



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



GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

Report of the 10th Coordination Meeting of the Sub-Committees (CMSC)

St George's Bay, Malta, 3 December 2010*

*** Only available in English**

OPENING OF THE MEETING

1. The Coordination Meeting of the Sub-Committees (CMSC) was opened by Mr. Henri Farrugio, Chairman of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), who welcomed the members (see list in Annex II). He expressed his satisfaction for the outcome of all workshops and technical meetings convened since the last meeting of the SAC and congratulated the four Sub-Committees for the excellent work carried out. He stated that, in consequence, he was confident that the Coordination Meeting was in a good position to draw up concerted scientific and management advice to be presented at the forthcoming SAC meeting, on the basis of the results of the Sub-Committees.
2. The Executive Secretary a.i., Mr. Abdellah Srour, recalled the mandate of the CMSC and introduced the agenda of the meeting. He suggested that items 4 and 5 of the draft agenda should be moved under agenda item 7 and that it would not be necessary to retain agenda item 6. In addition he proposed that a new agenda item be introduced on the contribution of FAO Sub-Regional projects to the SAC activities (new agenda item 4).
3. The participants agreed with Mr Srour's proposed amendments and adopted the revised agenda as given in Annex I.

REVIEW OF THE MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUB-COMMITTEES INCLUDING THE OUTCOME FROM THE TRANSVERSAL SESSION.

Sub-Committee on Economic and Social Sciences (SCESS)

4. The SCESS Coordinator, Mr. Vahdet Unal, presented the outcome of the Sub-Committee. The CMSC reviewed the main conclusions and proposals drawn up by the SCESS as summarized below:

- 4.1. The SCESS stressed on the need to ensure a steady and more active participation of social and economic scientists from all Member countries in SCESS activities and meetings.

The CMSC noted the limited number of participants and contributions during the SCESS meeting. It considered initiatives such as the Masters programme on “Fisheries Economics and Management”, jointly organized by University of Barcelona, CIHEAM, IAMZ and COPEMED I, conducted in the past was instrumental in increasing the expertise in this field. **The CMSC** was informed that, in fact, the University of Alicante would be running this course as from 2011 subject to sufficient funding being obtained.

- 4.2. The SCESS proposed the inclusion in the GFCM Glossary of revised definitions for Recreational fishing and Underwater fishing. It also suggested that a definition for “Tourism fishing” should be drawn up and included in the glossary.

The CMSC agreed that these proposals should be forwarded to SAC for its consideration and endorsement.

- 4.3. The SCESS underlined the importance of developing a common and harmonised scientific monitoring protocol for recreational fisheries and listed a number of parameters for which data should be collected. It also recommended that a regional study be carried out to obtain an overview of recreational fishing activities (gears, techniques, target species, etc), the results of which could be used as a basis for the setting up of the monitoring framework. Furthermore, the SCESS recommended that, when appropriate, an effective licensing system should be considered for the regulation of recreational fisheries in the GFCM area.

The CMSC agreed with these proposals and further proposed that a Code of Practice/technical guidelines for the development, promotion and management of recreational fisheries in the GFCM area should be elaborated.

- 4.4. The SCESS stressed on the importance of progressing with studies on the socio-economic impacts of implementing the 40 mm square mesh or 50 mm diamond mesh in trawl codends in the Mediterranean Sea.

The CMSC proposed that experimental case studies should be undertaken to assess effects on landing value, landing weight, discard weight and cost of fishing per vessel day.

- 4.5. The SCESS recommended focusing on the socio-economic analysis of Mediterranean fleet segments for which economic data will be available as from 2011 through the GFCM Task 1.3 requirements. Upon the invitation by the Sub-Committee on Statistics and Information (SCSI), the SCESS reviewed the definitions of the Task 1.3 parameters to eliminate any ambiguity in the terms used and thus facilitate the data submission process.

The CMSC welcomed the work undertaken in this regard.

The CMSC agreed with the proposal by the SCESS to look into the subject of eco-labelling and its impact on the economic value of fisheries products in the GFCM Area.

Sub-Committee on Statistics and Information (SCSI)

5. The SCSI Coordinator, Mr. Joel Vigneau, presented the outcome of the Sub-Committee. The CMSC reviewed the main conclusions and proposals drawn up by the SCSI as summarized below.

- 5.1. The SCSI underlined the need to optimise the submission of fleet-based information, in reducing the number of datasets to be submitted, ideally to a unique fleet submission (fleet register) adding fields to provide indications given by the other datasets non redundant information.

The CMSC suggested that SAC should discuss on a mechanism to tackle this issue.

- 5.2. The SCSI proposed that Permanent Statistical Assistance Entity should be established to ensure continuity of assistance to the countries and to strengthen the capacity of GFCM in handling the numerous data exchange processes. The GFCM secretariat is invited to coordinate efforts and explore the possibility to set up this entity (PSAE).

The CMSC agreed that it was natural for this Entity to be placed within the GFCM Secretariat.

- 5.3. The SCSI suggested that the reporting of the unwanted catch (weight or number) of species of conservation concern through the Task 1 framework should be done by species for each Operational Unit and by gear and period. The bycatch of commercial species will be reported as associated species.

The coordinator of the Sub-Committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE) stated that this proposal was in agreement with the approach proposed by the SCMEE on this matter. **The CMSC** invited the SCMEE to elaborate a list of unwanted species to be included in the Task 1 reporting scheme and suggested that the definition in the SAC glossary related to bycatch is fine tuned to reflect the term “unwanted species”.

- 5.4. The SCSI proposed to hold a transversal workshop (SCSI/SCSA) on the development of a scheme for the reporting of biological data to expand on the current requirements of Task 1 framework and drew up draft Terms of Reference.

The CMSC reviewed this proposal and agreed that the Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment (SCSA) should *a priori* identify the biological parameters for which data should be submitted by species and gear for each Operational Unit and for given fishing periods. **The CMSC** added that following this, the 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 which will be linked to the former as well as to the stock assessment forms. In this context, the SCSA was invited to collaborate with the GFCM Secretariat in order to progress on the issue during the interim period.

On the options proposed by the SCSA for the Task 1 data access policy, **the CMSC** agreed that the statistical bulletin and other general statistical outputs should be available to the public by default. It concluded that, on this issue, the SAC should only discuss the modality of data access *i.e.* whether the data access is given upon registration to individuals or related to the needs expressed for participants of a GFCM meeting.

- 5.5. On the SCSA proposal to keep the present system of reporting through both STATLANT 37A and Task 1, **the CMSC** proposed to continue the trial period until a data flow (Task 1) can replace it without losing the historical series. **The CMSC** also agreed that the development by the Secretariat of a routine tool to automatically produce the output requested by STATLANT 37A from Task-1 data was useful but not urgently needed.
- 5.6. The SCSA made progress on the analysis of the weight threshold effect in reporting catches through logbooks, but no concrete conclusions were reached.

The CMSC agreed that SAC should discuss whether there is sufficient evidence to set up a threshold on the basis of the studies presented or whether there is a need to allow one more year in order to broaden the studies (scope and countries).

6. **The CMSC** agreed that the following issues raised by the SCSA should be addressed by the Compliance Committee:
 - 6.1. The lack of follow-up of Recommendation GFCM/2008/1 with regards to the submission of registered ports and the submission of data on inspections in accordance with Annex E. The SCSA suggested that the Commission should reassess the viability of this data exchange requirement.
 - 6.2. The fact that non-coastal non-GFCM member countries that fish in the Mediterranean and are reporting landings through STATLANT 37A but not submitting Task-1 data.

Sub-Committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE)

7. The SCMEE Coordinator, Mr. Federico Alvarez, presented the outcome of the Sub-Committee. **The CMSC** reviewed the main conclusions and proposals drawn up by the SCMEE as summarized below:
 - 7.1. The SCMEE proposed that bycatch data on elasmobranchs, on gelatinous species (algae and invertebrates) as well as catches of red coral should be recorded through the Task 1 framework. As previously suggested by the SCSA this reporting should be done by species for each Operational Unit and by gear and period. A special Operational Unit for

red coral harvesting should be defined and included in the current reporting scheme.

The CMSC discussed on these issues and agreed on including the bycatch on elasmobranchs, gelatinous zooplankton and algae, as well as on red coral in the data submission protocol of GFCM (task 1.4)

- 7.2. To establish a daily and/or seasonal quota system based on number of licenses issued to control fishing effort on red coral. This quota system should be based on the reporting system of task 1 mentioned in 7.1 above and include an appropriate monitoring system for landings.
- 7.3. In agreement with the SCSA, the SCMEP proposed to hold a joint meeting for stock assessment of selected species of elasmobranchs, either in parallel with the Working Group on Demersal species or separately. The SCMEP also supported the idea of organizing an age reading training course in 2011 in the framework of the Mid Term Working Program for Elasmobranchs approved during the 12th meeting of SAC in 2009. It also recommended that doubtful species from the taxonomic point of view should not be considered for stock assessment purposes.

The CMSC agreed on that foreseen assessment meeting on Elasmobranchs for 2011 and stressed on the need of considering the ongoing works already in place by other Fisheries bodies such as ICCAT and ICES in relation to Elasmobranchs species.

- 7.4. The SCMEP recommended the following **management measures for the Red Coral** fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea:

- 7.4.1. To set up a minimum size of 10 mm of basal diameter with 20% tolerance. Stricter measures already in place should be maintained and adaptive approach should be considered in the case that valid scientific evidence demonstrates the need for a higher limit size.
- 7.4.2. To prohibit the harvesting of the shallow water populations in the depth less than 50 meters. Stricter measures already in place should be maintained and adaptive approach should be considered.
- 7.4.3. To establish a daily and/or seasonal quota system based on number of licenses issued to control fishing effort. This quota system shall include a reporting system for harvesters with the standard GFCM data submission scheme (Task 1) adapted to coral harvesting and an appropriate monitoring system for landings.
- 7.4.4. To set up a system of permanent or temporary (in a rotational fashion) fisheries closure areas for red coral according to the status of the resource.

The CMSC discussed on these proposals and agreed on accepting them.

- 7.5. The SCMEP highlighted the importance of reducing impacts of fisheries on the habitats and ecosystems on potential income for the fisheries, and encouraged assessing the likely relationship between the added value of a sustainable exploitation and its introduction into the market by ecolabelling.
- 7.6. The SCMEP suggested that TECHNOMED network could prepare a new version of the protocol on selectivity as a standard document which could be available for any Mediterranean case study, including socio-economical indicators to be collected. The standardized methodology of the statistical analysis should be improved and completed

(as minimum number of hauls) to make more reliable the conclusions on the catch and economical losses of the implementation of a selectivity device.

The CMSC agreed on assessing the impact on potential income of the strategies for protecting the fisheries and ecosystems and considered the possibility to add value to the products of the fisheries activities with a sort of ecolabelling. At the same time, the **CMSC** took note of the relevance of the update of the selectivity protocol for the correct application and the results consistency of the pilot studies.

7.7. The SCMEE made the following proposal on new terms and its correspondent definitions to be included in the **SAC Glossary**:

7.7.1. *Algal blooms*

The rapid and excessive growth of algal, generally caused by high nutrients levels and favourable conditions. It can result in deoxygenation of the water mass when the algal die, leading to the death of aquatic flora and fauna. (Source: Water Resources Management Practicum, 2000)

7.7.2. *Poaching*

Illegally taken or possession of wild fish or other wild animals for different motivations, from food to strictly monetary profit. (Source: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife).

7.7.3. *R.O.V.*

Remotely Operated underwater Vehicle

7.7.4. *Deep seabed*

It is defined by the IOC as a non-legal term commonly understood by scientists to refer to the seafloor below 200–300 m. In other words, it is non-shelf area.

7.7.5. *Deep sea*

Sea water column below 200 m. It is a fully aphotic zone.

7.7.6. *High Sea*

It is defined by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as all parts of the sea that are not included in exclusive economic zone, in the territorial sea or in internal waters of a State, or in the archipelagic waters of an archipelagic States (Article 86).

7.7.7. *Open sea*

Term adaptation to the Mediterranean Sea from “Open ocean” defined by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission as a non-legal term commonly understood by scientists to refer to the water column beyond the continental shelf, in other words, non-coastal. Open ocean may occur in areas within national jurisdiction in States with a narrow continental shelf

The CMSC recommended to check all the existing published documents that can include those concepts, specially and with priority a late publication of FAO for Deep Seas and

High Seas. (UNESCO. 2009. *Global Open Oceans and Deep Seabed (GOODS) – Biogeographic Classification*. Paris, UNESCO-IOC. (IOC Technical Series, 84.))

Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment (SCSA)

8. The SCSA Coordinator, Mr. Fabio Fiorentino, presented the outcome of the Sub-Committee. The CMSC reviewed the main conclusions and proposals drawn up by the SCSA as summarized below :

- 8.1. Within the framework of the Mid Term Working Program for Elasmobranch species approved during the 12th meeting of SAC in 2009, the SCSA, in agreement with the SCME, made the following proposals:

- 8.1.1. To hold a workshop, for their stock assessment inside the Demersals WG week or depending of the availability of data and of the interest, in a specific one in other dates.

- 8.1.2. Among the group of seven species pinpointed by the transversal Workshop held in Sfax in September 2010, the SCSA selected four: *Raja clavata*, *Raja miraletus*, *Raja asterias* and *Scyliorhinus canicula* for which information from trawl surveys is available and ready to be assessed next year 2011.

- 8.1.3. Among the suitable methods for the stock assessment of elasmobranchs discussed during the meeting, those named “less data demanding” are proposed to start with for the first exercise: *i. e.*; Y/R method of Beverton and Holt models, Composite Surplus Production Models, Non Equilibrium Biomass Dynamic Models for single species and Susceptibility Analysis (PSA) for fishing assemblages.

- 8.1.4. **The CMSC** accepted all the suggestions and recommended to carry out assessments on selected Mediterranean and Black Sea elasmobranchs stocks inside the activity of the next WG on demersal species for a preliminary group of species for which information to assess stock status be available.

- 8.2. After having analyzed the outcomes of the two 2010 transversal WS on Elasmobranchs and on Selectivity, some mitigation measures are highlighted aimed at reducing bycatch of unwanted species of conservation concern such as turtles, cetaceans and birds. Among the management measures the adoption of circular hook seems to be appropriate to be applied without major delay for pelagic species and, the grid and separator for demersals (according to the Selectivity and bycatch WS) also protection of nurseries is underlined as a general tool for all the species.

- 8.3. Regarding the outcomes of the WS on Selectivity The SCSA recommends to perform experiments to compare not only square/diamond mesh selectivity, but also to analyze the effects of a wider range of square mesh sizes in order to obtain models relating mesh size to retention at size. The Sub-Committee suggested studying also the effect of separator panels in reducing the occurrence of debris and litters in the trawl nets.

The CMSC agreed on considering the above two recommendations for their application to specific case studies.

- 8.4. Due to the increasing use of fishery restricted areas (FRA) in management and conservation framework, the SCSA recommended to investigate the role of Spatial

Based Approach to Fishery Management. The SC suggests strong link with SCMEF and SCESS in the possible organization of a specific WS to further study this issue.

The CMSC welcomed the idea without specifying a date for this proposed Workshop.

- 8.5. Concerning the development of the task 1.5 data submission forms as stated in point 5.4 of this report and in agreement with the SCSI, the SCSEA support the idea of separating it from the bulk of Task 1 forms , giving it more entity and to create a specific task 2 containing data on biological characteristic of the catches (length, age, sex, maturity) both in terms of landing and discards. This new task 2 should have the possibility to exchange data and information with the task1, the GFCM data base on biological parameters and with the Stock Assessment Forms. This activity should be integrated with the SCSI in a possible joint WS.

As stated in point 5.4 of this report, **The CMSC** reviewed this proposal and agreed that the SCSEA should, *a priori*, identify the biological parameters for which data should be submitted by species and gear for each Operational Unit and for given fishing periods. **The CMSC** added that following this, the transversal workshop could be held to elaborate on the data collection, data submission and data processing mechanisms. In this context, the SCSEA was invited to collaborate with the GFCM Secretariat in order to progress on the issue during the interim period.

INPUTS FROM THE FAO REGIONAL PROJECTS TO THE SUB-COMMITTEES

9. **The CMSC** noted the contribution made by the FAO Regional Projects, in particular the support provided for the participation of experts from various countries. It also welcomed the initiation of the EASTMED project which has already organized a number of training workshops on data collection and age reading for experts from its participating countries.
10. The meeting was informed by the projects' staff that the SAC programme of work will be considered during the coordination meetings of the respective Regional Projects, during which specific decisions on projects' involvement in the activities of SAC will be taken. A complete report on the contribution of the Regional Projects to SAC activities together with the related programme of work will be presented during the forthcoming SAC meeting.

STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTING THE PRELIMINARY 2011 WORKPLAN OF SAC

11. The meeting reviewed the programme of work as drafted by the Sub-Committees, including proposed workshops on specific subjects.
12. The decision of **the CMSC** on the convening of the workshop proposed by the SCSI on the development of a scheme for the reporting of biological data is reported in paragraph 5.4 of this report.
13. **The CMSC** agreed with the SCESS that it would be beneficial to hold a specific working group, back-to-back with the next SCESS meeting, to evaluate the availability and quality of Task 1.3 data as well as to identify and estimate the possible socio-economic indicators.

14. As reported in paragraph 7.4 and 8.1, **the CMSC** agreed 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 Program for Elasmobranchs should be organised.
15. **The CMSC** highlighted the need for the FAO Regional Projects to contribute to the execution of the SAC's programme of work and to 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.
16. The Secretariat informed **the CMSC** on the letter received from the CIESM Secretariat to call for strengthening collaboration on subjects of mutual interest, namely related to alien species, and jellyfish blooms, as well as on the promotion of multi-stakeholder dialogues on the exploitation of fisheries resources. **The CMSC** welcomed this letter and agreed that the Secretariat should follow this up and seek appropriate ways to enhance cooperation with this Organisation.
17. **The CMSC** noted the extensive contribution of RAC/SPA to the implementation of the SAC programme of work during the intersessional period, particularly in subjects concerning elasmobranchs, European eel, bycatch reduction and selectivity. In this respect, it looked forward to maintaining close collaboration between SAC and RAC/SPA which would be beneficial in maximizing the outputs of SACs endeavours.

ANY OTHER MATTERS

Issues related to the functioning of the SAC Sub-Committees and Working Groups

18. **The CMSC** expressed its satisfaction on the general functioning of the SAC subsidiary bodies. It underlined the importance of the half-day Transversal Session, which customarily takes place before the start of the Sub-Committee meetings, and considered extending it to at least one day or two half days. Although there was agreement on the important role that this session plays in formulating multidisciplinary advice, concern was raised on the restricted time available for the meetings of the respective Sub-Committees.
19. Remarks on the excessive length of some presentations delivered during the Sub-Committee meetings were noted. **The CMSC** suggested that the time available for individual presentations should be restricted and that the 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.

Review of the GFCM publications

20. The Secretariat informed **the CMSC** that the publications expected to be produced in the coming months are those on alien species and their impact on fisheries and ecosystems, the Task 1 Statistical Bulletin (reference year 2008), European eel and jellyfish. In addition, the publication on the use of socio-economic indicators in fisheries management will be published by GFCM in collaboration with CopeMed II, including Spanish, English and French versions. All SAC meeting reports will also be published as usual.
21. The Secretariat announced that an interactive electronic version of the revised SAC Glossary will be developed by the first quarter of 2011.

CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

22. The SAC Chairman closed the meeting at 15:30 and thanked all present for their valuable contribution. On behalf of **the CMSC** he also thanked the Maltese Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs for the generous hospitality and excellent organization of the meetings.

Agenda

- 1. Opening of the meeting**
- 2. Review of the main conclusions and recommendations of the Sub-Committees including the outcome from the transversal session**
- 3. Strategy for implementing the preliminary 2011 workplan of SAC**
- 4. Contribution of FAO Regional Projects to the SAC programme of work**
- 5. Any other matters**
 - 5.1 Issues related with the SAC/Sub-Committees and Working groups functioning
 - 5.2 Review of the GFCM publications
- 6. Closure of the meeting**

List of Members

Henri Farrugio, SAC Chairman

Othman Jarboui, SAC first Vice Chairman

Vahdet Unal , SCESS Coordinator

Federico Alvarez; SCMEEC Coordinator

Joel Vigneau, SCSII Coordinator

Fabio Fiorentino, SCSA Coordinator

Abdellah Srouf, GFCM Executive Secretary a.i

Matthew Camilleri, GFCM Biostatistician

Pilar Hernandez, GFCM Information Management Officer

Camille Samier, GFCM Consultant

Pedro Barros; FAO FIMF Officer

Constantina Karlou-Riga, Coordinator of EastMed project

Nicoletta Milone, AdriaMed project Officer

Luca Ceriola, MedsudMed project Officer

Mark Dimech, EastMed project officer