

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

**Report of the twelfth session of the
SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Budva, Montenegro, 25–29 January 2010

**Rapport de la douzième session du
COMITÉ SCIENTIFIQUE CONSULTATIF**

Budva, Monténégro, 25-29 janvier 2010



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PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This is the final report approved by the participants at the twelfth session of the Scientific Advisory Committee of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean held in Budva, Montenegro, from 25 to 29 January 2010.

PRÉPARATION DE CE DOCUMENT

Le présent document est le rapport final adopté par les participants à la douzième session du Comité scientifique consultatif de la Commission générale des pêches pour la Méditerranée tenue à Budva, Monténégro, du 25 au 29 janvier 2010.

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ABSTRACT

The Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) held its twelfth session in Budva, Montenegro, from 25 to 29 January 2010. The Session was attended by delegates from nineteen Members of the Commission. The Committee reviewed the activities and results obtained by its subsidiary bodies along with the proposals of the Coordinating Meeting of the Sub-Committees (CMSC), as well as the achievements by the FAO regional projects in support to the GFCM activities. It reflected on the management advice drawn up by the Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment on the basis of thirty-one stock assessments and agreed that the existing scientific evidence sufficed to support that the Commission takes relevant management measures notably to establish a regional logbook and to monitor the fishing capacity in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The SAC suggested that, in future, management advice on small pelagic fisheries should benefit more from the development of biological Reference Points for Biomass. It further discussed several important topics including recreational fisheries, improvement of gear selectivity and reduction of bycatch, the impact of climate change, the impact of alien species on fisheries and other issues such as the exploitation of red corals, the status of elasmobranch species and the follow-up on fisheries-restricted areas. The Committee appraised the data exchange protocols and related electronic tools developed by the Secretariat for the submission of Task 1 data. It also proposed that the criteria to identify sensitive habitats should be revisited and amended. Furthermore, the Committee acknowledged the proposal on the new functioning of the SCSA working groups on stock assessments, on the progress made on the updating of the SAC glossary and on updating of the reference frame of SAC and the establishment of a future strategic workplan. Finally, the SAC agreed upon its workplan for 2010 and renewed the mandate of the bureau for another two-year term and nominated a new coordinator for each of its four Sub-Committees.

RÉSUMÉ

Le Comité scientifique consultatif (CSC) de la Commission générale des pêches pour la Méditerranée (CGPM) a tenu sa douzième session à Budva (Monténégro), du 25 au 29 janvier 2010. Des Délégués de dix-neuf Membres de la Commission y ont participé. Le Comité a examiné les activités et les résultats obtenus par ses organes subsidiaires, la réunion de coordination des Sous-Comités (CMSC) ainsi que les réalisations des projets régionaux de la FAO qui soutiennent les activités de la CGPM. Il a examiné les avis de gestion formulés par le Sous-Comité de l'évaluation des stocks sur la base de trente et une évaluations de stocks et a convenu que des preuves scientifiques existantes suffisent à soutenir que la Commission prenne des mesures pertinentes de gestion, notamment pour établir un journal de bord régional et à faire le suivi de la capacité de pêche dans la Méditerranée et la mer Noire. Le CSC a suggéré que les avis de gestion à venir sur les petits pélagiques devraient bénéficier davantage de l'élaboration de points de référence biologiques de la biomasse. Il a en outre discuté de plusieurs sujets importants tels que la pêche récréative, l'amélioration de la sélectivité des engins et réduction des prises accessoires, l'impact du changement climatique, l'impact des espèces non indigènes sur les pêcheries et d'autres questions telles que l'exploitation du corail rouge, la situation des espèces d'elasmobranches et le suivi des zones de pêche à accès réglementé. Le Comité a examiné les protocoles d'échange de données et des outils électroniques mis au point par le Secrétariat pour la présentation des données de la Tâche 1. Il a également proposé que les critères permettant d'identifier les habitats sensibles devraient être révisés. En outre, le Comité a approuvé la proposition sur le nouveau fonctionnement des groupes de travail du SCSA sur les évaluations des stocks et a pris note des progrès accomplis dans la mise à jour du glossaire du CSC, de la mise à jour du cadre de référence du CSC et dans l'établissement d'un plan stratégique pour le futur. Enfin, le CSC a décidé son plan de travail pour 2010, renouvelé le mandat du Bureau pour un autre mandat de deux ans et a nommé un nouveau coordonnateur pour chacun de ses quatre Sous-Comités.

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OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The twelfth session of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) was held in Budva, Montenegro, from 25 to 29 January 2010.

2. The session was attended by delegates from 19 Members of the Commission as well as by observers from the “Confédération internationale de la pêche sportive” (CIPS), Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Area United Nations Environment Programme Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP-MAP-RAC/SPA), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

3. The meeting was called to order by Mr Henri Farrugio, Chairperson of the Committee, who welcomed the participants to the session. He gave the floor to the GFCM acting Executive Secretary, Mr Abdellah Srour, who welcomed all participants and expressed his gratitude to the authorities and people of Montenegro for their generosity and hospitality. Mr Srour recalled with deep regret that GFCM had recently lost its Executive Secretary, Dr Alain Bonzon. He reminded the competence that Mr Bonzon had always demonstrated, together with his high quality of work, both of which had allowed GFCM to achieve successful progress during the years. Mr Srour invited the Committee to take a minute of silence in his memory.

4. Mr Srour underscored the excellent achievements by the Scientific Advisory Committee during the last ten years and expressed his confidence that ongoing and future endeavours will be just as successful.

5. The meeting was then addressed by the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of Montenegro, His Excellency Milutin Simović, who welcomed all participants to Budva, highlighting the close collaboration of his country with the GFCM Secretariat, in particular with the late Alain Bonzon. He noted also that Montenegro had started the process of redefining its fisheries policy through the development of a new legal framework, which were passed by the Parliament of Montenegro in August 2009. In that respect, he made reference to a new law on marine fisheries and mariculture, to a large extent harmonized in particular with GFCM recommendations. He wished all participants a pleasant stay in Montenegro and a fruitful meeting (the speech is attached to this report).

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

6. After having invited all delegates to introduce themselves, the Chairperson gave the floor to the acting Executive Secretary who informed the Committee about logistics and reporting arrangements during the session.

7. The Agenda was introduced and adopted, as shown in Appendix A to this report. The list of participants is attached as Appendix B.

8. The documents, which were before the Committee, are listed in Appendix C.

INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Review of the decisions adopted at the thirty-third session of GFCM concerning fisheries management

9. The acting Executive Secretary outlined the decisions adopted by the Commission at its thirty-third session held in Tunisia (March 2009) recalling their respective scopes. He stressed that three of

these decisions were related to fisheries management, namely the establishment of a new fisheries restricted area (FRA) in the Gulf of Lions, the implementation of a minimum 40-mm square mesh codend or a diamond mesh size of at least 50 mm and a general reduction of fishing effort on demersal fisheries in the entire GFCM competence area. Mr Srour invited the Committee to consider the possibility of strengthening the resolution on demersal fisheries and recalled the request¹ of the Commission to continue analysis for the protection of spawning areas in the continental slope and canyons of Geographical Sub-areas (GSAs) 7 and 6 including also activities of fishing vessels in the FRA of Gulf of Lions as well as their biological and economical impacts. The Committee was further reminded of the decisions taken in the field of data reporting notably to implement the five components of Task 1 statistical matrix in 2010 and 2011 and also to set up a regional fleet register. Mr Srour also referred to the pending decision on fishing capacity and recalled the request of the Commission to make available the required data and information on fishing capacity at national level; thus helping the Commission to reach a final decision in this matter.

Report by the Chairperson: overview of SAC activities

10. On the basis of document GFCM:SAC12/2010/2, the Chairperson presented the activities undertaken by the four Sub-Committees during the intersession. He informed the delegates that nine scheduled meetings had been convened and that the Workshop on Fishing Capacity will be held in Rome from 17 to 19 February 2010.

11. The Chairperson highlighted the progress made by the Sub-Committee on Statistics and Information (SCSI), with the support of the Secretariat, in the development of a data exchange protocol together with related software tools for the transmission of Task 1 data. He also referred to the work carried out during the transversal workshop on the GFCM Logbook, which produced a draft format of the regional logbook. Further within the field of statistics and information, he informed the SAC that the SCSI had reviewed the STATLANT 37A capture production data submission scheme.

12. Moving onto the activities of the Sub-Committee on Economics and Social Sciences (SCESS), the Chairperson reported that technical discussions were held on non-professional commercial fishing and recreational fisheries. In addition, he informed the meeting that issues related to socio-economic aspects in connection with the improvement of gear selectivity as well as on implications of the increase in fuel prices and the obligation to reduce carbon dioxide emissions were also raised by the SCESS.

13. Referring to the undertakings of the Sub-Committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE), he highlighted, in particular, the work carried out by the transversal workshop on selectivity improvement and bycatch reduction together with the revision of the criteria for identifying sensitive habitats of GFCM priority species. He added that the SCMEE covered several other topics including the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF), marine protected areas (MPAs), fisheries restricted areas (FRAs), artificial reefs, status of elasmobranches as well as alien species.

14. The SAC was informed that the Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment (SCSA) convened meetings of working groups of the stock assessment on small pelagic and demersal species, including a practical assessment session. These working groups reviewed a total of 46 technical documents, out of which 31 were considered as complete assessments. The Chairperson added that the SCSA reviewed the stock assessment forms and proposed the addition of specific sheets for direct methods. This Sub-Committee also reviewed the list of priority species.

15. The Chairperson also referred to the SAC glossary and informed that progress on this matter would be addressed under agenda item 6.

¹ See Appendix H of the report of the thirty-third session.

Meeting of the Coordinating Meeting of the Sub-Committees (CMSC)

16. Referring to document GFCM:SAC12/2010/Inf.9, the SAC Chairperson presented the conclusions of the Coordinating Meeting of the Sub-Committees (CMSC), including the proposal related to the improvement of the functioning of the SCSA and its assessment working groups on stock assessment.

17. The SAC commended the work carried out by its subsidiary bodies during the intersession and felt that it had been provided with several elements on the basis of which it could formulate proposals for management decisions to safeguard the sustainability of fisheries in the region.

18. On the issue of the functioning of the SCSA and its working groups, the SAC agreed on the extension of the working group meetings on stock assessment by three days each to allow enough time for both the practical assessment session and the review of completed assessments to take place. The SAC underlined that, in this way, the workload of the SCSA in connection with the review of stock assessments would be alleviated giving more time to the Sub-Committee to focus on other important themes. It was agreed that the SCSA would ensure a second scientific scrutiny on the validated assessments by the working groups and would focus specifically on the coherence of the assessments and related management advice. Furthermore, the SAC stressed the importance of the stock assessment forms in the validation process of the assessments and underlined the need to revise these forms to include any further details which may facilitate this process. In particular these forms should provide any relevant information and data used as input for the models together with the analysis performed and the diagnostic on stock status. Within this context, the SAC agreed with the proposal of the CMSC on the new working procedures of the working groups.

19. The Committee agreed that the submission to the GFCM Secretariat of stock assessment forms duly filled out at least one week before the working group meetings shall be a pre-requisite for the validation of the related stocks assessments.

20. The SAC Chairperson informed the participants about the nomination of the Coordinators of the Sub-Committees. He thanked the outgoing coordinators for their excellent work and welcomed the new coordinators.

21. Finally, the Committee congratulated the GFCM Secretariat for the excellent work performed during the intersessional period and for the organization of this session.

Major activities of the FAO Regional Projects and initiatives

22. On the basis of document GFCM:SAC12/2010/Inf.15, the major activities of the ongoing FAO Regional Projects AdriaMed, CopeMed II, ArtFiMed, EastMed and MedSudMed during the intersessional period, were presented by their respective Coordinators. The information provided dealt with research activities, training programmes, workshops and working groups as well as technical assistance provided to the countries and the contributions to SAC activities. Mr Pedro de Barros (FAO) presented the information on the current situation of the MedFisis, MED-LME and the Black Sea projects and the overall coordination activities.

23. The Committee congratulated Ms Konstantina Karlou-Riga and Mr Enrico Arneri for their recent appointment as Coordinators, of the EastMed and AdriaMed/MedSudMed projects respectively.

24. The SAC acknowledged the effort pursued by the projects and the valuable scientific contributions provided, especially in developing and implementing common methodologies through organizing joint on-field training activities, surveys at sea as well as strengthening the expertise at national level and encouraged the projects to pursue their efforts. Some delegates mentioned the need for enhancing the coordination among the projects and congratulated FAO for having already started that process.

25. Some participants welcomed the various activities reported by the FAO Regional Projects while stressing the need to provide greater priority to initiatives aiming at delivering more stock assessments to support the GFCM for the implementation of the EAF. Referring to a particular paragraph in the report on the regional projects (document GFCM:SAC12/2010/Inf.15), the European Union (EU) delegate highlighted the fact it was not correct to state, as underlined in the document, that the assessment of anchovy and sardine GSA 17 had been performed for the first time by combining all data made available by participating countries. At least this fact was not known by all GFCM parties that had been always informed that all relevant data had been joined and commonly analysed.

26. Some delegations questioned the process of designing the projects of a duration of 3-4 years and requesting further extension afterwards. In the discussion that followed, it was made clear that FAO recognized that achieving sustainable development goals required longer-term support. However, operational and funding constraints made it necessary to formulate this support as shorter-term projects, which are easier to monitor and evaluate.

27. The Moroccan delegation, referring to the ongoing work on fisheries statistics and on the minimum 40-mm square mesh or at least 50-mm diamond mesh size pilot project started in 2009 with the support of CopeMed II, thanked the project for its important contributions and its support to GFCM activities.

28. The Tunisian delegation underlined the support of MedSudMed, CopeMed II and ArtFiMed to strengthen the SAC and called for an enhanced coordination among the projects, suggesting stronger concentration and focus on fewer priority objectives.

29. The delegation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya acknowledged the contributions of MedSudMed and CopeMed II on capacity development, including staff training and the institutional capacity for monitoring fisheries resources, especially with acoustic surveys. Their interest in a further involvement of Libyan institutions in these two subregional projects was also clearly presented. The major role of the projects to support the execution of the SAC annual workplan was also highlighted.

30. The EU delegate highlighted the importance for improving the scientific basis for sustainable management of fisheries resources in the region. He called for increased coordination and cooperation among all projects to deliver better results with the available resources. He underlined the need that the participating countries to the regional projects shall provide human resources and structures to ensure long-term perspective and maintenance of the projects achievements. It is in fact responsibility and interest of the participating countries to secure the results.

SALIENT RESEARCH ACTIVITIES IN MEMBER COUNTRIES

31. Mr Matthew Camilleri from the GFCM Secretariat presented the document GFCM:SAC12/2010/Inf.10, which summarized the national reports submitted prior to the meeting. He informed the Committee that only seven reports had been submitted before the extended deadline set by the Secretariat, thus the review on the progress made notably in the field of scientific research was limited. In view of the few responses from countries in this regard, the SAC was invited to review the customary practice of the submission of national reports and to provide guidance to the Secretariat on the ways to address this situation. The summary table and the national reports submitted before or during the meeting are provided in Appendices E and M respectively.

32. The SAC acknowledged this deficiency and agreed that the presentation of national reports should be seen as an added value to the work of SAC, particularly in identifying research gaps and assistance required by certain countries. The Committee called upon the SAC national focal points to coordinate better their efforts in collecting the information required for the national report in order to ensure its timely submission. It was agreed that as from the next session, delegates would be invited to expand on and present research proposals to be taken into consideration by the Committee.

FORMULATION OF ADVICE IN THE FIELD OF FISHERY MANAGEMENT AND RESEARCH

Sub-Committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE)

33. The Coordinator of the sub-committee, Mr Mohamed Bradai, presented the conclusions and recommendations of the SCMEE on the basis of document GFCM:SAC12/2010/3 and document GFCM:SAC12/2010/Inf.5. The Committee acknowledged the work carried out, including the results obtained by the transversal workshop on selectivity improvement and bycatch reduction (Tunis, 2009).

34. With reference to a request made by the sub-committee regarding the FRA established last year in the Gulf of Lions, the SAC noted with concern that data on vessels operating in the FRA had not been submitted to the Secretariat as required by the Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/1. The Committee stressed the importance of the spatial distribution of fishing effort, derived, *inter alia*, from vessel monitoring systems (VMS) data, as a key element in stock assessments.

35. Some delegations underlined the need to set up a more formal data policy for the availability, access and use of VMS data in line with the Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7 while also verifying the consistency of the provisions in Recommendation GFCM/2006/7.

36. In this regard, the Secretariat reminded the Committee that there was already an adopted Recommendation concerning minimum standards for the establishment of a VMS in the GFCM area (Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/7), which also laid down the framework for the provision of VMS data for scientific studies.

37. The Committee recalled that the data submitted for 2008 were considered as the “zero point” reference upon which the evolution of the fishing activities in the FRA could be later followed. It was thus deemed important that Member countries provide information, including from VMS, where possible, on the number of vessels fishing and their respective number of fishing days in 2008 in the zone delineated by the FRA in the Gulf of Lions.

38. The EU delegate informed the Committee on an ongoing internal process to validate the list of vessels operating in the FRA and stressed that the EU was planning to communicate such data to the GFCM Secretariat as soon as possible. The EU delegate underlined that the delay for communicating the required information was due to such a validation process and cross checking of different sources of information. In fact, the current EU legal instruments for positioning fishing activities at sea, i.e. VMS and logbook, do not work with a small and fine spatial scale as it would be necessary for correct allocation of the fishing effort in the FRA. Moreover, the fact that these control instruments are still to be adopted or implemented at GFCM level has not been helpful to address for the first time this matter. He also underlined that this example shows on one side the importance of VMS and logbooks and on the other side the need to implement them in a way to collect data at small and fine scale whenever necessary.

39. The acting Executive Secretary evoked the importance of VMS as a valuable source of data for the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies and noted that holding a meeting in 2010 could be a good opportunity to define all relevant technical aspects related to VMS data.

40. The EU delegate reiterated the importance of VMS and informed the Committee that the EU would be in a position to provide financial support to hold this meeting which should focus on the technical matters for its implementation. Given the offer of EU delegation the SAC agreed to organize an expert meeting in 2010.

41. Regarding the proposal by the sub-committee to investigate the possibility of a new management approach aiming to close all sea bottom for trawling and authorize specific delimited

area for this activity, assuming that this approach would allow concentrating the effect of trawling on areas of the marine environment with more resilience capacity, the SAC requested the sub-committee to perform further investigations on this matter and to report to the next SAC session. Some delegations underlined some examples regarding the implementation of this approach in their national waters.

42. Concerning the proposed definition by the sub-committee on sensitive habitats of relevance for the management of a given priority species, the SAC introduced an amendment and adopted it as follows:

“A sensitive habitat is:

- *essential to the ecological and biological requirements of at least one of the life stages of the species;*
- *crucial for the recovery and/or the long-term sustainability of the marine biological resources and the assemblages to which the priority species belongs;*
- *any other habitat of high biodiversity importance potentially impacted by fisheries and other activities”.*

43. On the basis of this definition, it was recommended that further consideration should be given to the list of criteria for selecting sensitive habitats, focusing on the identification of the corresponding sensitive habitats of GFCM priority species as a first step. The SCMEE was requested to draw up a revised version of the guidelines to identify sensitive habitats by its next session.

44. The Committee reiterated on the importance of enhancing collaboration between GFCM and the partner organizations namely RAC/SPA and IUCN, particularly with regard to the identification of specially protected areas of Mediterranean importance (SPAMIs) and protection of marine living resources that could also have potential implications for fisheries management.

45. The EU delegate expressed views to continue to foster collaboration with partner organizations and called on the Secretariat to inform the SAC focal points whenever scientific activities of relevance to the Mediterranean fisheries were scheduled by RAC/SPA, particularly on the identification of SPAMIs. He also stressed on the importance of participation, when possible, of SAC coordinators and scientists in the scientific fora organized by this GFCM partner organization.

46. The Committee took note of the proposal of the Sub-Committee to prepare a form for data collection on bycatch of endangered species to be included in the GFCM Task 1 and requested to ensure follow-up on this topic during the next intersessional period in collaboration with the SCSI. Some delegations expressed their concern on the difficulties in collecting such information.

Sub-Committee on Statistics and Information (SCSI)

47. The Secretariat recalled that the thirty-second session of the GFCM had requested the SAC to work on the technical aspects related to the establishment of a regional logbook in the view of possible adoption of a specific recommendation. The Committee was informed that, in response to this request, a transversal workshop was convened in Rome in 2009, during which a format of the logbook and the roadmap for its implementation were proposed and reviewed by the SCSI. The reviewed version was the basis for discussion by the SAC.

48. The Committee highlighted the importance of the use of regional logbook, particularly for monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) purposes, improving fishers' responsibility in relation to the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and collecting data on the parameters directly linked to GFCM Task 1. The logbook is the tool that allows the fishers to introduce their data into the decision-making process for fishery management.

49. Furthermore, the SAC agreed on the SCSI proposal to carry out further analysis in 2010 whether none or optimum weight threshold for which catches should be reported within the context of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries and endorsed the format of the logbook with the inclusion of a field for the signature of the master of the vessel. The Committee agreed to propose the version of the logbook, as presented in Appendix F, to the GFCM for its consideration.

50. Some delegations expressed concern with regard to the implementation of the logbook system, which may imply heavy workloads in particular for specific fisheries.

51. Referring to the implementation of Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/3, the Committee acknowledged the proposal by SCSI that the first submission of data on Tasks 1.1, 1.2 and 1.4 by February 2010 should relate to the year 2008, not excluding the possibility to submit also data for previous years. The delegate from Lebanon stressed that technical and financial assistance would be needed to properly comply with this decision. In this respect the EastMed project was invited to envisage the possibility of providing the required assistance, as deemed necessary. The GFCM Secretariat could also provide assistance in the use of the new Task 1 data entry software and data exchange protocol.

52. The EU delegate questioned the role of the first phase of MedFisis to support Lebanon in the development of its national programme for fisheries data collection. The delegate from Lebanon confirmed that MedFisis had assisted his country in the establishment of a fleet register in 2004.

53. The Committee further agreed that a specific data policy for the use and access of Task 1 datasets, as managed by the GFCM Secretariat, be drawn up according to the GFCM recommendation on data confidentiality policy.

54. The Committee had an extensive discussion on the suggestion by SCSI to remove the fields on sex and maturity scales in Task 1.5 and to keep only the fields related to the range of fish size. Considering the scientific nature of this information and that the implementation of Task 1.5 is foreseen for January 2011, the Committee was of the opinion that no change should be made before this specific deadline. On the same lines, it was noted that Task 1.5 could serve the needs for stock assessment and management purposes and it was proposed that further work be carried out on this issue jointly by SCSI and SCSA. Some delegations pointed out that Task 1.5 could be converted in the future into a Task 2 framework relating to both life history parameters for stock assessments and biological reference points.

55. The Committee took note of the request of SCSI to translate the Task 1 data entry software into the GFCM working languages. The Secretariat stressed the importance to translate these tools into the organization's working languages in order to facilitate the accomplishment of tasks required by the Commission. However the realization of this wish will depend on the availability of funds. The acting Executive Secretary drew the attention of the Committee on the fact that the non-availability of the Task 1 data entry forms and related electronic tools in other languages other than English should not be seen as a limitation or constraint for the Members to submit data connected with the GFCM Task 1 Recommendation.

Sub-Committee on Economic and Social Sciences (SCESS)

56. The designate SCESS Coordinator, Mr Vahdet Ünal, introduced the conclusions of the sub-committee on the basis of documents GFCM:SAC12/2010/3 and GFCM:SAC12/2010/Inf.7.

57. During an extensive discussion on the definition of recreational fisheries, the Committee underlined the fact that this definition needed to be finetuned in order to be more coherent with the overall definitions and questioned the need to add a new fishing category (i.e. non-professional commercial fishing). It was pointed out that the need for this category was motivated by the fact that sales of catches by such fishers occurred and were often unaccounted for in data collection systems. It

was further noted that sales of catches by recreational fishers were not specified as an illegal activity in some GFCM Members.

58. Several delegations voiced their preference that these activities be registered either as recreational fisheries or commercial fisheries and that data be collected within these categories.

59. The Committee reiterated the importance of recreational fisheries both in terms of their social and economic contributions as well as their biological impacts.

60. The SAC agreed that the issue of definitions be addressed in the framework of the proposed workshop by SCESS for the next intersession. In this respect, the SAC was invited to use the already established transversal working group on recreational fisheries as a framework for the workshop. The SAC agreed to discuss the terms of reference (TORs) for a recreational fisheries workshop under agenda item 9.

61. The observer of CIPS requested that all recreational fisheries terms suggested for inclusion into the draft GFCM glossary be placed on hold until the proposed working group had agreed upon such terms.

62. The SAC further agreed upon the need for multidisciplinary data to evaluate the impacts of gear selectivity management recommendations, such as the implementation of at least 40-mm square mesh or at least 50-mm diamond mesh size and bycatch reduction devices. The SAC concurred with the call for transversal activities that would support the SCESS work in providing economic evaluations of such measures but noted that each Sub-Committee should continue its efforts to collect relevant information.

63. A discussion ensued regarding the involvement of national fisheries economists in the SCESS activities and how best to create or enhance these capacities and to promote and strengthen the activities of this sub-committee (e.g. through increased participation in SCESS meetings and collection and provision of social and economic data). The SAC stressed the need for Members to increase their participation in SCESS activities and to regularly collect and provide social and economic data through the GFCM Task 1 framework.

64. The EU delegate underlined that the limited attendance of economists should invite to have very focused activities on limited actions giving priority to those that may facilitate the joint assessment with SCSA by carrying out bioeconomics modelling.

65. The SAC welcomed a proposal by the Secretariat to develop a dedicated project that would stimulate capacity-building on fisheries economics notably to use the social and economic data in bioeconomics models to provide an analysis of management measures and scenarios.

66. The SAC acknowledged the preliminary work by SCESS to address the issue of the impacts of fuel price changes and of calls to decrease the sector's CO₂ emissions on fisheries activities, since these issues were of relevance for the sustainability of the industry and the safeguarding of fishery resources and ecosystems.

67. After discussion, the SAC supported the continuation of this work including economic analysis of these external drivers, together with the gathering of information on the implementation of potential technologies and methods aiming to decrease the fuel use of the sector.

Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment (SCSA)

68. The conclusions and advice emanating from SCSA were reviewed on the basis of documents GFCM:SAC12/2010/3 and GFCM:SAC12/2010/Inf.8. The SAC congratulated the SCSA for the work done and expressed its satisfaction for the extended coverage of GSAs by assessments as well as for

the continuous increase of work in terms of quantity and quality although further improvements are still needed. It was noted, however, that several of the stocks assessed may be -related with the populations dynamic found in adjacent areas and further research is required in order to verify the existence of those connections which might affect the limit of spatial distribution of the stock unit definitions and the assessments performed by GSA. Furthermore, the Committee insisted on the need to improve the stock assessment forms by adding specific sheets in particular for the survey-based assessment approaches applied to the demersals and small pelagic stocks.

69. During the general discussions which followed, the Committee stressed the importance of improving the data collection and the expertise of the Mediterranean scientists in relation to the use of different tools for stock assessment and called GFCM Members to grant adequate support to their scientific community and national statistical services for adequate monitoring of fisheries and exploited resources.

Advice on demersal species

70. In relation to the assessment of the blackspot seabream (*Pagellus bogaraveo*) carried out in GSA03, the Spanish delegation noted that this fishery extended into the Atlantic in GSA01 and proposed the establishment of a joint ad hoc working group involving Moroccan and Spanish scientists to analyse the existing information and the importance of presenting the outcome to SAC. COPEMED II project offered its support for the establishment of such an ad hoc working group.

71. In addition, the range of ages or lengths over which the average fishing mortality is estimated needs to be more clearly stated. Furthermore, when estimated through length-based methodologies, this range should encompass only those lengths that are fully selected by the gear, to avoid underestimation of fishing mortality.

72. In view of the fact that management advice was generally given in terms of reduction of current fishing mortality, the SAC agreed that in the future this should be translated into a measure of reduction in fishing effort in terms of capacity and activity of the fleets, in order to be more useful to fisheries managers.

73. The acting Executive Secretary referred to the report of the eleventh session of SAC (paragraphs 41-43) stressing evidence that general reduction of fishing effort was necessary to protect the demersal fisheries in the Mediterranean. The SAC was unanimously of the opinion that strong evidence exist which could allow to the Commission to envisage strengthening of the resolution adopted last session and related to the general reduction of fishing effort on demersal species in all GFCM competence areas.

74. The SAC agreed that the existing scientific evidence sufficed to support appropriate management measures on demersal species as demonstrated in Table 1.

Table 1 – Management advice for demersal species

GSA	Stock	Stock status	Working group management advice	Working group comments	SCSA comments	SAC comments
GSA 3 (southern Alboran sea)	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	Overexploited	Reduce the fishing mortality by 60 percent	Variable pattern in fishing mortality	Due to one year only data the assessment was considered as preliminary	Assessment was considered as preliminary
	<i>Pagellus bogaraveo</i>	Moderately exploited	Maintain the fishing mortality at the current level	Due to the flat-topped Y/R curve, the F_{max} is not well defined	Due to the depletion status of the species in the Spanish coast and the uncertainty of the unit stock, in the Alboran Sea, a joint assessment with GSAs 1 and 3 is recommended	Verify the stock unit
	<i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i>	Overexploited	Reduce the fishing mortality by 30-66 percent (depending on the model). A long term management plan is required	Many Fter values were tried. Schaefer model fitted well the data	The outcomes from one year data used in the analytical model were supplemented by the several years data used in Schaefer model	Endorsed with the comment of the SAC that the stock should be assessed as depleted
	<i>Boops boops</i>	Overexploited	Reduce the fishing mortality by 64 percent. A long term management plan is required	No particular comments	Include in the assessment also the artisanal fishery data, if any	No further comments
	<i>Mullus barbatus</i>	Overexploited	Reduce the fishing mortality by 76 percent. A long term management plan is required	No particular comments	Include in the assessment also the artisanal fishery data, if any	No further comments
GSA 5 (Balearic islands)	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	Overexploited	Improve the trawl exploitation pattern and reduce the trawl effort. A long term management plan is required		SCSA endorses the WG management advice	Improve knowledge of stock boundary in this area. Explore the possibility to joint data of GSAs 5 and 6
	<i>Mullus surmuletus</i>	Fully exploited	Not to increase the fishing effort		SCSA endorses the WG management advice	Endorsed
	<i>Aristeus antennatus</i>	Overexploited	Not to increase the fishing effort		SCSA endorses the WG management advice	Endorsed
GSA 7 (Gulf of Lions)	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	Overexploited	Improve trawl exploitation pattern, close nursery areas to fishing, implement 40-mm square mesh size in trawl codened		It is a necessity to reduce the fishing effort	Endorsed Urgent implementation of 40-mm square mesh size in trawl codened
	<i>Mullus barbatus</i>	Fully exploited	Reduce the fishing effort		The stock status was changed by the SC as overexploited	Endorsed as overexploited

GSA	Stock	Stock status	Working group management advice	Working group comments	SCSA comments	SAC comments
GSA 9 (Ligurian and north Tyrrhenian)	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	Overexploited	Reduce the fishing mortality by 40 percent. A long-term management plan is required		SCSA endorses the WG management advice	Endorsed. A long term management plan was prepared and was to be adopted by Italian Administration
	<i>Mullus barbatus</i>	Overexploited	Reduce the fishing mortality by 30 percent (when F_{MSY} reference point)		SCSA endorses the WG management advice	Endorsed. A long term management plan was prepared and was to be adopted by Italian Administration
	<i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i>	Fully exploited			The stock status diagnosis is also based on the fact that fishing mortality is close to $F_{0.1}$	Endorsed. A long term management plan was prepared and was to be adopted by Italian Administration
GSA 10 (South and Central Tyrrhenian)	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	Overexploited	Reduce the fishing effort until fishing mortality is below $F_{0.1}$. A long term management plan is required		SCSA endorses the WG management advice	Endorsed. A long term management plan was prepared and was to be adopted by Italian Administration
GSA 15 (Malta)	<i>Mullus barbatus</i>	Overexploited	Reduce the fishing mortality by 30 percent. A long-term management plan is required	SURBA outputs were uncertain, which is probably due to the short time series data	SCSA endorses the WG management advice	Endorsed
	<i>Mullus surmuletus</i>	Fully exploited	Maintain fishing mortality at the current level	SURBA outputs were uncertain, which is probably due to the short time series data	SCSA endorses the WG management advice	Endorsed
GSAs 15+16 (Malta + South of Sicily)	<i>Aristaeomorpha foliacea</i>	Overexploited	Reduce the fishing mortality by 30 percent (when $F_{0.1}$ reference point)		SCSA endorses the WG management advice	Endorsed. A long term management plan was prepared and was to be adopted by Italian Administration

GSA	Stock	Stock status	Working group management advice	Working group comments	SCSA comments	SAC comments
GSA 17 (Western part of northern Adriatic)	<i>Nephrops norvegicus</i>	Overexploited	Reduce the fishing mortality on females by 64-68 percent and on males by 77-79 percent (depending on M values). A long term management plan is required	Data were available only on the western side of the Adriatic	A joint assessment with data covering the whole GSA was recommended	It is recommended to join western and eastern data for a new assessment.
	<i>Solea solea</i>	Overexploited	Reduce the fishing mortality by 82-86 percent. A long-term management plan is required	Spatial distribution indicated sole move east across Adriatic with increasing age. Thus fishing mortality based on Italian coast data may be biased	A joint assessment with data covering the whole GSA was recommended	It is recommended to join western and eastern data for a new assessment.
GSA 25 (Cyprus)	<i>Mullus barbatus</i>	Overexploited	Reduce fishing pressure		Since fishing pressure is due more to artisanal fishery, SC recommended to monitor this fishery more closely	Endorsed
GSA 26 (South Levant)	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	Overexploited	Reduce the fishing mortality by 51 percent. A long-term management plan is required	Model did not fit well the 2008 data. The status reflects the study period only	It is a need to improve knowledge of the stock unit in the area	Further knowledge on stock unit in this GSA were requested
	<i>Mullus barbatus</i>	Overexploited	Reduce the fishing mortality by 61 percent		Due to the one year only data the assessment was considered as preliminary	Assessment was considered as preliminary
	<i>Mullus surmuletus</i>	Overexploited	Reduce the fishing mortality by 63 percent		Due to the one year only data the assessment was considered as preliminary	Assessment was considered as preliminary

Advice on small pelagic species

75. The SAC went on to further review the advice on small pelagic species as formulated by the SCSA as summarized on Table 2. After acknowledging that the different diagnostics for sardine and anchovy in GSA 06, although of mixed fishery were due to the fact that this fishery mostly targeted anchovy, the Committee had an extensive discussion on the inconsistencies it noted between the status of the stocks and the management advice for the small pelagic species in GSA 17. Therefore it was suggested that in the future, management advice be accompanied by the reference points for biomass. It was also pointed out that the advice presented this year was substantially different from the previous one presented in 2008.

76. The EU delegate stressed that, although there was appreciable progress, the change in evaluation on stock status called for more accuracy and reliability of data parameters and output of assessment procedures. He made a statement on this issue that can be found in Appendix L of this report.

77. The Italian delegate recalled that in previous years a lot of discussion had taken place on the stock status of small pelagic species in the GSA 17, albeit on the basis of incomplete information. He stated that the change in the evaluation on stock status might be attributed to new information available from echosurveys and commercial catches for the whole area.

78. The Croatian delegate stressed that during the last working group on small pelagic species, some gaps in the datasets and parameters previously used had been filled with the necessary information. In addition, he underlined that status of the stocks derived from acoustic assessments had not significantly changed in the recent years and that further improvement of small pelagic assessments in the Adriatic Sea were expected in future.

79. The delegation from the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya informed the SAC that data from echosurveys together with data on eggs and larvae were being processed by the National Scientific Institute and that the results would be presented during the next SCSA working group meeting.

80. The SAC underlined the considerable effort done with the support of the AdriaMed project to improve the assessments and invited the scientists involved to continue to develop the data collection and assessment procedures, to give a more accurate evaluation of stock status in GSA 17. It also underlined that due to the fact that advice changed considerably it requested to perform another practicable assessment of sardine and anchovy in GSA 17 during the next SCSA working group meeting on small pelagic species using the most relevant updated data while providing full documentation of the changes introduced and analysing their effects. The Committee agreed to endorse the advice given by the sub-committee and insisted on the above-mentioned request.

Table 2 Management advice for small pelagic species

GSA	Species	Stock status	Working Group management advice	Working Group comments	SCSA comments	SAC comments
GSA 1 (Northern Alboran Sea)	<i>Engraulis encrasiculus</i>	Overexploited With moderate fishing mortality and low abundance	No reference points were given	Presented inside the SC	The use of BRP is also recommended to be used. However based to the examined data, the moderate fishing mortality should change to high fishing mortality	Endorsed. Not increase the fishing effort
	<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	Overexploited with moderate fishing mortality and low abundance	No reference points were given	Presented inside the SC	The use of BRP is also recommended to be used. However based to the examined data, sardine was considered as fully exploited with risk to overexploitation	Endorsed. Not increase the fishing effort
GSA 6 (Northern Spain)	<i>Engraulis encrasiculus</i>	Overexploited with high fishing mortality and low abundance	No reference points were given	Presented inside the SC	The use of BRP is also recommended	Endorsed. Not increase the fishing effort
	<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	Overexploited with moderate fishing mortality and low abundance	No reference points were given	Presented inside the SC	The use of BRP is also recommended	Endorsed. Not increase the fishing effort
GSA 7 (Gulf of Lions)	<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	Moderately exploited but intermediate biomass abundance	As biomass estimation for 2006-2008 remain lower than 2005 estimate, it is recommended not to increase the fishing effort	Mixed fishery. Advice coherent with that for anchovy. Assessment rely on the assumption of unbiased estimate of biomass by acoustics	SCSA endorses the WG management advice The use of BRP is also recommended	Endorsed. Not increase the fishing effort
	<i>Engraulis encrasiculus</i>	Moderately exploited but biomass at low stock abundance	Given the low levels of biomass for the last 4 yrs in comparison with the series of acoustic biomass available, it is recommended not to increase the fishing effort	Mixed pelagic fishery. Assessment relies on the assumption of unbiased estimate of biomass by acoustics (which is consistent with a DEPM estimate). Decreasing tendency in GSAs 06, 07	Endorsed. The use of BRP is also recommended	Endorsed. Not increase the fishing effort
GSA 16 (South of Sicily)	<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	Moderately exploited but biomass at intermediate abundance	Medium biomass levels in 2006-2008 at moderate fishing levels. In coherence with anchovy, is recommended not to increase the fishing effort with anchovy	Mixed fishery. Advice coherent with that for anchovy. Assessment rely on the assumption of unbiased estimate of biomass by acoustics	Endorsed. The use of BRP is also recommended	Endorsed. Not increase the fishing effort

GSA	Species	Stock status	Working Group management advice	Working Group comments	SCSA comments	SAC comments
	<i>Engraulis encrasiculus</i>	High fishing mortality at low stock abundance	Given that biomass was very low for 3 consecutive years (2006, 2007, 2008) and the increasing trend in exploitation rate, fishing effort should not allowed to increase	Mixed fishery with sardine. Assessment relies on the assumption of unbiased estimate of biomass by acoustics (which is consistent with a DEPM estimate). Harvest rates average the last 3 years	Endorsed. The use of BRP is also recommended	Endorsed. Not increase the fishing effort
GSA 17 (Northern Adriatic)	<i>Engraulis encrasiculus</i>	Moderately exploited	Not to increase the fishing effort		Endorsed The use of BRP is also recommended to be used. The substantial differences between the new assessments and those of previous years were explained by the improvement of the assessments due to the incorporation of data covering the whole GSA	Since the stock status differed strongly from the previous assessment, the representative of the EC stated that this new assessment must be furthermore validated before being accepted.
	<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	Fully exploited	Not to increase the fishing effort		Endorsed The use of BRP is also recommended to be used. The substantial differences between the new assessments and those of previous years were explained by the improvement of the assessments due to the incorporation of data covering the whole GSA	Since the stock status differed strongly from the previous assessment, the representative of the EC stated that this new assessment must be furthermore validated before being accepted.

GSA 22 (Aegean Sea, Greek part)	<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	Fully exploited	Harvested sustainably, operating above but close to an optimal yield level, with no expected room for further expansion	Mixed fishery. ICA assessment should be taken with caution given the short time series available. Increasing trend in the estimates of SSB since 2004. Fishing mortality high but at a lower stage since 2004	Endorsed	Endorsed. Not increase the fishing effort
	<i>Engraulis encrasiculus</i>	Fully exploited	Harvested sustainably, operating above but close to an optimal yield level, with no expected room for further expansion	Mixed fishery. ICA assessment should be taken with caution given the short time series available. Increasing trend in the estimates of SSB since 2004. Average exploitation rate (last 5 yrs) =0.35, just < the empirical level for stock decline E<0.4	Endorsed	Endorsed. Not increase the fishing effort

81. Furthermore, the SAC endorsed general suggestions made by the SCSA on small pelagic species as follows:

- finalize the construction of the common database for the sardine and anchovy fisheries and direct monitoring in the Adriatic at subregional level;
- carry out an acoustic survey of pelagic resources off the Egyptian coasts;
- enhance the cooperation between France and Spain to update biological, catch and effort data collection of the two countries catching sardine in the Gulf of Lions; and
- monitor the fry fishery in the south of Sicily as the impact on the sardine fishery is unknown.

82. The SAC agreed to endorse the proposal by SCSA on updating the priority species list as given in Appendix G.

FOLLOW UP ON THE ISSUE OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACT ON FISHERIES

83. On the basis of documents GFCM:SAC12/2010/Inf.18 and GFCM:SAC12/2010/Dma.3, Mr Matthew Camilleri presented a summary of the current knowledge on the impacts of climate change on fisheries and marine ecosystems in general, as well as on the impacts identified in the Mediterranean basin through subregional initiatives. Ms Cassandra De Young (FAO) briefed the SAC on the climate change activities of the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, including the development of strategic and programmatic frameworks for the Department and for the Global Partnership on Climate, Fisheries and Aquaculture.

84. Some delegates noted the major impacts projected for their fisheries, the importance of addressing these and the special role that the SAC would play in linking the scientific knowledge to fisheries and their decision-makers. They noted that the best way for the GFCM to prepare itself for monitoring and addressing climate change is through proper scientific monitoring systems of fisheries.

85. The SAC agreed to continue, for the time being, ensuring follow-up on activities related to this topic. The Committee indicated that the SCMEE is the appropriate forum to coordinate efforts among the SAC sub-committees to address the interactions between fisheries and the environment in general and impact of climate changes on fisheries in particular.

PROGRESS ON UPDATING THE SAC GLOSSARY

86. On the basis of document GFCM:SAC12/2010/Inf.16, the SAC Chairperson gave an overview of the draft glossary prepared by a consultant, Mr Jordi Lleonart, with the support of CopeMed II project, which had been requested by the Commission. The SAC alluded the work done by the consultant and the coordination by the Secretariat and thanked CopeMedII project for its valuable support.

87. The draft updated glossary was introduced to the meeting together with the process performed to finalize it. It was noted that a total of 317 terms and 504 definitions present in the 2003 glossary were deleted; 147 new entries were added with their definitions; 230 original definitions were kept and 103 were modified. The total number of terms was reduced from 652 to 482 and the definitions were reduced from 841 to 484.

88. Several delegates welcomed the initiative and stressed the need to incorporate the definitions of some terms that did not have any definitions. Some delegations also recalled that some terms had different definitions and suggested to also include them. The need to maintain the draft glossary as an open document during a period to facilitate the additions of the sub-committees new proposals was underlined. The SAC Members and sub-committees expert were strongly invited to be involved as much as possible in the finalization of the draft glossary during the next period.

89. The Committee was reminded of the existence of the FAO Glossary as well as the EU Glossary on the technical terms related to fisheries which could be used as reference to complement the GFCM Glossary for fisheries management and control.

90. Some delegations requested that the glossary be translated in Arabic and French to facilitate the work of all Member countries. The SAC acknowledged the importance to translate the glossary into the GFCM working languages to ease the reference of the national fisheries managers and scientific researchers.

91. The acting Executive Secretary, Abdellah Srour, pointed out the relevance to translate the glossary into the two other GFCM working languages noting that this request should only be envisaged when a final version of the glossary is ready, taking in consideration the availability of funds to cover such task. In the meantime one working language should be used (English).

92. Finally it was agreed that the CMSC should reflect on the updating process of the glossary during the intersessional period and provide guidance to the SAC. Terms already defined/used by the Sub-Committees and the SAC as “deep-sea fisheries, fisheries restricted areas (FRA) and sensitive habitats” should be added to the glossary.

PROGRESS ON UPDATING THE REFERENCE FRAME OF SAC AND ESTABLISHING A STRATEGIC WORKPLAN FOR THE FUTURE

93. Mr Jean-Jacques Maguire, GFCM Consultant, presented his work on the basis of document GFCM:SAC12/2010/Inf.17 describing SAC achievements, and from his point view, the strengths and weaknesses of the SAC fonctionning. Weaknesses were closely linked to the strengths. The main weakness was the inability to provide integrated advice covering the three main disciplines of stock assessment, economics and social sciences and environmental science. The existence of four distinct standing sub-committees was seen as an impediment to the provision of advice integrated across disciplines. The draft document recommended that the flexible structure currently existing for working

groups, where working groups are convened on a “as needed basis” and not necessarily every year, be also adopted for the sub-committees. The presentation illustrated the magnitude of uncertainties seen in some assessments of North American pelagic stocks to illustrate the need to incorporate more than stock assessment results in formulating advice, e.g. social, economic and environmental information in the context of implementing an EAF. The proposed vision was briefly reviewed.

94. The SAC thanked Mr Maguire for his work and welcomed his preliminary evaluation and proposals. It noted that the weaknesses identified by the consultant were already known and that pathways to solutions were needed. The Committee noted the consultant’s views that the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) was seen as having two interpretations: one requiring a complete knowledge of how the ecosystem functions and the other one working with existing knowledge in an ecological risk assessment framework. The consultant clarified that it is the latter that was proposed in the report. The SAC noted that the report should better cover the achievements of all sub-committees, not only those of the SCSA.

95. The Committee acknowledged also that there were aspects of the functioning of the SAC which needed improvement and that it should seek to develop an integrated vision as suggested by the Consultant. In this respect, the SAC requested that the section in the draft document on the future vision be expanded, giving clear guidelines for a better functioning of the SAC by fostering both bottom-up and top-down strategies.

96. The EU delegate pointed out that uncertainties in fisheries science could be tackled with appropriate scientific methods and highlighted the importance of quantitative science to provide multidisciplinary advice. He added that the fact that the SAC had focused, in particular, on carrying out single species assessments did not impede the process to implement an EAF but should be seen as one of the important building blocks for this approach.

97. In view of the above, the acting Executive Secretary suggested that a second version of the report be completed by the consultant by 8 February 2010. Following this, the second version of the report will be circulated to SAC Members who will be invited to submit comments to the Secretariat within two weeks. The consultant will then finalize the report taking the comments received into account and will be submitted to the Secretariat by 15 March 2010. The SAC agreed on this proposal.

REVIEW OF THE SAC PRELIMINARY WORKPLAN FOR 2010

98. This agenda item was introduced on the basis of the suggestions made by the sub-committees as reflected in documents GFCM:SAC12/2010/4, supplemented by the reports of the sub-committees (documents GFCM:SAC12/2010, Inf.5, Inf.6, Inf.7 and Inf.8) and the Coordinating Meeting of the Sub-Committees (document GFCM:SAC12/2010/Inf. 9).

99. During the general discussions preceding the review of the 2010 work plan as proposed by the Sub-Committees, the SAC highlighted the need to enhance the knowledge on selected topics, such as the red coral, the artificial reefs which are being considered by some Mediterranean countries within the framework of their management plans and the European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) for which the Sub-Committees are invited to gather the available information in view to address the status of exploitation of this species. The Committee alluded to the work carried out on alien species by Mr Bayram Ozturk and noted that the publication related to this topic will be a good basis for the relevant workshop scheduled for 2010.

100. With regard to the red coral, the SAC acknowledged the proposal by the Italian delegate to launch a working program to improve knowledge and assess the state of this important specie. This initiative also includes the holding of a meeting to review the available information on the biology, fishery, regulations and existing management plans for red corals in the Mediterranean. The proposed TORs for this meeting are presented in Appendix H (B).

101. The SAC acknowledged that algal and jelly fish blooms were a global problem affecting marine environments and human health. Occurrence of many algal and jelly fish blooming in the Mediterranean and Black Sea had been observed over the last decade. The Committee noted the Reference Framework for the mandate of SAC endorsed by the Commission at its twenty-seventh session requesting the SAC to “report on the geographical occurrence and seasonality extent and effects of mucilaginous algal blooms”. The SAC was in favour of holding a workshop to tackle this matter. The TORs of the workshop are in Appendix H (C).

102. Noting the importance of market related studies on fisheries, some delegations suggested to give priority to market oriented studies in future work of the SCESS. It was also noted that changes of behaviour of fishers as well as species they target are very important and should be taken into account for the EAF.

103. The Committee also noted the need stressed by some countries for capacity building in some fields of interest for SAC. The Secretariat reminded the Committee on the established Permanent Working Group on Assessment Methodologies which could be beneficial for training in selected fields.

104. The SAC acknowledged the proposal to develop a medium term workplan on elasmobranches, stressing that the objectives and the proposed TORs need to be improved, in particular by including also data gathering and information on anthropic activities other than fisheries that may have direct impact on deteriorating essential habitats for different life-stages of elasmobranches.

105. The EU delegate reiterated the need already expressed by SAC to identify the appropriate way to promote the involvement of experts from Black Sea countries in GFCM activities.

106. The representative of RAC/SPA informed the meeting that his Organization was already involved in some of the activities mentioned such as on red coral and elasmobranches. He stated that RAC/SPA envisages joint organization of activities on these topics.

107. In light of the above, the SAC further agreed on its working programme for 2010 as follows:²

Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment (SCSA)

- Pursue activities on stock assessment using both commercial data and surveys at sea.
- Pursue the work aimed to develop a GFCM protocol for undertaking surveys at sea.
- Improve knowledge on biology, life history parameters and stock structure, including also the spatial location of nurseries and spawning areas. Agree on a set of biological parameters to be used for the stock assessments in the Mediterranean and Black Sea, either by GSA or by merging adjacent GSAs.
- Develop specific sheets in the assessment forms for survey-based assessment approaches.
- Improve biological indicators and further develop reference points with the view to evaluate the status of the stocks and fisheries including also the effects on exploited stocks of FRAs.
- Organize the meetings of the Working Groups on stock assessment of demersal and small pelagic resources, considering the new functioning approach.
- Carry out a review of the current scenario and knowledge on age reading in the GFCM area.
- Contribute to the implementation of the medium-term working programme to improve the knowledge and to assess the status of the stock of elasmobranches.
- Contribute to perform case studies on the implementation of at least 40-mm square mesh or at least 50-mm diamond mesh in demersal fisheries and on the EAF.

Sub-Committee on Statistics and information (SCSI)

² The final programme also includes the activities mentioned in paragraphs 98 to 101.

- Organization of a workshop on data collection methods applied to all segments of the fleet, and their coherence with the requirements of the GFCM Task 1 (see Appendix I [A] of the terms of reference).
- After reception by the GFCM Secretariat of the Tasks 1.1, 1.2 and 1.4 datasets:
 - Update the statistical bulletin accordingly.
 - Work on proposing data summary outputs and data access functions to be proposed at the next SCSI meeting.
 - Work on data policy linked to the Task 1 dataset.

Sub-Committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE)

- Identification for each GFCM priority species the corresponding sensitive habitats to be submitted to the next SCmee meeting.
- Preparation of a detailed form for data collection on endangered species bycatch to add to the Task 1 system.
- Update the knowledge on artificial reefs.
- Organization of a workshop on alien species in relation to fisheries back-to-back with the SCmee meeting.
- Organization of a workshop on selectivity improvement, bycatch reduction and alternative gears.
- Implementation of the programme on elasmobranches species including an expert meeting and training course. The detailed proposal related to this programme is presented in Appendix I.
- Contribute to perform case studies on the implementation of at least 40-mm square mesh or at least 50-mm diamond mesh in demersal fisheries and on the EAF.

Sub-Committee on Economic and Social Sciences (SCESS)

- Constitution of an expert network for the analysis on the fisher's social structure across all Mediterranean countries, along with the compilation of studies through email exchange.
- Opening of a section in the GFCM Web site to put all related studies on the impact of changes in the cost of energy.
- Organization of a Workshop on Monitoring Recreational Fisheries in the GFCM area. The SAC agreed that final draft TORs for this workshop be finalized and submitted for the consideration of the Commission at its next session (Athens, Greece, April 2010). The revised version should take into consideration the proposed TORs by SCESS at its tenth meeting (see document GFCM:SAC12/2010/Inf.7) as well as those for the already established Working Group on Recreational Fisheries.
- Contribute to perform case studies on the implementation of at least 40-mm square mesh or at least 50-mm diamond mesh in demersal fisheries and on the EAF.

Meetings

108. The detailed list of meetings for 2010 is provided below:

Meeting	Place/Date
Thirteen session of the SAC (5 days)	France/TBD
Transversal Workshop on VMS data (2–3 days)	Morocco/TBD
Transversal Workshop on Red Coral (2–3 days)	TBD/TBD
Session of the SCSA (4 days)	TBD/TBD
Working Group on Stock Assessment of Demersal Species (6–7 days)	Istanbul, Turkey/TBD
Working Group on Stock Assessment of Small Pelagic Species (6–7 days)	Mazzara del Vallo, Italy/TBD
Session of the SCESS (4 days)	TBD/TBD
Workshop on Monitoring Recreational Fisheries in the GFCM area (3 days)	Palma de Mallorca, Spain/October 2010
Session of the SCSI (4 days)	TBD/TBD
Workshop on Data Collection Methods applied to all Segments of the Fleet and their Coherence with the requirements of the GFCM Task 1 (3 days)	Rome, Italy/TBD
Session of the SCMEE (4 days)	TBD/TBD
Workshop on Alien Species in relation to Fisheries back-to-back with the SCMEE meeting	TBD/TBD
Transversal Workshop on Selectivity Improvement, Bycatch Reduction and Alternative Gears (3 days)	Egypt/TBD
First Experts Meeting on the Status of Elasmobranches in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (4 days)	Tunisia/TBD
Training course on age reading and growth parameters of the main elasmobranches species (5 days)	TBD/TBD
Workshop on Algal and Jelly Fish Blooming (3–4 days)	Istanbul/TBD
1 st Session of the CMSC (2 days)	Rome, Italy/3–4 May
2 nd Session of the CMSC (1 day)	TBD/TBD

Joint GFCM/ICCAT Working Group on Large Pelagic Species

109. Considering the decision taken during the last SCRS/ICCAT session to postpone until 2011 the Joint GFCM/ICCAT Workshop on Small Tuna Fisheries initially scheduled for 2010, the SAC acknowledged the sub-committees proposal to convene this meeting in 2011.

ELECTION OF THE SAC BUREAU AND ENDORSEMENT OF THE NOMINATION OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE COORDINATORS

110. The SAC thanked the Bureau for its excellent work performed during the last two years and unanimously decided to renew its mandate for another two-year term. The Bureau will be constituted as follows:

- Chairperson: Mr Henri Farrugio (France)
- First Vice-chairperson: Mr Othman Jarboui (Tunisia)
- Second Vice-chairperson: Mr Atig Drawil Huni (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

111. The Committee also endorsed the nominations of the following Coordinators of the sub-committees: SCSA: Mr Fabio Fiorentino (Italy); SCSI: Mr Joël Vigneau (France); SCESS: Mr Vahdet Ünal (Turkey); SCMEE: Mr Federico Alvarez (Spain).

ANY OTHER MATTERS

112. Referring to the CMSC proposal, the SAC acknowledged the exponentially increase of the SAC and sub-committees activities which had put a heavy burden on the Secretariat and it agreed to invite the Commission to consider to strengthen the Secretariat in terms of technical human resources in the fields of stock assessment and scientific editing.

113. The SAC took note of the proposal made by the GFCM Secretariat related to duties and responsibilities of a population dynamics expert and a scientific editor (See Appendixes J and K).

114. The participants thanked the Montenegrin Authorities for their hospitality and kindness in hosting the meeting and expressed their appreciation for ensuring excellent condition of work.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION OF SAC

115. The Committee took note of the invitation made by the French delegate to host the thirteenth session of the SAC, subject to confirmation by the competent authorities of his country. The exact venue will be communicated at a later stage.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

116. The report, including its appendixes, was adopted on Friday 29 January 2010.