

**TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE WECAFC-CRFM-OSPESCA FISHERIES DATA AND STATISTICS WORKING GROUP (FDS-WG)  
(Period 2018-2019)**

**Preamble:**

CRFM, OSPESCA and WECAFC, in January 2016, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to facilitate, support and strengthen the coordination of actions among the three RFBs to increase the sustainability of fisheries. WECAFC in its 16th session held in Guadeloupe, France, 20-24 June 2016 agreed to establish a working group for fisheries data and statistics matters (FDS-WG), based on the ongoing work of the WECAFC-FIRMS partnership and in support of the development of a regional database in collaboration with the Members and partners in the region.

The aim of the envisioned FDS working group was to strengthen collaboration on fisheries data and statistics matters among the three regional fisheries bodies. The European Commission Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) agreed to support financially the organization of the first meeting of the FDS-WG in the context of the WECAFC-FIRMS project phase II.

**The FDS-WG will report to the WECAFC Commission**

- Formulate recommendations and guidelines for data collection and statistics.
- Develop standardized data collection formats and templates to be collectively considered for coordinated national and regional implementation.
- Conduct work under direction from the WECAFC Commission, and in close interaction with the WECAFC Secretariat emphasizing the prioritization of work activities in alignment and support of WECAFC towards becoming a fully functional and effective RFMO.
- Develop biennial work plans prioritizing activities and identify actions to be taken, and annually provide a report of activities, outputs, and prioritized future work plans with considerations for specified intervals (short term 1-2 years, medium term 3-5 years, as well as general directions for the long term) to the Secretariat.

**The FDS-WG will interact/liaise with:**

- All working groups under the WECAFC and regional fishery bodies (CRFM), OSPESCA, CFMC and their working groups with the aim to strengthen the coordination of actions among the three RFBs to increase the sustainability of fisheries.
- Intergovernmental institutions, including those that constitute the Interim Coordination Mechanism of the Strategic Action Programme for the Sustainable Management of the Shared Living Marine Resources of the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems

**The Membership of the FDS-WG:**

National Officers responsible of Fishery Statistics and Data in WECAFC Member Countries ( e.g., statisticians, data managers, directors of fisheries statistics, or fisheries offices, etc.) with activities related to the following domains: statistical analyses of fisheries data, data collection, designing data collection systems, analysing statistics for statistical bulletins, report preparation, organizing and managing data collection, storage and dissemination according to a variety of needs (e.g., RFMO reporting, departmental, scientific meetings, etc.)

- Regional Officers from the three Regional Fisheries Bodies (CRFM, OSPESCA and WECAFC) involved in the same domains related to fisheries data and statistics as listed above;
- The WECAFC Secretariat.

**Sessions of the FDS-WG:**

- The FDS-WG shall meet ideally annually face-to-face, and at least once every two years.
- The FDS-WG elects a convener (and vice convener) every two years among its members.
- The vice-convener will assist the convener in his/her roles and shall fulfil the duty of the convener if the convener is not able to carry-out the duty of the position;
- Meeting of the FDS-WG will be notified by the FDS-WG convener.
- The WECAFC Secretariat will organize the FDS-WG meetings.
- The WECAFC Secretariat will inform the FDS Members at least 3 months in advance and share the agenda and meeting documents at least 2 months before the meeting.
- The FDS-WG may include experts appointed as resource persons by the WECAFC Secretariat, on the basis of their knowledge in FDS matters and their expertise in FDS regional issues.
- The WECAFC Secretariat will organize with the support of CRFM and OSPESCA resource persons the drafting, translation, review, validation and distribution of the FDS-WG meeting report and its recommendations when relevant.

**Intersessions of the FDS-WG:**

- The WECAFC Secretariat supervises in close consultation with the FDS convener the intersession activities recommended by the FDS-WG, with the support of resource persons.
- The WECAFC Secretariat ensures coordination among regional projects and other thematic working groups related to fisheries data and statistics with the support of the WECAFC-FIRMS task force.

**The FDS-WG will assist with:**

**Data collection at national level** - Provide recommendations and guidelines to address national data collection and sharing challenges in the WECAFC region:

- Identify issues (gaps, deficiencies), challenges and best practices in data collection at national level in the region, and provide recommendations on how to address issues and challenges, and implementing best practices.
- Identify and recommend best practices for the region including how to involve private interests in data collection (of fisheries operational and socio-economic data from industry's stakeholders, intergovernmental groups, etc.).
- Review and make recommendations on standard data collection formats for use at national level and related minimum guidelines for collection.
- Review and make recommendations on coordination opportunities for new data and statistics projects coming into the region.

**Data sharing and harmonization at regional level** - Provide recommendations to address open data sharing challenges at international level for the benefit of fisheries, research and management communities and to improve the ability of WECAFC to manage fisheries resources:

- Identify and recommend a list of data to be shared among WECAFC countries in a regional data base (RDB), defining regional standards, classifications and data policies.
- Define formats, metadata, policies (including confidentiality matters) and best practices to exchange data.
- Provide recommendations on data harmonization to allow data collation at regional level including the mapping between national and regional classifications

**Countries data reporting to international bodies and global monitoring systems** (i.e., CRFM, FAO, ICCAT, OSPESCA, FIRMS) - Provide recommendations to streamline reporting from national to regional and international levels, including through collaborative arrangements promoting harmonization:

- Address issues of multiple reporting standards and formats among the various international organizations, including through review of documents, sharing experiences and lessons learned and formulate recommendations and guidelines in support to enhanced reporting on shared fisheries resources in the WECAFC area.
- Formulate mechanisms to coordinate / streamline exchanges among regional fishery bodies and other intergovernmental institutions operating at regional and global level, including methods, tools and procedures for the harmonization of national/sub-regional/regional data collection, storage formats and reporting approaches
- Participate in the development and implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of the CLME+ Strategic Action Programme and in the regular reporting of the State of the Marine Environment and Associated Economies (SOMEE), making recommendations to ensure that data sets, information and assessment approaches follow statistically sound and regionally harmonized methods.

**IT management and maintenance of the Regional DataBase (RDB)** - Provide recommendations for cost efficient and sustainable management and maintenance of the Regional DataBase

- Provide high level recommendations on technology and policy issues related to development, hosting and maintenance for the RDB.
- Provide RDB specifications, priorities, governance, policy mechanisms.
- Formulate project development phases and participation mechanisms.

#### **Administration of the FDS-WG**

The FDS-WG will be supported through the financial resources of the Commission.

#### **Performance review of the RDB**

- Conduct periodic review against a set of metrics of the data collection reference framework (DCRF) and best practices data collection guidelines.
- Recommend changes and adjustments to the RDB after review.

