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	منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة	联合国 粮食及 农业组织	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture	Продовольственная и сельскохозяйственная организация Объединенных Наций	Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Agricultura y la Alimentación
CENTRAL ASIAN AND CAUCASUS REGIONAL FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE COMMISSION						
INAUGURAL MEETING						
Istanbul, Turkey, 19-21 December 2011						
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)						

BACKGROUND

1. This document provides brief information on the establishment of the Technical Advisory Committee as a subsidiary body under the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission. The document also includes information on the mode of structuring of advisory committees of some other regional fisheries bodies.
2. The document needs to be read in conjunction with other related documents, namely the Rules of Procedure of the Commission (CACFish:I/2011/2) and the 5-year Regional Work Programme (2011-2015) of the Commission (CACFish:I/2011/5).
3. During the establishment process of the Commission, among others, the basic legal documents (i.e. the Agreement on the establishment of the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission; and the Rules of Procedure of the Commission) were discussed, formulated and developed. These documents set, *inter alia*, general frameworks for the establishment of subsidiary bodies under the Commission, including a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).
4. The Rules of Procedure of the Commission (CACFish:I/2011/2), which had been approved by the Preparatory Meeting for presentation to the Commission for final endorsement at its Inaugural Session, includes a particular rule on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and other subsidiary bodies (Rule X) and includes a Terms of Reference that describes the duties and responsibilities of the TAC (Annex 1 to this background paper).
5. Moreover, the provisions of Article VII (I) of the Agreement affirm that “[the Commission shall establish a Technical Advisory Committee to provide technical and scientific advice to the Commission and its work” (CACFish:I/2011/Ref.1). The Article VII also creates a legal basis for the establishment of temporary, special or standing committees and working groups with an aim to studying, reporting, advising and recommending “on matters pertaining to the purposes of the Commission and on specific technical problems”. Under such a structuring, The TAC, which will be composed of both inland fisheries and aquaculture scientists, researchers, and experts, may establish its subsidiary bodies to produce more specialized technical advice and technical guidance in order to respond quickly to emerging issues, prioritized by itself or referred to it by the Commission.

6. The TAC is expected to provide “independent” technical and scientific advice and guidance to the Commission for supporting sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the region, taking into account the ecological, biological, and socio-economic factors. Availability of timely and reliable information is of critical importance for the scientific advice and technical guidance to be generated by the TAC.

7. As explained above, the Article VII (I) of the Agreement draws a general mandate framework for the TAC, that is “to provide technical and scientific advice to the Commission and its work”. In addition to that general mandate, the terms of reference of the TAC, give general mandate-related responsibilities and roles to TAC, including supply of fisheries and aquaculture production data and information in support for Commission’s work as well as roles in providing technical oversight, monitoring and evaluation of relevant projects and activities of the work programme.

8. The 5-year Regional Work Programme of the Commission (CACFish:I/2011/5) envisages close supervision and relations with the TAC in terms of formulating, monitoring, evaluating and following-up the work programme, as well as the other associated projects and activities. The outputs of the work programme and such projects are supposed to contribute to active functioning of TAC in the formulation and development of scientific and technical advice, for the consideration of the Commission in its decision-making processes for sustainable governance of fisheries and aquaculture in the Region. Building on the previous initiatives to advance scientific and technical collaboration in the Central Asia and Caucasus region, the TAC is thought to take an appropriate lead role in the scientific advice generation for the Commission. In this context, the first 5-year Regional work Programme is expected to build effective capacity within the TAC to conduct its mandatory advisory and monitoring activities.

9. In the formulation, development, implementation and monitoring of scientific advice and technical guidance the TAC is expected to develop a gradual scientific and technical framework for generation of its advice and guidance formed in line with main international fisheries instruments [i.e. FAO’s Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF)] and management approaches [Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF); Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture (EAA) and precautionary approach to fisheries]. In this context, such a gradual strategic structuring would assist in the handling of priorities or emerging needs through a balanced management. However, it should be noted that moving towards such a structuring would take a long time considering the fact that the fisheries management approaches have not been yet duly translated fully into the work of most of the other existing Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs).

10. The TAC will meet annually, under the direction of its chairperson, preferably well before the (annual) Session of the Commission for allowing enough time to generate its advice and to complete the related works and reports. In case of establishment of a subsidiary body under the TAC, the work programme of such body needs to be approved by the TAC who similarly needs an approval from the Commission with respect to its annual work programme.

11. The FAO Secretariat would like to note that, as a general rule, all existing RFMOs have a scientific or technical advisory committee. For example, the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean produces science-based fisheries management advice. The SAC currently has four well-functional sub-committees (Subcommittee on Stock Assessment; Subcommittee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems; Subcommittee on Economic and Social Sciences; and Subcommittee on Statistics and Information) each headed by a selected coordinator. Under such structuring, each Sub-committee, when required, could form working groups or study groups and organize its workshops and trainings. Transversal issues are generally discussed and decided upon at the annual Subcommittee meetings. During the 2010 intersessional period, the GFCM organized a total of 26 Meetings (Session, workshop, expert group meeting, etc), of which 17 were meetings of subsidiary bodies of the Commission¹. The SAC can also create transversal working groups and organize related transversal activities (transversal workshops and expert meetings) with respect to issues that fall into scope of more than one Sub-committee.

¹ GGCM Report of the Secretariat on Administrative and Financial Issues, 2011.
http://151.1.154.86/GfcmWebSite/GFCM/35/CAF_II_2011_2_GFCM_XXXV_2011_8-e.pdf

12. The organizational structuring of advisory subsidiary bodies of RFMOs may vary considerably from one organization to another. The Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) is the subsidiary advisory body of the The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and has two sub-committees: Sub-Committee on Statistics and Sub-Committee on Ecosystems. Both of these sub-committees are led by a convener. The SCRS “is responsible for developing and recommending to the Commission all policy and procedures for the collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of fishery statistics. It is the SCRS' task to ensure that the Commission has available at all times the most complete and current statistics concerning fishing activities in the Convention area as well as biological information on the stocks that are fished. The SCRS also coordinates various national research activities, develops plans for special international cooperative research programs, carries out stock assessments, and advises the Commission on the need for specific conservation and management measures.”²

13. As a third example, the FAO Secretariat would like to provide the Inaugural Meeting with information about the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES); a Regional Fisheries Body established in 1902. ICES has delegated its advisory authority to its Advisory Committee who, in the preparation and dissemination of its scientific advice, follows a protocol that aims at meeting the following criteria³, which might set a good example for the TAC of the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission:

1. Objectivity and integrity,
2. Openness and transparency,
3. Quality assurance and peer review,
4. Integrated advice – based on an ecosystem approach,
5. Efficiency and flexibility, and
6. National consensus.

14. For the TAC to formulate and disseminate scientific advice and technical guidance, harmonized and coordinated efforts are needed. Dedicated continuous support from the Members to the TAC is of critical importance for realization of its mandatory works in a functional and desired manner. Timely submission of required data and information, ensuring participation of scientists, researchers and experts to the scheduled activities under the TAC work programme, financial support of Members, creation of frameworks for collaboration and cooperation with relevant stakeholders (fishers, aquaculture farmers, fishers/farmers associations, universities, research institutions, etc) would greatly support the future proper functioning and the associated success of the TAC.

SUGGESTED ACTION FOR THE COMMISSION

15. In the light of the above considerations, the Commission is invited to endorse the establishment of the TAC, its Terms of Reference, and, if appropriate, to establish specific subsidiary body/bodies under it.

16. The Commission is also invited to discuss and agree on the date and place of the first meeting of the TAC, which should take place before 1 August 2012 in order to provide its technical and scientific advice and guidance to the second session of the Commission in 2012.

² <http://www.iccat.es/en/SCRS.htm>

³ <http://www.ices.dk/iceswork/acom.asp>

ANNEX I:

Terms of Reference of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The Technical Advisory Committee shall be composed of scientists or technical experts in inland fisheries and aquaculture research and development. The member of the Technical Advisory Committee may be from an appropriate government agency or from a University or a scientific institute.

The Technical Advisory Committee shall be open to all Members of the Commission. Each Member of the Commission shall designate a representative to represent the Member of the Commission in the Technical Advisory Committee. Such representative may be accompanied by other experts and advisors.

The Technical Advisory Committee shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

- a) ensure that policies and decisions of the Commission are operationalized.
- b) formulate and provide technical and scientific advice to the Commission and its work.
- c) propose the work programme of the Commission with the assistance of the Secretariat.
- d) provide independent technical and scientific advice and expert inputs to assist the Commission in implementing its work programme and in monitoring and evaluating such implementation
- e) provide technical oversight, monitoring and evaluation of projects and programme of work activities.
- f) provide advice on the technical and scientific bases for decisions and recommendations on measures concerning general conservation and rational management of living aquatic resources, including the biological, social and economic aspects of fisheries and aquaculture management
- g) propose the establishment of subsidiary bodies to work on specific technical issues or to provide a specified output.
- h) provide information on fisheries and aquaculture production and other data relevant to the functions of the Commission in such a way as to enable the Commission to achieve its objectives.