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RECOFI REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

1. The aim of this document is to provide a general review on RECOFI within the context of strengthening the Commission's functioning.
2. More key roles have been given to the Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), such as RECOFI, in the management and conservation of fisheries resources, particularly following the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (1995). In 2005, The United Nations General Assembly, through a Resolution, urged RFMOs to strengthen and modernize their mandates to include an ecosystem approach to fisheries management and biodiversity consideration with an aim to ensuring that these organizations effectively contribute to long-term conservation and management of living marine resources. The UN Fish Stocks Review Conference in May 2006 agreed that RFMOs should undergo performance reviews on an urgent basis through independent evaluation the results of which is should be available to the general public.
3. Most of the world's capture fisheries have reached their maximum potential some years ago and the majority of monitored fish stocks are now fully exploited. This has brought increasing concerns over the state of the world's fisheries. There has been, therefore, a significant international effort, among others, to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and to reduce excess fishing capacity. Therefore, RFMOs have come under additional and increasing pressure to better conserve and manage the fishing resources within their competence areas.
4. A number of RFMOs have been subject to considerable changes over the last decade. The changes include implementation and enforcement of more effective conservation and management measures; modernizing the treaties establishing RFMOs; development and implementation of regional observer programmes; enforcement of trade-related schemes; regional monitoring, surveillance and controlling systems; compliance and monitoring schemes; and regional data collection systems.
5. RECOFI has not undertaken a comprehensive performance review. However, the Commission had a number of discussions at its past regular sessions on effective ways to strengthening the Commission. Budget limitation and Member State's insufficient interest in RECOFI activities as

reflected by low level of attendance particularly at the events of RECOFI subsidiary bodies were previously identified as the main internal problems to be overcome. It should be noted, in 2011 a technical performance review was carried out, which is accessible at the following link: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/022/am411e.pdf>).

6. When compared to the annual autonomous budget of RECOFI (i.e. USD 40 000), a considerable amount of external financial has been provided by FAO, through its regular programme, to RECOFI, generally for use of Secretariat's operational expenses and for technical backstopping to the Commission's work. However, as it was underlined at the last session of RECOFI (2015) this extra budgetary financial support could not continue as in the past. It should be noted here that FAO is not charging any service cost for RECOFI. This is a secondary financial support that FAO has provided to RECOFI. [FAO service cost for the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish) are 4.5 and 5.9 percent, respectively].

7. There has been broad agreement in principle that RECOFI needs to undergo change in order to increase its functioning. At its eight session (2015), the Commission was provided with likely strategic directions and budget models in relation to the proposed changes. The Commission requested the Secretariat to prepare a working document, for an *ad hoc* session, comprising among others, an indicative budget scenarios for the future functioning of the Commission with a dedicated Secretariat and operating from headquarters located in the region. The working document, titled RECOFI Review, prepared at the request of RECOFI, is provided in Appendix I.

8. The *ad hoc* session referred to in the above paragraph, which was originally set for by 2016, could be delayed further. Therefore, with the agreement of the RECOFI Chairperson, Dr Al Mazrouai, the Secretariat included this working document to the agenda of this session.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMISSION

The Commission is invited to comment, before a high-level *ad hoc* session, on the analysis made, review the suggestions presented, examine the current Status and Rules of procedures and, provide guidance to members and FAO on how to further improve the Commission's efficiency and effectiveness.

Review of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) 2005-2015

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Executive Summary

This report contains a brief review of RECOFI from 2005 to 2015, and includes a summary of what RECOFI has achieved and some of the key challenges facing the effective functioning of RECOFI. Attention is drawn to the important role that RECOFI has played in advancing fisheries management and aquaculture development in the RECOFI area, in terms of data collection, providing a forum for discussing emerging fisheries issues, conducting training and capacity building workshops and engagement at the regional level. Despite this role, RECOFI has faced a number of challenges, including lack of support (both financial and other) at various times, which has impeded the work of the Commission. While this has been discussed at various RECOFI sessions and meetings, where this challenge has been acknowledged with concern, no concrete action to rectify the problem has been agreed and the Commission continues to suffer from these challenges. The purpose of this review is to summarize both the achievements of and challenges facing RECOFI in a concise manner, to clearly present the current context to RECOFI member countries. Subsequently, and based on the existing context, scenarios are proposed for the future functioning of RECOFI, briefly noting the commitment and implications of each.

This review builds on a series of related previous activities and discussions, most recently at the eighth session of RECOFI (Muscat, Oman 12 to 14 May 2015), where the current status of RECOFI and future outlook was discussed. The Secretariat, with the agreement of the RECOFI Chairperson, commissioned this brief review of RECOFI, which would provide decision-makers in RECOFI member countries. The review provides an overview of the activities of the Commission itself and in particular the activities of its two advisory bodies, the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) and the Working Group on Aquaculture (WGA).

Since the third session of RECOFI (Doha, Qatar 9-11 May 2005), 14 workshops and 15 annual meetings of the WGA and WGFM, were held, and comprise the main activities of RECOFI, in addition to the development, management and advancement of the Regional Aquaculture Information System (RAIS). On average, five of the eight RECOFI member countries participated per meeting/workshop, with a maximum participation of eight member countries and a minimum of three member countries. These technical workshops and meetings of the working groups have yielded the attendance of over 430 participants from RECOFI members as well as observers and have provided an opportunity to engage in a wide variety of technical and scientific areas. These activities are important for advancing the programme of work for RECOFI and require that a RECOFI member will host, providing the venue and some logistical support; in the period from 2005 to 2016, three RECOFI members (Oman, Qatar and Kuwait) hosted 66 percent of these activities, followed by FAO.

The activities and programme of work of the WGFM and WGA have varied from periods with very low levels of activity to higher levels of activity. Since 2007, the WGFM has been consistent in ensuring the implementation of its annual meetings; regarding technical and capacity building workshops, there was a peak of three in the 2011-2012 biennium. However, in the current and previous biennia (2015-2016 and 2013-2014, respectively) no activities were implemented by the WGFM outside of the annual meetings of the WGFM. The WGA has recently been engaged in a higher level of activity after a period of lower levels of activity. These workshops and meetings have resulted in a number of outcomes, including regional action plans, a socio-economic task group, the formulation of six fully fledged project proposals (two of which have been fully implemented), a number of declarations and development programmes and contribution to guidelines and reviews.

Of particular note, are the two binding recommendations formulated and adopted by RECOFI (Recommendation RECOFI/8/2015/1 on Minimum Reporting on Aquaculture Data and Information and Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1 on Minimum data reporting in the RECOFI area), as well as RAIS, which is currently being expanded to include capture fisheries information and will serve as a regional data and information center for RECOFI. While

Recommendation RECOFI/8/2015/1 was only recently adopted, RECOFI/6/2011/1 has served to collect data for a number of years and, as a result, there is now a sufficient basis for monitoring the status of fishing operations and resources and taking management decisions using data reported under this recommendation.

The RECOFI Secretariat, comprised of FAO staff who contribute their time to RECOFI, has supported RECOFI through the organization and logistics of the above mentioned sessions, meetings and workshops, and additionally have attended approximately 28 relevant meetings and workshops on behalf of RECOFI.

The Secretariat also produced 30 publications in the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Circular series, as well as over 115 working documents to inform discussions for RECOFI sessions and meetings of the working groups. Additionally, a number of standalone information documents and publications were also produced and disseminated by the Secretariat.

One of the main challenges facing RECOFI is its budget; RECOFI member countries each contribute USD 5 000 per year, which is insufficient for a substantial programme of work and budget to effectively fulfill its mandate. This is compounded by the level of arrears that have troubled RECOFI, ranging between USD 35 000 and 95 000 in the review period. Despite this, RECOFI has managed to maintain a minimum programme of work, mainly through some extra-budgetary funds, funds carried forward from periods of low activity, and the contribution of FAO Regular Programme funds.

At this stage, FAO stands ready to continue to assist RECOFI, but the ultimate responsibility for regional fisheries and fish stocks rests with member countries, which must be more actively involved in the work of their Commission in order to fully benefit from its services. Two scenarios are thus proposed, to maintain RECOFI activities with the current budget and reduced FAO support, or to strengthen RECOFI to function with an increased budget and fully-fledged secretariat.

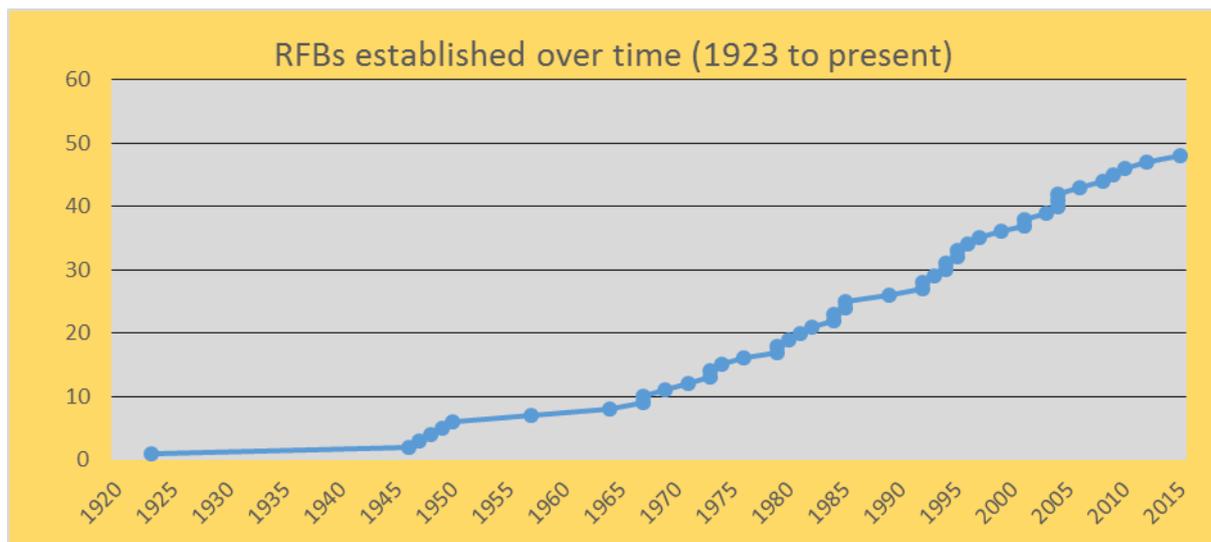
The Commission has a potential key role to play in ensuring sustainable management and exploitation of Gulf resources for the benefit of the eight coastal countries, but it needs adequate funding. Not all of the eight countries have similar priorities, national wealth, or capacity to contribute to fund its activities, however, and this represents a challenge to achieving effective collaboration. RECOFI is the ideal vehicle for this collaboration, but in the 15 years since its work began, the organisation has not received the technical and financial support needed from its member countries for it to be fully effective. Currently, RECOFI is at a turning point and decision-makers must take the decision on the role this RFMO should have in the future with regards to fulfilling its mandate for the management and to promote the development, conservation, rational management and best utilization of living marine resources, as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture in the area of its competency.

RECOFI REVIEW: 2005-2015

Introduction

Regional fisheries bodies (RFBs) are a key and critical tool in the management of living resources, with particular regard for shared fish stocks. Article 118 of UNCLOS, Cooperation of States in the conservation and management of living resources calls upon States to cooperate with each other in the conservation and management of living resources in the areas of the high seas. States whose nationals exploit identical living resources, or different living resources in the same area, shall enter into negotiations with a view to taking the measures necessary for the conservation of the living resources concerned. They shall, as appropriate, cooperate to establish subregional or regional fisheries organizations to this end. Globally, regional organizations have been on the increase; in 1950 there were six RFBs, contrasted with the 48 RFBs that existed at the close of 2016¹ (Figure 1). Countries are increasingly looking to establish some sort of regional fishery management cooperation where they do not exist. Additionally, there is an increasing trend to strengthen and update RFBs which had been established previously, to ensure that they have the appropriate mandate and capacity to address modern fisheries issues. This is a sign that coastal countries are increasingly recognizing the importance of regional cooperation to manage fish stocks, to exchange information, enhance aquaculture production capacity. The Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) was established because the coastal states around the Gulf and Sea of Oman recognized the need to cooperate on the management of fish stocks in this area.

Figure 1. Establishment of RFBs 1920 to 2016



The Agreement for the Establishment of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) was drafted to replace the Committee for the Development and Management of the Fisheries Resources of the Gulfs, which was a subsidiary of the now-abolished Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (IOFC). The Agreement entered into force on 26 February 2001. It was established by its member countries (Bahrain, Iran (I.R), Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates) to “promote and enhance the regional dialogue and cooperation for the sustainable development of regional fisheries and aquaculture”.

Its expressed aim is “to promote the development, conservation, rational management and best utilization of living marine resources, as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture in the area of its competency.” The area of the Commission is delineated as follows: from Ras Dhabat Ali in (16° 39’N, 53°3’30’’E) then to a position in (16° 00’N, 53° 25’’E) then to a position in (17°

¹ According to the RFBs listed on <http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/search/en>

00°N, 56° 30°E) then to a position in (20° 30°N, 60° 00°E) then to Ras Al-Fasteh in (25° 04°N, 61° 25°E) (Article IV). The Commission covers all living marine resources, including aquaculture, in the sea area with the exception of internal waters.

The period of this review is from the May 2005 to April 2015, covering the last 10 years² and following the period of the technical performance review of RECOFI.

Background

At the eighth session of RECOFI (Muscat, Oman 12 to 14 May 2015), the current status of RECOFI and future outlook was discussed. The Commission was reminded that, as discussed at previous sessions of RECOFI, the current support of FAO to RECOFI could not continue as in the past and the Commission was presented with a number of options for strengthening RECOFI. However, no recommendations were made on how to address this, and an *ad hoc* meeting was proposed by RECOFI members to further discuss the issue. The Secretariat, with the agreement of the RECOFI Chairperson, commissioned this brief review of RECOFI, which would provide decision-makers in RECOFI member countries with a brief but comprehensive summary of what RECOFI has achieved and some of the key challenges facing the effective functioning of RECOFI. The purpose of this review is to undertake the above and, based on this, propose scenarios for the future and the support that each would require from RECOFI members.

This review builds on a series of related previous activities and discussions, namely: the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development, which was convened as a follow-up to the fifth session of RECOFI held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 12 to 14 May 2009; the Technical Performance Review of RECOFI (2011), which was presented at the sixth session of RECOFI (Rome, Italy, 10 to 12 May 2011), the agenda item “Current status and action needed for the future of RECOFI” and discussion at the seventh session of RECOFI (Tehran, Iran [I.R.], 14-16 May 2013), and the agenda item “Current status of RECOFI and future outlook” at the eighth session of RECOFI.

Excerpts from the discussions and statements by the Commission related to these agenda items are included below in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of statements from RECOFI sessions and meetings on the way forward for RECOFI

Meeting/Session	Relevant discussions
<p>Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development</p>	<p>- The meeting recognized the need for Members to ensure that the Commission had the resources required to fund its programmed activities. It was suggested that FAO should assist RECOFI to prepare well documented project proposals for donor funding.</p> <p>- The meeting agreed unanimously that RECOFI required strengthening to make it a more effective and legitimate organization. However, it was recognized that the movement towards a stronger and more dynamic Commission should be achieved in a phased, stepwise approach. It was stressed that Members should lead the Commission’s work and activities, both in the period of reorganization and strengthening and afterwards as RECOFI takes on its role as a fully functional and operational regional fisheries management organization.</p>
<p>6th Session of RECOFI (Rome, Italy, 10-12 May 2011)</p>	<p>- The Commission endorsed the findings and outcomes of the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development (Rome, 11–12 May 2010).</p> <p>- The Commission agreed that many fisheries management and developmental challenges faced RECOFI. Members were calling upon the Commission more frequently to undertake additional work and, for this reason,</p>

² The RECOFI financial year is 1 May to 30 April

	<p>it was necessary to reconsider the annual contributions paid.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commencing in 2013, the Commission agreed that the annual Member's contribution would be increased to USD 15 000. This level was established on the condition that current and outstanding contributions would be settled not later than 31 December 2011.
<p>7th Session of RECOFI (Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, 14–16 May 2013)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Commission noted with appreciation the efforts and work of the Secretariat despite the financial challenges that have persisted and recognized that a need exists for Member countries to further support these efforts. - The Commission recognized that there is a minimum budget requirement in order to implement a rich programme of work and those current contributions do not meet this. - The Commission reiterated the importance and value of fish stocks in the RECOFI region, and the importance of regional fisheries management for ensuring the sustainability of those fish stocks; with regards to this the Commission recognized that the current FAO support of the RECOFI Secretariat at the current level would not be possible to maintain. It also reiterated Member countries would have to ensure adequate funding for the Secretariat in order to preserve the work of the Commission, as this is becoming increasingly essential for the sustainability of shared fishery resources and aquaculture development in the region.
<p>Eighth session of RECOFI (Muscat, Oman, 12–14 May 2015)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Commission was informed that the current support of FAO to RECOFI could not continue as in the past. The Commission took into consideration the different strategy options, including three different funding mechanisms. - The Commission considered the strengthening of the Secretariat, including its location in a RECOFI member country, and agreed that the actual decision on the budget and elements involved would need to be discussed and agreed at an ad hoc session. The Commission noted the offer of Kuwait to host the RECOFI headquarters and Secretariat, should they be relocated. - The Commission requested that the Secretariat prepare indicative budget scenarios for the future functioning of the Commission with a dedicated Secretariat and operating from headquarters located in the region. The Secretariat was requested to prepare a working document for the ad hoc session, including the indicative budget, and to be circulated well in advance to allow for the necessary internal consultations.

Functioning and organization of the RECOFI Secretariat

The FAO Senior Fishery Officer assigned at the Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa in Cairo (RNE) acts as the Secretary of RECOFI. In 2008 FAO nominated the Technical Secretary of the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM). This post has been vacant since 2012, and the Secretary of RECOFI has been supporting the WGFM in this respect. The Commission also benefitted from the support provided by the Technical Secretary of the Working Group on Aquaculture (WGA), which is an Aquaculture Officer from the Aquaculture Branch of the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department. The core of the RECOFI Secretariat is completed by the bilingual (Arabic/English) administrative assistant, based in RNE. In addition, the Commission has received significant support from FAO through the support of a Senior Statistician Officer from the Statistics Branch, an Information Officer from the Aquaculture Branch, a Liaison Officer and secretarial support from the Policy, Economics and Institutions Branch, all contained within the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department. The RECOFI fisheries statistics database has been regularly maintained and updated thanks to the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Information and Statistics Branch. The above staff time has been supported through FAO Regular Programme funds.

RECOFI Activities

RECOFI's main programme of work is implemented through intersessional scientific and technical workshops, annual meetings of the two advisory bodies (WGFM and WGA), maintaining RAIS, and the implementation of its binding recommendations. The technical workshops are proposed by the WGFM and WGA, and a set of workshops is approved at each Commission session, which are then anticipated to be implemented through the coordination of the Secretariat, the host countries and the respective focal points. The planned and implemented activities of RECOFI over the last six biennia are demonstrated below, in Figure 2 demonstrating the implemented activities vs what was endorsed at the previous RECOFI session, and in Figure 3 by type (annual WG meeting or technical workshop). Since the third session of RECOFI, 14 workshops and 15 annual meetings of the WGA and WGFM, as well as the advancement of RAIS were held. On average, five RECOFI member countries participated per meeting/workshop, with a maximum participation of eight member countries and a low of three member countries.

Figure 2. RECOFI intersessional activities, planned vs implemented

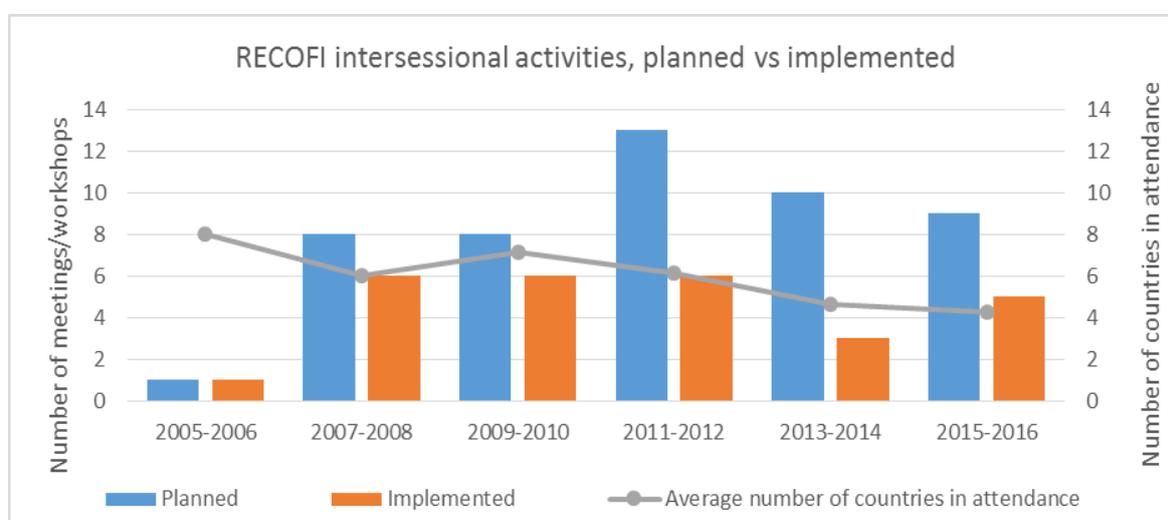
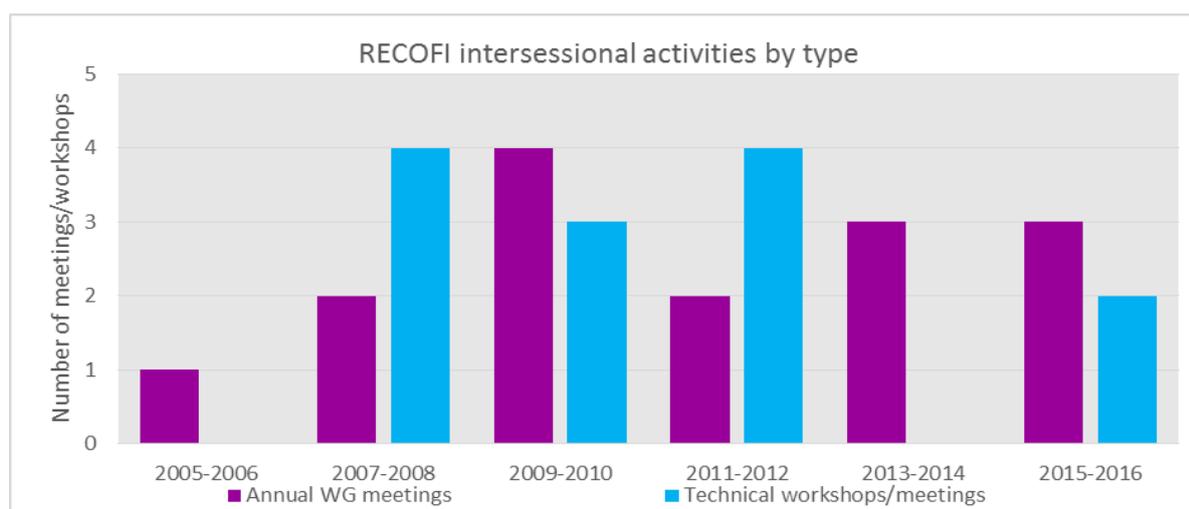


Figure 3. RECOFI intersessional activities by type

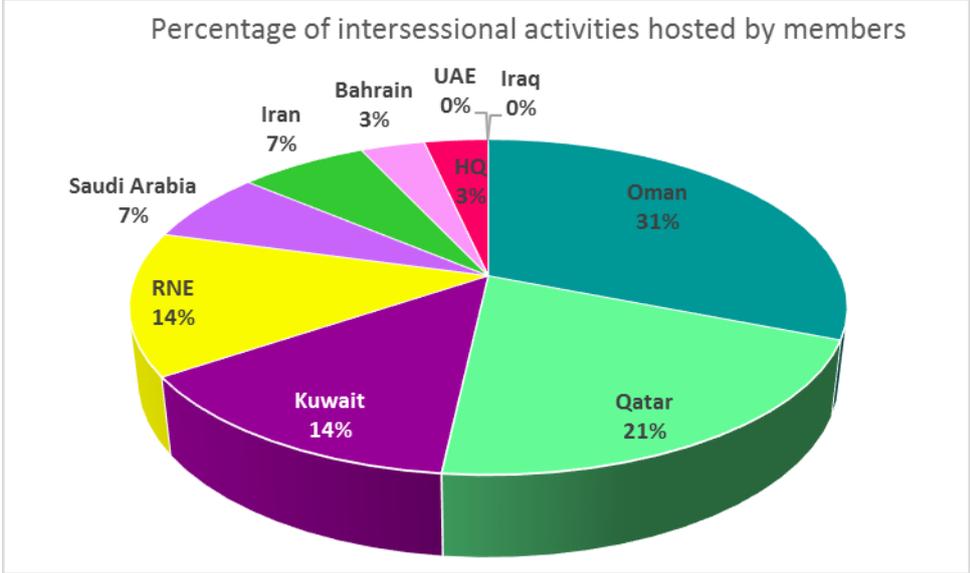


These technical workshops and meetings of the working groups have yielded the attendance of over 430 participants from RECOFI members as well as observers.

Each meeting and workshop requires that a RECOFI member will host, providing the venue and some logistical support. These offers to host are key to delivery of intersessional activities,

whether they are meetings of the two Working Groups, or workshops of a technical or capacity building nature. In the period from 2005 to 2016, 29 activities requiring hosting meetings or workshops took place³; three RECOFI members (Oman, Qatar and Kuwait) hosted 66 percent of these activities, followed by the FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa (14 percent), highlighted below in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Host country for RECOFI intersessional activities 2005-2016



Working Group on Fisheries Management

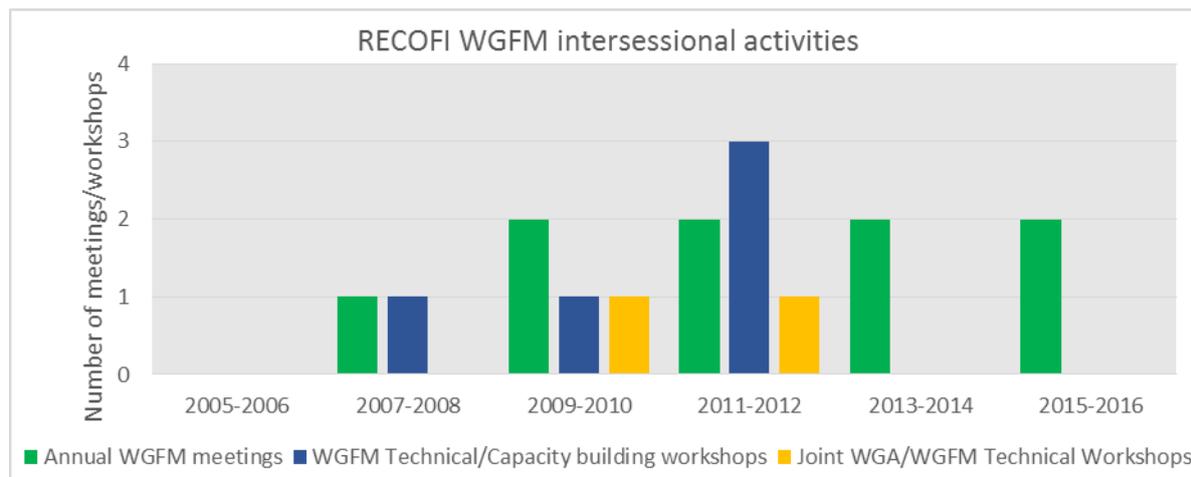
At the Commission’s fourth session (Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 7–9 May 2007), a decision was taken to re-name the Working Group on Fishery Statistics (WGS). It was decided to change its name to the Working Group on Fisheries Management and to expand and strengthen the Working Group’s scope, role and functions, and a Terms of Reference was outlined⁴. The WGFM is expected to undertake a number of roles and functions, including the consideration of biological, statistical, social, economic, policy, legal and institutional aspects of fisheries conservation and management with a view to ensuring the long-term sustainable development of resources in the region, and also provide technical and scientific advice to RECOFI.

A workplan for the WGFM is discussed in its meetings and then proposed at Commission sessions. In the 2011-2012 biennium, a number of activities proposed by the WGFM and endorsed at the sixth session of RECOFI were undertaken. Figure 5 below shows the types of intersessional activities since 2005, of the WGS prior to 2007, and the WGFM from 2007. Since 2007, the WGFM has been consistent in ensuring the implementation of its annual meetings; regarding technical and capacity building workshops, there was a peak of three in the 2011-2012 biennium.

³ Not including RECOFI sessions, for which hosting responsibilities had been pre-assigned to be undertaken on a rotating basis

⁴ The report of the fourth session of RECOFI, including the Terms of Reference for the WGFM is available here: www.fao.org/3/a-a1628b

Figure 5. RECOFI WGFM intersessional activities



However, in the current and previous biennia (2015-2016 and 2013-2014, respectively) no activities were implemented by the WGFM outside of the annual meetings of the WGFM. This is despite reducing the number of priority activities of the WGFM in the current programme of work and budget to one activity only (Joint assessment of the narrow-barred Spanish mackerel and related workshop). Additionally, low levels of participation at the last three consecutive meetings of the WGFM have made discussion on this matter difficult, and to date this activity has not taken place, despite the availability of funds.

The activities undertaken in the review period included:

- Spatial Planning Development Programme for Marine Capture Fisheries and Aquaculture (Cairo, Egypt, 25 to 27 November 2012)
- RECOFI Workshop on Bycatch Management and Low Impact Fishing (Kuwait City, Kuwait 9-12 December 2012)
- RECOFI Workshop on Social and Economic Aspects of Fisheries in the RECOFI Region (Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain, 22 to 24 April 2012)
- RECOFI–FIRMS Workshop on Resources and Fisheries Inventories (Cairo, Egypt, 12-14 July 2011)
- RECOFI workshop on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing (Muscat, Oman, 30 March- 2 April 2009)
- FAO/RECOFI Regional Workshop on “Stock Indicators and Stock Status Reporting” (Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, 26-29 July 2009)

In addition to this list, relevant workshops for RECOFI members and to which all RECOFI member countries were invited included: FAO Workshop on Implementing the 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the North West Indian Ocean (Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1-5 June 2015) and the FAO Regional conference on food security and income generation through the reduction of losses and waste in fisheries (Nouakchott, Mauritania, 15-17 December 2013). Near-East and North Africa Regional Consultative Meeting on Securing Sustainable Small- Scale Fisheries: Bringing Together Responsible Fishing and Social Development, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 26–28 March 2012.

These workshops provided the forum for discussion on specific priority topics of relevance for RECOFI, and a number of notable outputs have resulted either directly from these workshops, or from discussions that have been initiated at these workshops.

Outputs from WGFm-related activities since 2005 have included:

- The formulation of a Regional Action Plan for managing the environmental impacts of fishing in the RECOFI region;
- The formulation of a socio-economic Task Group with a ToR and ongoing workplan;
- The formulation of Spatial Planning Development Programme for Marine Capture Fisheries and Aquaculture;
- Regional recommendations on the implementation of the Port State Measures Agreement;
- The formulation of the project document: Initiative on Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of RECOFI⁵;
- An adequate basis for monitoring the status of fishing operations and resources and taking management decisions using data reported under the recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1 on minimum data reporting in the RECOFI area;
- The establishment of a regional database and information centre to strengthen the RECOFI Commission and support fishery management and aquaculture development in the region (ongoing);
- Review of fisheries laws of certain members of RECOFI;
- The Nouakchott Declaration on food security and income generation through the reduction of losses and waste in fisheries⁶;
- Formulation and implementation of the project: TCP/SNG/3402 Support to capacity development for fishery stock assessment in GCC countries and Yemen;
- Formulation and implementation of the project: UTF /OMA/010/OMA Oman Trawl Survey Information System (OTrIS);
- Formulation of the project: UTF /QAT/001/QAT Fisheries surveys in Qatari waters: planning, implementation, data analysis and capacity building;
- Formulation of the project: Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture Management for Improved Food Security in the Shatt Al-Arab.

Working Group on Aquaculture

At the second session of the Regional Commission for Fisheries. Muscat, Oman, 18–21 May 2003, the Commission endorsed the recommendation to establish a standing Working Group on Aquaculture (WGA), including a Terms of Reference for both the working group and the focal points. At the eighth session of RECOFI, a revised Terms of Reference for WGA focal points was adopted⁷. The main functions of the WGA are to advise RECOFI on technical and policy matters related to aquaculture, identify and discuss major issues and trends in regional aquaculture development, identify and establish national focal points, encourage technical cooperation and coordination among the Member countries, monitor development and trends of aquaculture practices in the region, establish a system for regular collection, up-dating and dissemination of aquaculture information.

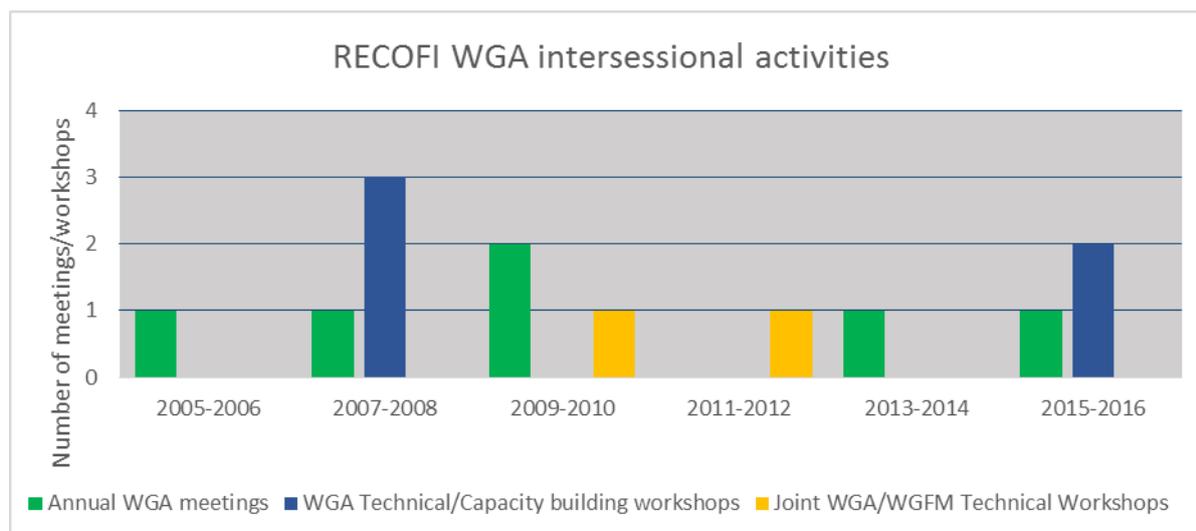
As in the case of the WGFm, a workplan for the WGA is discussed during its annual meetings and then proposed at Commission sessions. The intersessional activities in the review period are highlighted below in Figure 6. Both the annual meetings of the WGA and the technical and capacity building workshops have varied throughout the last ten years with regards to numbers of workshops and meetings.

⁵ This project has been fully formulated and endorsed by the three beneficiary countries (Iran (I.R.), Iraq and Kuwait), however a coordinated request to donors by the beneficiary countries has yet to be undertaken.

⁶ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5581e.pdf>

⁷ ToR for focal points and working group are available as an Appendix to the report of the eighth session of RECOFI

Figure 6. RECOFI WGA intersessional activities



The intersessional activities held in the review period include:

- Introductory Training Course on Risk Analysis for Movements of Live Aquatic Animals for RECOFI, Muscat, Oman 2-4 November 2015
- Round-table meeting on RECOFI regional aquatic biosecurity programme, Muscat, Oman, 5 November 2015
- RECOFI Regional Technical Workshop on Sustainable Marine Cage Aquaculture Development, held from 25 to 26 January 2009 in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman
- RECOFI Regional Technical Workshop on Aquatic Animal Health, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, 6-10 April 2008
- Technical Meeting on the Regional Aquaculture Information System (RAIS), Kuwait City, Kuwait, 6-9 November 2007

Outputs from WGA-related activities include:

- FAO CD-ROM on “Introduced species in fisheries and aquaculture: Information for responsible use and Control”
- Regional review on aquaculture development, Near East and North Africa, 2005
- Formulation Aquaculture Legal and Policy Framework Project
- Regional Aquaculture Information System (RAIS)

RECOFI Recommendations

Recommendation RECOFI/8/2015/1 on Minimum Reporting on Aquaculture Data and Information

The recommendation RECOFI/8/2015/1 on Minimum Reporting on Aquaculture Data and Information was adopted at the eighth session (Muscat, Oman 12–14 May 2015) as the second binding recommendation adopted by RECOFI⁸. At the seventh meeting of the WGA, a roadmap was adopted for the execution of the recommendation. This roadmap is outlined as follows: (1) FAO-FIAS to develop a statistical questionnaire for aquaculture data collection and circulate it to the WGA Focal Points; (2) the WGA Focal Points to share the questionnaire with their national statistics department for a testing phase; and (3) the questionnaire to be commented on by the WGA Focal Points.

⁸ Appendix of the report of the eighth session of RECOFI

Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1 on Minimum data reporting in the RECOFI area

The RECOFI Recommendation on Minimum Data Reporting was established as an initial part of process establishing a pragmatic management scheme based on an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management with adaptive management procedures, the decision taken by the second meeting of the WGF (Cairo, Egypt, 27-30 October 2008), endorsed by the fifth Session of the RECOFI (Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 12-14 May 2009). The FAO/RECOFI Regional Workshop on Stock Indicators and Stock Status Reporting (Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, 26–29 July 2009) reviewed data and statistics availability in the region and stock status reporting and recognized the lack of information commonly accessible through the Region. The sixth session of RECOFI (Rome, Italy, 10-12 May 2011) endorsed the Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1, entitled “Recommendation on minimum data reporting in the RECOFI area”.

At the Eighth Session of RECOFI the Secretariat informed *that the data reported under the RECOFI Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1 has become sufficient for providing an adequate basis for monitoring the status of fishing operations and resources and supporting for taking management decisions, and urged the Commission to establish a common database and an agreed data access policy.* At the ninth meeting of the WGF (Kuwait City, State of Kuwait, 24-26 November 2015), the meeting discussed the convenience and feasibility of taking further steps towards actively utilizing these data, possibly beginning with the joint assessment of the kingfish and the development of operational management objectives and corresponding indicators. In particular, it was noted that the Commission had not yet been able to identify fisheries management objectives of regional relevance, including the associated multidisciplinary indicators and related reference points and reference limits. This was identified as a significant constraint that could affect progress towards the formulation of regional fisheries management plans such as those for shrimp and kingfish fisheries.

Regional Aquaculture Information System (RAIS)

The Regional Aquaculture Information System (RAIS) was established as a regional repository system for storing and sharing information including that generated from RECOFI and other technical workshops/meetings. During the Third session of the Commission (Doha, Qatar, 9–11 May 2005) the State of Kuwait offered to host the RAIS in the premises of the Public Authority of Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAFR) and allocated extra-budgetary funds to develop the information system. The Commission requested the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department to develop the system along with a bilingual (Arabic and English) “RAIS User Manual” to facilitate data submission by authorized RAIS users. The information system was developed within FAO through the Information Technology Division (CIO) staff. Before and after the official launching of RAIS three ad hoc technical trainings had been organized by the Secretariat to consolidate the information system and to strengthen the input capacities of the data owners and data managers. Currently the WGA Focal Points are those responsible for data reporting in each member country and the RAIS Regional Centre is responsible for the management and daily maintenance of the system.

At the eighth session of the Regional Commission for Fisheries the Commission decided that RAIS would include the data collection and management under RECOFI Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1 on minimum data reporting in the RECOFI area, considering that RAIS is well established and could provide any additional required functionalities. It was acknowledged at the ninth meeting of the WGF (Kuwait City, Kuwait, 24-26 November 2015) that the establishment of the regional database and information centre was a core undertaking for RECOFI and an essential step in strengthening the Commission and supporting fishery management and aquaculture development in the region. Progress was made between FAO and Kuwait, and at the time of this review (as noted at the tenth meeting of the WGF, held in Doha, Qatar 4 to 6 December 2016) a concept note had been prepared by the RECOFI Secretariat and sent to Kuwait;

confirmation was received by Kuwait that the activity and its components as outlined would be integrated into the Kuwait/FAO cooperation framework. Kuwait and FAO are currently working out the details of this cooperation framework, which represents an initiative by a RECOFI member country that supports an important element of the programme of work for RECOFI and provides much-needed extra-budgetary funds in this regard.

Activities of the RECOFI Secretariat

The Secretariat, as described above FAO staff working who contribute their time in addition to their other duties, work to ensure the timely implementation of activities, provide scientific, technical and administrative support, and ensure timely publication of relevant documents. This is in addition to publicizing the work and activities of RECOFI at the wider regional and international level.

In the review period, the Secretariat coordinated and actively contributed to the preparation and the implementation of all of the above-mentioned RECOFI sessions, meetings and workshops in the review period. In addition to logistical support, in order to support these sessions and meetings, the secretariat produced 30 publications in the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Circular series, as well as over 115 working documents to inform discussions for RECOFI sessions and meetings of the working groups. Additionally, a number of standalone information documents and publications were also produced and disseminated by the Secretariat. A complete list of publications since 2015 is available in Appendix 1.

The Secretariat also participated in meetings of partner organizations or entities (in the period since the third session of RECOFI) as follows:

1. Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fisheries Bodies on Accelerating Progress Towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, Seoul, Republic of Korea, 26-29 September 2016
2. Sixth Meeting of Regional Fishery Body Secretariat's Network, (Rome, Italy, 9 and 15 July 2016)
3. Thirty Third Session of the Regional Conference for the Near East (Rome, Italy 9-13 May 2016)
4. Toward the Development of a Regional Ecosystem Based Management Strategy for ROPME Sea Area, Dubai, UAE, 4-7 April 2016
5. FAO Workshop on Implementing the 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the North West Indian Ocean (Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1-5 June 2015)
6. Fifth Meeting of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network, (RSN-5). Rome, 7 and 13 June 2014
7. Thirty Second Session of the Regional Conference for the Near East (Rome, Italy, 24-28 February 2014)
8. Regional Cooperation for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (Cairo, Egypt 22-24 June 2014)
9. Two meetings to implement the FAO/RECOFI Initiative to Promote Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of RECOFI
10. Fourth Meeting of the Regional Fisheries Body Secretariat Network (Rome, Italy, 13 July 2013)
11. Regional Meeting on Reducing Vulnerability of Fishing and Fish Farming Communities to Natural Disasters and Climate Change Impacts in the Near East and North Africa" (Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 25 March 2012)
12. The Near East and North Africa Regional Consultative Meeting "Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries: Bringing Together Responsible Fishing and Social Development" (Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 26-28 March 2012)
13. Thirty First Session of the Regional Conference for the Near East (Rome, Italy, 14-18 May 2012)
14. Workshop on FAO Article XIV statutory bodies (Rome, Italy, 30 January 2012)

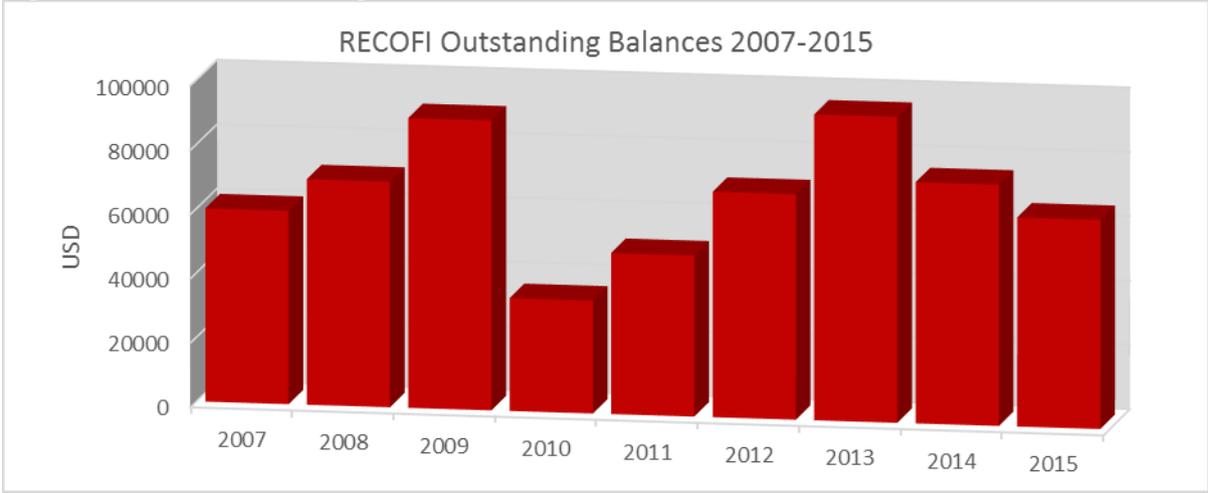
15. Regional Intergovernmental Meeting to Initiate the Establishment of a Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Fishery Management Arrangement (Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 28-30 November 2011)
16. Third Meeting of the Regional Fisheries Body Secretariat Network (Rome, Italy, 7–9 February 2011)
17. Thirtieth Session of the Regional Conference for the Near East (Khartoum, Sudan, 4-8 December 2010)
18. FAO/INFOSAMAK Regional Seminar on Fish Trade and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Near East and North Africa: Implication of Certification and Traceability Schemes for the Region” (Agadir, Morocco, 22-24 June 2010)
19. Inception Workshop and First Coordination Meeting of regional project Scientific and Institutional Cooperation to Support Responsible Fisheries in the Eastern Mediterranean – EastMed (Greece, April 2010)
20. Coordination Meeting of the FAO Regional Fisheries Projects in the Mediterranean (Rome, January 2010)
21. FAO/WorldFish Regional Workshop on Adapting to Climate Change: The Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries and Aquaculture in the Near East and North Africa Region (Abassa, Egypt, 10-12 November 2009)
22. Four meetings to implement the FAO/RECOFI Initiative to Promote Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of RECOFI
23. Twenty-ninth session of the Regional Conference for the Near East (Egypt, March 2008)
24. Regional Workshop on “Fish Trawling Management (A Review of World Experiences) through the Introduction of By-catch Reduction Technologies and Change of Management” (Kish Island, Islamic Republic of Iran, 2008)
25. Eleventh session of the Scientific Advisory Committee of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (Marrakech, Morocco, December 2008)
26. Twenty-eighth session of the Committee on Fisheries (Rome, Italy, March 2009)
27. Second meeting of the Regional Fisheries Body Secretariat Network (Rome, Italy, 9–11 March 2009)
28. Regional workshop “The Use of Geographical Information System in Fisheries Management” (Tunisia, July 2008).

The secretariat was also involved in the formulation and implementation of the FAO sub-regional project “Support to capacity development for fishery stock assessment in GCC countries and Yemen” and the “Initiative on Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of RECOFI”, as well as the formulation of a number of other above-mentioned projects.

Financial Inputs and Delivery

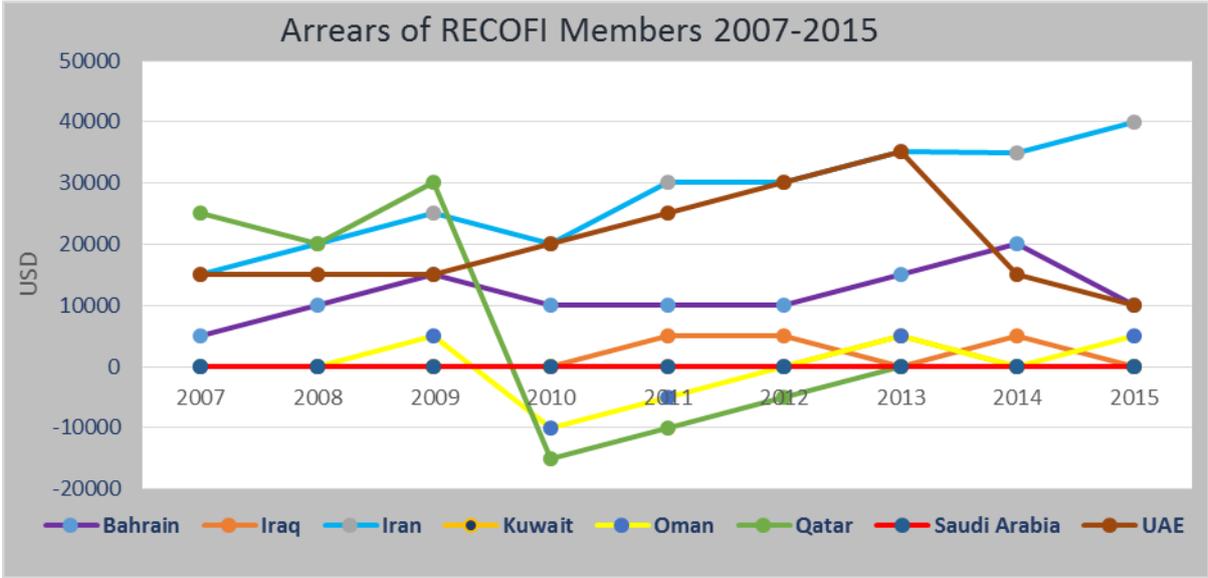
RECOFI Member countries each contribute USD 5 000/year. The core budget of RECOFI takes the form of a multi-lateral trust-fund project under the FAO symbol MTF/REM/001/MUL and title “Support to the Secretariat of RECOFI”. The project began in April 2003 and since then has been renewed on a yearly basis. Its budget is revised regularly in order to monitor annual contributions by member countries and the cash flow of expenditures. The book-keeping activity continued to be ensured through the FAO central accounting system. RECOFI members maintaining arrears regarding their annual contributions due create an important obstacle in implementing the Programme of Work and Budget for RECOFI. Figure 7 shows the total outstanding balances since 2007, which has ranged between USD 35 000 to USD 95 000.

Figure 7. RECOFI outstanding balances 2007-2015



Further, Figure 8 shows the arrears over time for each RECOFI member. While members such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Iraq (and Qatar since 2010) have generally been consistent in paying their annual contributions, Iran (I.R.), UAE, and Bahrain have maintained an outstanding balance, despite some attempts to pay these arrears by UAE and Bahrain.

Figure 8. Arrears of RECOFI Members 2007-2015



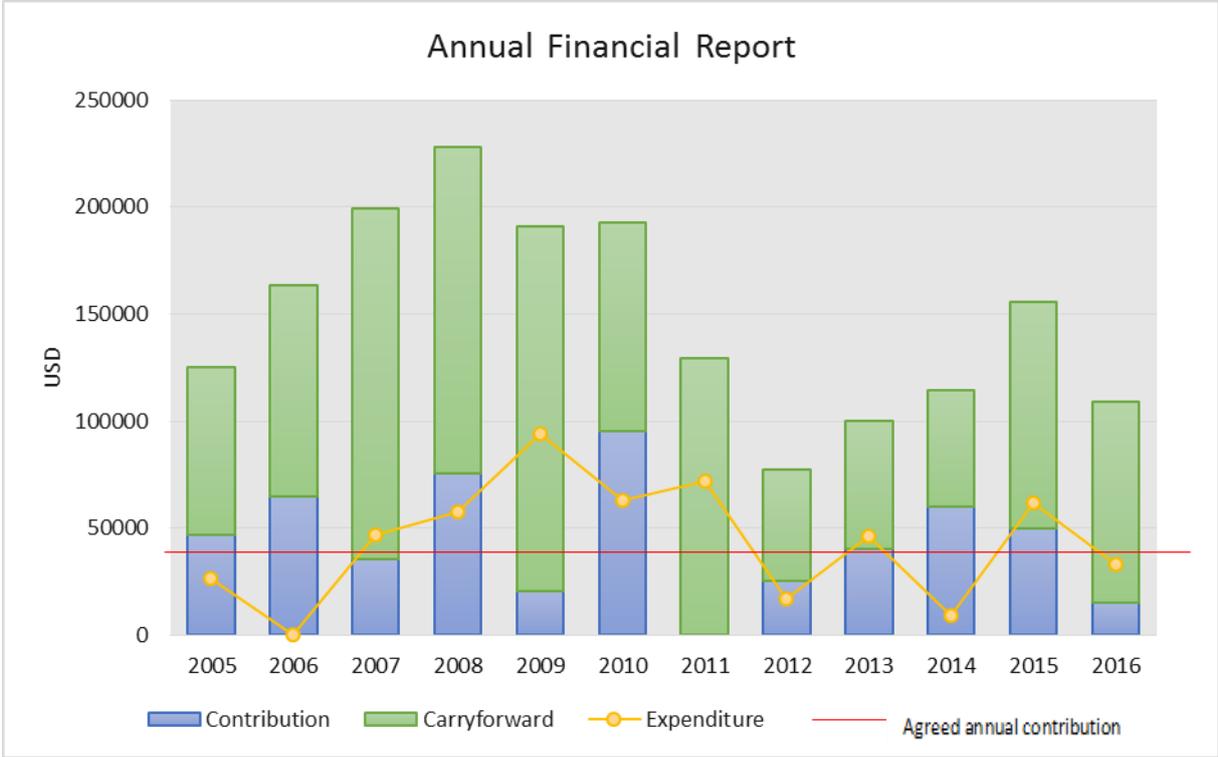
In addition to member contributions, member countries also contribute to the functioning of RECOFI through extra-budgetary funds.

At the sixth session of RECOFI, 10-12 May 2011 Rome, Italy, the Commission agreed that, commencing in 2013, the annual member’s contribution would be increased to USD 15 000. This level was established on the condition that current and outstanding contributions would be settled not later than 31 December 2011. Outstanding contributions remain to be settled to date, and annual contributions remain at USD 5000 per member annually.

At the sixth, seventh, and eighth sessions of RECOFI, the endorsed programme of work and budget for the following biennia amounted to USD 200 000, USD 160 000, USD 65 000 respectively, not including annual WGFM and WGA meetings or Commission sessions. Each meeting of the WGFM or WGA or technical workshop costs between USD 6 500 and 10 000, depending on the number of experts or secretariat needed for its effective execution. The RECOFI

sessions cost between USD 18 000 and 20 000, and costs include interpretation, in-session translation of draft report, travel, printing and miscellaneous. Travel, accommodation and associated costs are borne by the member countries for their respective participants at each workshop, meeting or session. Figure 9 below demonstrates the annual financial report of the RECOFI Trust Fund each year.

Figure 9. Annual Financial Report of the RECOFI Trust Fund 2011-2016



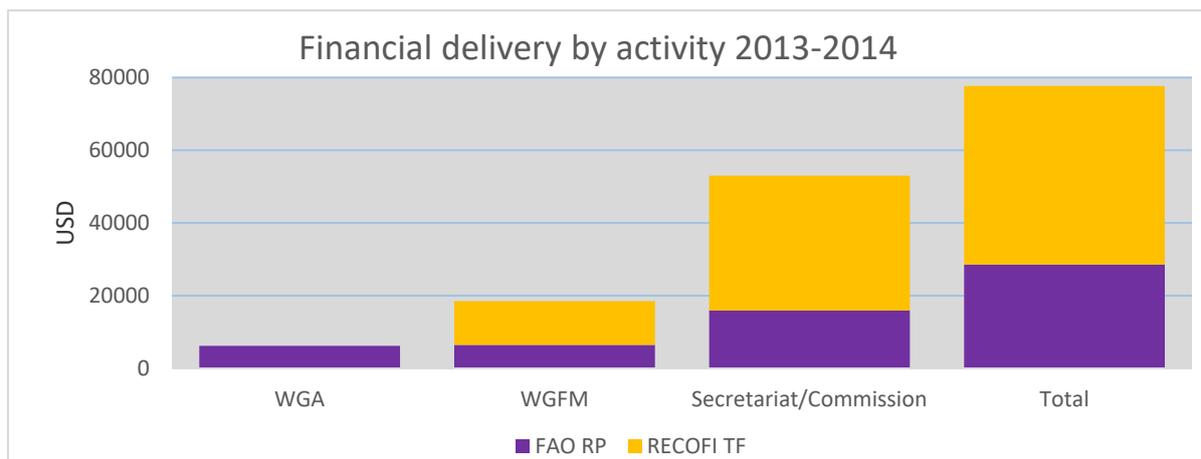
The above graph shows the extent to which funding for RECOFI activities have been reliant on either funds carried forward from previous years, or by activities supported by extra-budgetary funds⁹ or FAO Regular Programme funds¹⁰, or low levels of activities implemented in that particular year. In terms of expenditures, Figure 9 only shows expenditures from the RECOFI Trust Fund, but demonstrates the extent to which expenditures are often higher than the agreed annual contribution of USD 40 000; this was the case in seven of the last 12 years.

In addition, RECOFI activities have been supported by FAO Regular Programme funds, which are less straightforward and more difficult to calculate and demonstrate. However, some estimates were calculated to inform the eighth session of RECOFI, in particular for the agenda item on Financial and Administrative Reporting. Figure 10 demonstrates these estimates through the financial delivery by activity in 2013-2014, which used a combination of Trust Fund and Regular Programme Funds. While Figure 9 above shows that estimated expenditures supported by the RECOFI Trust Fund totaled USD 55 145, the total cost of activities, as demonstrated in Figure 10, was actually USD 77 700. The gap was supported by FAO Regular Programme Funds.

⁹ Extra-budgetary funds are voluntary contributions outside of the RECOFI trust fund, from a RECOFI member, an outside country, or a donor agency which are used to support specified activities, often within a specific framework agreement, such as a project.

¹⁰ FAO Regular Programme funds are the assessed contributions paid by member countries which comprise a portion of the regular budget used to support FAO’s programme of work.

Figure 10. Financial delivery by activity 2013-2014



In this particular period, the sixth meeting of the WGA was supported entirely from FAO Regular Programme or project funds, while the seventh and eighth meetings of the WGFM were supported approximately through 35 percent RECOFI Trust Fund, and 65 percent FAO Regular Programme. The Secretariat, including the seventh and eighth sessions of RECOFI were supported using RECOFI Trust Fund (70 percent) and FAO Regular Programme (30 percent), approximately. In this period it was estimated that this contribution amounted to approximately USD 23 000, or 30 percent of total support, not including staff time. This is more than 50 percent of annual member contributions, and if these total expenditures were replicated each year without FAO Regular Programme funds, the funds currently being carried forward would be depleted in the three to four years.

It should also be noted that this same period was noted as one with a particularly low level of activity, whereby no activities outside annual meetings of the WGA and WGFM and Commission sessions took place. As there is not a system or criteria in place on for the decision to use FAO Regular Programme s vs the RECOFI Trust Fund, it is not clear whether this period represents a typical period, a period of unusually high or low use of FAO Regular Programme funds. However, at the RECOFI Special Meeting on Consolidation and Development (Rome, Italy, 11–12 May 2010), estimated expenditures by FAO in support of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, including staff time, for the implementation of the work plan activities, amounted to **USD 410 394.91**¹¹, during the period 2008–2009. It was further elaborated that the FAO contribution over that period represented indirectly 73.61 percent of financial commitments.

Ways forward for RECOFI

FAO stands ready to continue to assist RECOFI, but the ultimate responsibility for regional fisheries and fish stocks rests with the member countries. Members should be more actively involved in the work of their Commission to fully benefit from its services for the wealth and sustainability of regional fisheries and aquaculture and of their fishing communities. The visibility of RECOFI and regional fisheries cooperation has received some visibility at the international level, due in part to the activities of RECOFI Secretariat, as noted above. Notable visibility includes the inclusion of the cooperation between RECOFI and ROPME in the so-called Seoul Outcome, of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fisheries Bodies on Accelerating Progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, held in Seoul from 26 to 28 September 2016. This in part, demonstrates the positive achievements of RECOFI, despite the challenges faced, as mentioned above. The below paragraphs and Table 2

¹¹ Available at: www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2035e/i2035e00.pdf

provide a starting point for discussing the future of RECOFI, including possible scenarios and the implications of each.

Maintain RECOFI activities within current budget and reduced FAO support

RECOFI could maintain the current contributions (with the anticipated increase in contributions to USD 15 000 per country if and when arrears are settled) and operate under a total budget of USD 40 000 and then USD 120 000 per year. Under this scenario, RECOFI will maintain the support of a part-time FAO secretariat. The USD 40 000 budget would allow for one session and two to four annual meetings of the WGA and WGFM per biennium. If arrears are settled and the budget is increased to USD 120 000 per year, in addition to the session and four annual meetings per biennium, additional technical and scientific activities, which will empower RECOFI to take initial steps to fulfill its mandate, could be included in the programme of work.

Strengthen RECOFI to function with an increased budget and secretariat

Possible mechanisms to meet the funding challenge include:

- a. The principle of equal contributions from all eight countries is maintained: A contribution level is set that will allow a useful programme of work to be implemented – for instance USD 50 000 per country per year.
- b. The annual contribution from each country is based on factors such as GDP, fisheries landings, total or per capita: A total contribution is set that will allow a useful programme of work to be implemented – for instance USD 400 000 to 500 000 per year, split according to the chosen criteria.

Table 2. Summary of possible RECOFI scenarios

Scenario	Inputs required	Potential Outcomes/Implications
Maintain RECOFI activities within current budget and reduced FAO support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total budget of USD 40 000 and then 120 000 per year - Support of part-time RECOFI Secretariat 	Per biennium activities could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 session - 2-4 meetings of advisory bodies - If arrears are settled some additional technical/ scientific activities included
Strengthen RECOFI to function with an increased budget and secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total budget of USD 400 000 to 500 000 per year - Full-time Secretariat located in a RECOFI member country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 session - 4 meetings of advisory bodies - Additional technical/management recommendations, implementation of fisheries management measures and aquaculture development - Increased training and capacity building activities for member countries - Dedicated RECOFI Secretariat - Increased capacity for engagement in regional and international processes - Increased role as a fisheries management and aquaculture development entity at regional level

In both cases, mechanisms need to be agreed for moving ahead with the work programme even if not all member countries are up to date with the payment of their contributions.

Depending on the budget forecast and expectations from other recommendations, a budget of around US\$400 000 to US\$500 000 per year would be a significant step towards the Commission's autonomy and would signal its longterm commitment to regional work programmes and related capacity development activities which support good fisheries governance and aquaculture development based on modern concepts and internationally recognised standards and requisites. This budget could constitute a working capital and would hence be a visible guarantee that national and international donors (stakeholders in the region's marine and inland interests) would notice. Partners and donors pay increasing attention to the self-financing capacity of Member countries of regional organizations and to their own capacity regardless of their access to extra-budgetary funds. The Commission, while maintaining the current *modus operandi* in recovering FAO and Member country staff expenses, could progressively prepare projects covering some thematic work programmes that may then be submitted to external donors or partners. A budget of this size could be used to hire a full-time RECOFI Secretary, as well as number of experts (either as consultants or a minimum technical staff), and to undertake scientific, technical and capacity building activities in the intersessional period, which will place RECOFI in a promising position to fulfil its mandate.

Additionally, if the Secretariat should be relocated in a member country, this would strengthen the embedding of the Commission in the region. The host country would need to fund a core administrative Secretariat staff and provide premises.

Conclusion

RECOFI has played an important role since its establishment, both at the national and regional level. Many of the key fisheries resources of the Gulf are shared and jointly exploited by several countries – shrimp and grouper (*hamour*), and migrating kingfish (*channad*) are leading examples. If exploitation of these resources is to bring maximum benefits to the people of the region and also remain sustainable, it is essential that the Gulf countries collaborate in their monitoring and management.

RECOFI was established through the initiative and vision of the coastal countries in the region. The Commission has a potential key role to play in ensuring sustainable management and exploitation of Gulf resources for the benefit of the eight coastal countries, but it needs adequate funding. Not all of the eight countries have similar priorities, national wealth, or capacity to contribute to fund its activities, however, and this represents a challenge to achieving effective collaboration. RECOFI is the ideal vehicle for this collaboration, but in the 15 years since its work began, the organisation has not received the technical and financial support needed from its member countries for it to be fully effective. Currently, RECOFI is at a turning point and decision-makers must take the decision on the role this RFMO should have in the future with regards to fulfilling its mandate for the management and to promote the development, conservation, rational management and best utilization of living marine resources, as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture in the area of its competency.

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2. FAO. 2016. Report of the ninth meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management. Kuwait City, State of Kuwait, 26-28 November 2015. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 1146.
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4. FAO. 2015. Report of the Sixth Meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Aquaculture, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 21-23 October 2014. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 1094.
5. FAO. 2015. Report of the Eighth Meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management, Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt, 8-10 December 2014. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 1130.
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17. FAO. 2011. Report of the RECOFI Workshop on Spatial Planning for Marine Capture Fisheries and Aquaculture, Doha, Qatar, 24-28 October 2010. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 961. Rome
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2. RECOFI. Technical Performance Review. FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa. Cairo. 2011. 83p.
3. Taconet et al. 2011. The Fishery Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS) and its application in the RECOFI area (Information document)
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6. Stamatopoulos, C.Improving the utility and diffusion of fisheries statistical data among RECOFI Members. FAO, Cairo (Egypt). Regional Office for the Near East. RNE
7. FAO/Regional Commission for Fisheries. Trends and Pattern of RECOFI Capture Fisheries Production (1986–2006). FAO Regional Office for the Near East. CD-Rom prepared for and presented at the Second Session of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management, 27–30 October 2008, Cairo, Egypt.

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Tenth meeting of the WGFM (Doha, State of Qatar, 6-8 December 2016)

1. RECOFI/WGFM10/2015/1: Annotated agenda
2. RECOFI/WGFM10/2016/2: Country reports: Current work on RECOFI priority species
3. RECOFI/WGFM10/2016/3: Socio-economics of RECOFI fisheries

4. RECOFI/WGFM10/2016/4: Update on the implementation of the RECOFI recommendation on Minimum Data Reporting
5. RECOFI/WGFM10/2016/5: Integration of current RECOFI regional data set into RAIS: Update
6. RECOFI/WGFM10/2016/6: RECOFI Review
7. RECOFI/WGFM10/2016/7: Update of RECOFI fisheries inventories in FIRMS
8. RECOFI/WGFM10/2016/8: RECOFI/ROPME cooperation

Ninth meeting of the WGFM (Kuwait City, State of Kuwait, 26-28 November 2015)

9. RECOFI/WGFM9/2015/2 Outcomes of the eighth Session of RECOFI of relevance to the WGFM
10. RECOFI/WGFM9/2015/3 Current work on RECOFI Priority Species
11. RECOFI/WGFM9/2015/4 Joint appraisal of the Kingfish stock in the RECOFI area: preparatory work before assessment workshop
12. RECOFI/WGFM9/2015/5 Socio-economics of RECOFI fisheries
13. RECOFI/WGFM9/2015/6 Update on the implementation of the RECOFI recommendation on Minimum Data Reporting
14. RECOFI/WGFM9/2015/7 Integration of current RECOFI regional data set into RAIS: action plan and requirements
15. RECOFI/WGFM9/2015/8 Outcomes of the FAO workshop on the port State measures agreement for the North West Indian Ocean

Eighth session of RECOFI (Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 12-14 May 2015)

16. RECOFI/VIII/2015/2: Report on the intersessional activities, including emerging
17. issues of regional relevance
18. RECOFI/VIII/2015/3: Administrative and financial reports
19. RECOFI/VIII/2015/4: Sixth meeting of the Working group on Aquaculture
20. RECOFI/VIII/2015/5: Regional Aquaculture Information System (RAIS): performance assessment and future outlook
21. RECOFI/VIII/2015/6: Seventh and eighth meeting of the Working Group on Fisheries Management
22. RECOFI/VIII/2015/7: Fishery social and economic survey in the RECOFI region
23. RECOFI/VIII/2015/8: Draft recommendation on minimum reporting on aquaculture data and information
24. RECOFI/VIII/2015/9: Implementation of RECOFI Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1 on minimum data reporting in the RECOFI area
25. RECOFI/VIII/2015/10: Current status of RECOFI and future outlook
26. RECOFI/VIII/2015/11: Programme of work and budget for the biennium 2015-2016

Eighth meeting of the RECOFI WGFM (Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt, 8-10 December)

27. RECOFI/WGFM8/2014/2 Kuwait proposal for the management of trawl shrimp fisheries in the RECOFI area
28. RECOFI/WGFM8/2014/3 Regional joint assessment of the Kingfish stock in the RECOFI area
29. RECOFI/WGFM8/2014/4 Results of the socio-economics questionnaire survey
30. RECOFI/WGFM8/2014/5 Update on the implementation of the RECOFI recommendation on Minimum Data Reporting
31. RECOFI/WGFM8/2014/6 State of IPOA-IUU and PSM in the RECOFI area and preparation for the Arabian Sea international workshop
32. RECOFI/WGFM8/2014/7 A role for RECOFI in CITES implementation?
33. RECOFI/WGFM8/2014/8 Workplan of the RECOFI WGFM for the period 2015-2016

Seventh meeting of the RECOFI WGFM (Kuwait City, the State of Kuwait, 5-7 November 2013)

34. RECOFI:WGFM7/2013/2 Main outcomes of the seventh session of RECOFI and implications for the WGFM
35. RECOFI:WGFM7/2013/3 Consolidated Country reports (will be made available at the meeting)
36. RECOFI:WGFM7/2013/4 Fishery socio-economics: design and implementation of a regional work plan

37. RECOFI:WGFM7/2013/5 Update on the implementation of the RECOFI recommendation on Minimum Data Reporting
38. RECOFI:WGFM7/2013/6 Preparatory work to the regional joint Kingfish stock assessment workshop
39. RECOFI:WGFM7/2013/7 Progress towards a regional fisheries management framework

Seventh session of RECOFI (Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, 14-16 May 2013)

40. RECOFI/VII/2013/2: Review of intersessional activities
41. RECOFI/VII/2013/3: Administrative and Financial Reports
42. RECOFI/VII/2013/4: Aquaculture in the RECOFI Area
43. RECOFI/VII/2013/5: Regional Aquaculture Information System (RAIS): performance and future outlook
44. RECOFI/VII/2013/6: Spatial Planning Development Programme for Marine Fisheries and Aquaculture in the RECOFI Area
45. RECOFI/VII/2013/7: Fisheries Management in the RECOFI Area
46. RECOFI/VII/2013/8: Social and Economic Aspects of Fisheries in the RECOFI Region
47. RECOFI/VII/2013/9: Implementation of RECOFI Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1 on minimum data reporting in the RECOFI area
48. RECOFI/VII/2013/10: RECOFI participation in FIRMS
49. RECOFI/VII/2013/11: Bycatch Management and Low Impact Fishing in the RECOFI region
50. RECOFI/VII/2013/12: Outcome of the Near-East and North Africa Regional Consultative Meeting on Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries
51. RECOFI/VII/2013/13: Review of the outcomes of the tripartite initiative on fisheries management cooperation in the Northern Area of RECOFI and progress
52. RECOFI/VII/2013/14: Current status and action needed for the future of RECOFI
53. RECOFI/VII/2013/15: Programme of Work and Budget: 2013–2014

Sixth meeting of the RECOFI WGFM (Doha, State of Qatar, 5–8 November 2012)

54. RECOFI:WGFM6/2012/2: Status of the implementation of fisheries management recommendation on minimum data reporting in recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1
55. RECOFI:WGFM6/2012/3: Report on the RECOFI Workshop on Social and Economic Aspects of Fisheries in the RECOFI Region
56. RECOFI:WGFM6/2012/4: Development of regional fisheries management plans with agreed operational objectives for fisheries management
57. RECOFI:WGFM6/2012/5: Main outcomes of the fifth session of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management
58. RECOFI:WGFM6/2012/6: Status of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in RECOFI fisheries
59. RECOFI:WGFM6/2012/7: Consideration of terms of reference for a RECOFI multidisciplinary expert group
60. RECOFI:WGFM6/2012/8: Status and report on RECOFI/FIRMS collaboration
61. RECOFI:WGFM6/2012/9: Main outcomes of the Near-East and North Africa Regional Consultative Meeting on Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries
62. RECOFI:WGFM6/2012/10: Status of RECOFI's financial situation and its implications for implementing the approved Working Group on Fisheries Management workplan
63. RECOFI:WGFM6/2012/11: Update of the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2013–2014 in relation to the Working Group on Fisheries Management
64. RECOFI:WGFM6/2012/12: Review of the outcomes of the tripartite initiative on fisheries management cooperation in the Northern of RECOFI and progress

Fifth meeting of the RECOFI WGFM (Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, 9–12 October 2011)

65. RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/2 Main outcomes of the sixth session of RECOFI
66. RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/3 Main outcomes of the fourth session of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management
67. RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/4 Informal Consultations among RECOFI Members

68. RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/5 Update of the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2011–2012 in relation to the Working Group on Fisheries Management
69. RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/6 Reconsideration of the proposal by the Sultanate of Oman on IUU fishing in the RECOFI region: establishment of a database of violations
70. RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/7 Report on the progress towards the implementation of the RECOFI Recommendation on Minimum Data Reporting
71. RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/8 Preliminary review of stock and fisheries status indicators to be produced from the RECOFI Fishery Management Database
72. RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/9 Consideration of a RECOFI Scientific Working Group to provide scientific advice to the Commission on aquaculture and fishery management: Role, structure and relationship with Working Group of Fishery Management

RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/10 RECOFI cooperation with FIRMS

Sixth session of RECOFI (Rome, Italy, 10-12 May 2011)

73. RECOFI/VI/2011/2: Review of Intersessional Activities
74. RECOFI/VI/2011/3: Administrative and Financial Reports
75. RECOFI/VI/2011/4: Aquaculture in the RECOFI Area
76. RECOFI/VI/2011/5: Spatial Planning for Marine Capture Fisheries and Aquaculture in the RECOFI Area
77. RECOFI/VI/2011/6: Fisheries Management in the RECOFI Area
78. RECOFI/VI/2011/6: Add.1 Report of the Special Meeting (available at the Session)
79. RECOFI/VI/2011/7: Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the RECOFI region: Establishment of a Database of Violations
80. RECOFI/VI/2011/8: RECOFI consolidation and development
81. RECOFI/VI/2011/9: Progress in the implementation of the initiative on fisheries management cooperation in the Northern Area of RECOFI
82. RECOFI/VI/2011/10: Programme of Work and Budget: 2011–2012

Fourth Meeting of the RECOFI WGFM (Muscat, Oman, 3–5 October 2010)

83. RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/2 Update on the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2011–2013 in relation to the Working Group on Fisheries Management including a review of the regional strategy and priorities for regional fisheries management
84. RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/3 Outcome of the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development (Rome, Italy, 11–12 May 2010) and considerations for the Working Group on Fisheries Management
85. RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/4 Stock status reporting in support of long-term sustainable fisheries management in the RECOFI region, including consideration of a draft recommendation for transmission to the sixth session of
86. RECOFI RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/5 Consideration of draft terms of reference for a feasibility study to review the development of a regional database of violations; establish a list of vessels authorized to fish by Members and promote the establishment of a regional monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) network
87. RECOFI:WGFM4/2010/6 Review of the outcomes of the Tripartite Meeting on Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of RECOFI and FAO/INFOSAMAK Seminar on “Fish Trade and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Near East and North Africa: Implication of Certification and Traceability Schemes for the Region”

Third Meeting of the RECOFI WGFM (Doha, Qatar, 20–22 October 2009)

88. RECOFI:WGFM3/2009/2 Outcomes of the fifth session of the Regional Commission for Fisheries relating to the future work of the Working Group on Fisheries Management
89. RECOFI:WGFM3/2009/3 Consideration of the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2009–2010 in relation to the Working Group on Fisheries Management
90. RECOFI:WGFM3/2009/4 Review of the outcomes of the FAO/RECOFI Regional Workshop to Combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (Muscat, Oman, 30 March–2 April 2009) and implications for future work of the Working Group on Fisheries Management

91. RECOFI:WGFM3/2009/5 Proposal by the Sultanate of Oman in relation to the development of a RECOFI record of IUU fishing violations RECOFI:WGFM3/2009/6 Report on the outcome of the tripartite meeting “Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of the RECOFI” (Tehran, Iran, 29 July 2009)
92. RECOFI:WGFM3/2009/7 Review of findings of the FAO Fisheries Circular relating to fisheries laws of certain Members of the Regional Commission for Fisheries and implications for future work of the Working Group on Fisheries Management
93. RECOFI:WGFM3/2009/8 Review of the outcomes of the RECOFI Workshop on Stock Status Reporting (Tehran, Iran, 26–29 July 2009) and implications for future work of the Working Group on Fisheries Management
94. RECOFI:WGFM3/2009/9 Consideration of a draft fisheries management measure to be adopted by the Regional Commission for Fisheries at its sixth session

Fifth session of RECOFI (Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 12-14 May 2009)

95. RECOFI/V/2009/1: Provisional annotated agenda
96. RECOFI/V/2009/2: Review of intersessional activities
97. RECOFI/V/2009/3: Administrative and financial reports
98. RECOFI/V/2009/4: Aquaculture in the RECOFI area
99. RECOFI/V/2009/5: Fisheries management in the RECOFI area
100. RECOFI/V/2009/6: Review of capture fishery statistics in the RECOFI region
101. RECOFI/V/2009/7: Outline of the Commission structure and *modus operandi*
102. RECOFI/V/2009/8: Terms of reference for RECOFI National Focal Points
103. RECOFI/V/2009/9: Programme of work and budget: 2009–2010

Second meeting of the RECOFI WGFM (Cairo, Egypt, 27–30 October 2008)

104. RECOFI:WGFM2/2008/2: Summary report of improving the utility and diffusion of fisheries statistical data among RECOFI Members
105. RECOFI:WGFM2/2008/3: Making the move: the transition of the Working Group on Statistics to the Working Group on Fisheries Management, including the adoption of terms of reference for the Working Group on Fisheries Management.
106. RECOFI:WGFM2/2008/4: Identification and establishment of a regional strategy and priorities for a future plan of work for the Working Group on Fisheries Management
107. RECOFI:WGFM2/2008/5: Terms of reference for fisheries management focal points to support the activities of the Working Group on Fisheries Management.
108. RECOFI:WGFM2/2008/6: Stock status reporting.

Fourth session of RECOFI (Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 7-9 May 2007)

109. RECOFI/IV/2007/2: Review of intersessional activities: 2005–2007
110. RECOFI/IV/2007/3: Aquaculture in the RECOFI area
111. RECOFI/IV/2007/4: National and regional measures to address IUU fishing
112. RECOFI/IV/2007/5: Guidelines for reporting stock status
113. RECOFI/IV/2007/6: Capture fisheries statistics
114. RECOFI/IV/2007/7: Strategic issues and challenges for RECOFI
115. RECOFI/IV/2007/8: Programme of work and budget: 2007-2008

Third Session of RECOFI (Doha, State of Qatar, 9-11 May 2005)

116. RECOFI/2005/3: Review of Intersessional Activities 2003–2005
117. RECOFI/2005/4: Programme of Work and Budget: 2005–2006