expressed his gratitude to the Government of Croatia for hosting the session in Split and for the excellent organization of the event.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION

3. The Vice-Chairperson referred to the Statement of Competence and Voting Rights by the European Union and its Member States as provided in CAF:IV/2013/Inf.4.
4. The agenda, attached in Annex A, was adopted with minor changes.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL ISSUES

5. Mr Abdellah Srour, Executive Secretary of the GFCM, introduced the "Report of the Secretariat on Administrative and Financial Issues" (CAF:IV/2013/2), summarizing the administrative and financial situation. After highlighting the impacts of the result-oriented approach adopted by the GFCM Secretariat and its key role within the process launched by FAO regarding bodies established within Article XIV of the FAO Constitution, the presentation touched upon, *inter alia*, topics such as the GFCM headquarters, staffing, material and infrastructure, activities carried out by the Task Force, actions for the Black Sea, cooperation activities and high-level visits and coordination meetings, meetings, publications, cooperation with partners, status of payment of contributions made by Members to the autonomous budget and review of the statement of the expenditures made in 2012, including extra-budgetary resources.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

Recommendations adopted under Article V of the GFCM Agreement

6. The Committee was informed that the Secretariat had officially transmitted the text of recommendations adopted at the thirty-sixth session of the Commission (Morocco, May 2012) to Members and observers. After a “grace period”, the relevant decisions entered into force on 6 October 2012.

Specific actions of GFCM for the Black Sea

7. The Executive Secretary informed the Committee on the most significant outcomes of activities for the Black Sea, highlighting in particular the nomination of focal points for each riparian State, the creation of a regional online database for experts and institutions of the Black Sea, the organization of two workshops on Monitoring, Control and Surveillance and data collection, respectively. He stressed in particular the marked interest shown by member and non-member countries towards GFCM activities and strengthened cooperation with Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey.

Activities and functioning of the Secretariat

8. The Committee was informed that the intersessional activities of the Secretariat included the organization and coordination of 22 meetings agreed by the Commission, including 9 meetings of subsidiary bodies and the annual Session of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), 4 meetings of subsidiary bodies of the Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ) and the eighth session of the CAQ, including SIPAM. In addition, GFCM held 3 meetings of the GFCM Bureau, COC Bureau and WGBS and organized 4 sub-regional workshops under the first FWP. The Secretariat produced 35 technical and administrative documents.

9. The Committee was informed that the Fishery Resources Officer (Professional Category P-4), Mr Miguel Bernal (Spanish citizen), was recruited in July 2012 and that the Scientific Editor/Translator (P-2), Ms Dominique Bourdenet (French citizen), was recruited in October 2012. Moreover, the post of Ms Claudia Escutia was upgraded from Administrative Assistant G-5 to Programme Assistant G-6 to better reflect the responsibilities and job profile of the position. The selection of the Fisheries Officer on Legal and Institutional matters (P-3), the Office Assistant (G-3) and Security Guard (G-2) were ongoing. Security duties had been performed by a temporary team of four FAO retirees working on shift. A temporary Office Assistant (G-3) had been recruited for 6 months to replace the GFCM Office Clerk in maternity leave, and security tasks had been performed by consultants. One Intern and several consultants provided support to activities in 2012-2013.

Information technologies and information systems

10. CAF was informed that a permanent IT cloud-based infrastructure had been set up with the objectives to: i) provide adapted interactive tools in support to intersessional activities, subsidiary bodies and the FWP; ii) build an integrated solution to enable interested Parties to communicate and store common data; and iii) improve the efficiency of the Secretariat and enhance cost-effectiveness.

GFCM Headquarters

11. The Committee was reminded that the headquarters of the GFCM Secretariat were financed through a contribution from FAO (€46 000 per year) and from Italy (€100 000 per year). Infrastructures and security material were installed and IT equipment was bought.

Status of ratification of the Amendments to the GFCM Agreement

12. The Committee was informed on the status of acceptance of 1997 amendments to the GFCM agreement, which remained unchanged, i.e. 21 Members had deposited their instruments of acceptance while Egypt (remitting its contribution) and Israel had not yet done so. A letter from the Embassy of Syria informing that Syria had ratified the Agreement had been received in September 2010.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

Member contributions to the autonomous budget

13. The Secretariat informed the Committee that the “Call for funds” letter was sent in June 2012. By December 2012, most Members had settled their contributions. In total, 18 Members deposited their instruments of acceptance and remitted their contributions; Lebanon, Libya and Malta had deposited their instruments of acceptance but had not paid their contributions, while the Syrian Arab Republic and Israel had neither deposited their instrument of acceptance nor paid their contribution.

14. The delegate of Algeria raised the issue of unsubmitted contributions, stressing the need to ensure that all Members equally fulfil their obligations when due and without delays, so to allow the Secretariat to work at full capacity. Delegations with outstanding contributions were called to clarify. Malta and Libya assured the CAF those would be timely submitted.

2012 financial situation: autonomous budget, arrears and trust funds

15. The Committee was informed on the main expenditures incurred during the intersession, set according to the priorities and work plan adopted.

16. Information on the status of GFCM extra-budgetary resources (i.e. voluntary contributions from Members for specific activities) received from FAO, EU and Italy was provided.

17. The Committee thanked the Secretariat for the thorough presentation made on administrative and financial issues.

18. The EU delegate mentioned the increasing amount of GFCM activities undertaken thanks to extra-budgetary resources and highlighted the need for Members to have a full picture of additional finances that come to feed the agreed intersessional activities. He stressed the importance of budgetary transparency so that Members could take informed decisions when examining the annual work plan. In this regard, he suggested that the Secretariat should prepare an additional report regarding extra-budgetary resources exclusively – to be submitted together with the usual report on administrative and financial issues – which could sustain the analysis of the work plan and the identification of priorities.

19. This proposal was strongly supported by the delegate of France, who insisted on the importance to see under which administrative umbrella (autonomous budget, extra-budgetary funds, FWP, other) each intersessional activity had been conducted. In this regard, it was recalled that actions carried out in collaboration with the FAO Regional Projects could not be accounted for.

Provisional GFCM budget and Member contributions for 2013

20. The Executive Secretary presented the GFCM budget and Member contributions for 2013 (CAF:IV/2013/3).

21. The proposed budget for the given period had been prepared assuming that the recruitment of

the Fishery Officer on Legal and Institutional Matters (P-3), the Office Assistant (G-3) and the Security Guard (G-2) would be completed by November 2013, as well as the upgrade of the Programme/System Analyst (G5) to IT Assistant (G6) starting from 2014.

22. The total sum of the autonomous budget for 2013 was estimated at US\$1 940 973 while that for 2014 was estimated at US\$2 056 017. Those figures would represent a 7.53 percent increase in 2013 in relation to 2012, and a 5.93 percent increase in 2014 in relation to the budget proposed for the previous financial year.

23. The budget proposal for 2013 was also prepared assuming that FAO would continue to contribute to the Secretariat with €46 000 per annum along with technical backstopping; and that the Government of Italy would continue to disburse €100 000 yearly to cover part of GFCM running costs.

24. Regarding the willingness informally expressed by Montenegro to cover the outstanding contribution of Serbia due before its withdrawal from the Commission amounting to US\$8 785,42, the delegate of Montenegro assured that this would be discussed bilaterally at Ministry level and that the final decision would be communicated as soon as possible for consideration of the Commission.

25. The delegate of Algeria supported the proposal of the Executive Secretary on covering the costs of vice-presidents of committees and proposed to examine the possibility that these costs be covered by their countries.

26. The EU delegation praised the level of detail of the presentation made by the Secretariat, allowing for a sound examination of efforts made by the Secretariat to deliver all expected outputs, improve its efficiency and optimize expenses. In this regard, they suggested giving Members more time to analyse the figures, especially in light of the discussions still to be held during the week.

27. The Committee agreed that a final decision on staffing, budget adoption and priorities would be taken during the week, further to the review of the 2013 work plan.

WORK PROGRAMME OF THE COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

28. Considering the importance of the CAF mandate, the delegate of Tunisia raised the possibility of holding a meeting of the CAF Bureau during the intersession for the necessary coordination with other committees and preparation of financial matters. In the ensuing discussions, it was however suggested to carry out such preparation via electronic means (teleconference or other) rather than putting a significant burden on existing expenses with the organisation of another meeting.

ELECTION OF THE CAF BUREAU

29. The Executive Secretary recalled the rules for the election of the Bureau of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission. Several delegations were in favour of re-electing the current Bureau, considering the challenges posed by the ongoing modernisation of the Commission for which continuous involvement of the persons already in charge was important.

30. Due to the absence of Mr Mohamed Najih, the CAF unanimously elected Ms Mimoza Cobani (Albania) as second Vice-Chair of the Committee.

ANY OTHER MATTER

31. Referring to Article II (1) of the GFCM Agreement and particularly to Rule III (2) of the

GFCM Rules of Procedure whereby “at each session, the Secretary shall receive the credentials of delegations, observer nations and international organization participating as observers and such credentials shall conform to the standard form set by the Secretariat”, the Executive Secretary presented a standard form for consideration of the Commission.

32. Delegates from France and Algeria supported the proposal, recalling that such practice was already in force in other RFMOs and that it would further strengthen the role and mandate of national representatives to the sessions.

33. The standard format was adopted with some changes suggested by delegations. It was agreed that the Secretariat would send the format to Members in due time prior to each session.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE FIFTH SESSION

34. The delegates of Egypt and Tunisia considered necessary to keep the CAF within (and not prior to) the annual session of the Commission, although they both stated that it should be held later during the week to tackle priorities and activities to be undertaken first and then consider the related budgetary implications.

35. It was agreed that the date and venue of the sixth session would hence be decided by the Commission at its thirty-seventh session.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT AND CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

36. This report was adopted on 16 May 2013.

Annex A**Agenda**

1. Opening of the session
2. Adoption of the agenda and arrangements for the session
3. Conclusions of the Task Force on administrative and financial issues
4. Reports from the Secretariat on administrative and financial issues
 - Activities and functioning of the Secretariat, including staffing issues
 - Status of ratification of the Amendments to the GFCM Agreement
 - Status of Member Contributions to the autonomous budget
 - 2012 financial situation: autonomous budget, arrears and trust funds
5. Provisional GFCM budget and Member contributions for 2013
6. Work programme of the Committee on Administration and Finance
7. Election of the CAF Bureau
8. Any other matter
 - Proposal for a standard format for Credentials to GFCM statutory sessions
9. Date and venue of the fifth session
10. Adoption of the report and closure of the session