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**WESTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC FISHERY COMMISSION (WECAFC)**

**WECAFC/CRFM/OSPESCA joint Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group (FDS WG)**

**12 - 16 October 2020 - Virtual Meeting**

# Report of the Online Technical Preparatory Sessions (17 July – 10 September 2020) in preparation for the second FDS-WG online meeting (12–16 October 2020)

Author: WECAFC/CRFM/OSPESCA Fishery Data and Statistics Working Group (FDS-WG)

*Copies of the presentations and related materials for each of the sessions below can be accessed at this link:* **https://data.d4science.net/1a48**

In preparation for the second online meeting of the Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group, a series of five on-line technical sessions were held between mid-July and late-September. The format of each technical on-line meeting consisted of one morning session beginning and lasting approximately 3.5 hours. These sessions addressed key topics treated by the WG. A calendar and further details identifying the date of each on-line session and the key topics covered are detailed in the Annex 1, while the list of participants can be found in annex 2b. The sessions were held in English. One session was planned with translation in Spanish but the arrangement for the interpretation didn't work eventually.
The overall participation was good with an average of 15 countries/territories and 3 international agencies/projects, as summarized in the table of Annex 2a.

## Online Technical Preparatory Session 1
## Vessel mapping matrix
## 17 July 2020

Mr Yann Laurent (FAO) delivered a presentation on the mapping between the proposed WECAFC regional fleet segments classification and national vessel types. The goal of this mapping is to ensure that all national classifications on vessel typologies can be linked to a regional fleet segment and that the regional classification is detailed sufficiently to account for the diversity of fisheries in the WECAFC region (covering many different ecosystems), especially the small-scale fisheries. The mappings can also be used in national information systems to ease the reporting to WECAFC, FAO, ICCAT etc.
The need for a WECAFC regional vessel type and fleet segment (vessel type per length class) was recalled to the group: harmonization is required to enable comparison of catch/effort/abundance indicators across the region, especially in support to the regional management of regionally shared stocks. Standardization of regional vessel types/fleet segments

is also required to lay the foundation of future regional vessel registries as recommended by the different regional fisheries management plans.
The proposed WECAFC classification is aligned with the International Standard Statistical Classification of Fishery Vessels (ISSCFV) by Vessel Types proposed by the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP). The revised ISSCFV classification adopted by CWP26 is available at this link (https://data.d4science.net/YXGp).
The mapping of national classification to the WECAFC fleet segments one is a table of correspondence between national and regional level. The process to populate the template was recalled.
Finally, the contributions from Countries were reviewed (10 at the prep session date): a misunderstanding was highlighted as many countries reported number of vessels per segment but not the mapping. No conclusion was drawn on the accuracy of the regional classification in accounting for the diversity of the fisheries fleet in the region.
An updated template with more detailed instructions will be circulated to WECAFC Members for contribution before mid-September. The template is enriched with additional information to be collected from countries as an answer to the concern raised regarding the multigear vessels (see below)

**Recommendation:**

Countries which have not yet done so should forward their mapping to the Secretariat (Yann Laurent focal point for the vessel mapping session - yann.laurent@fao.org)

**Q&A Session:**

There were questions and remarks regarding the fact that most vessels are multigear in the region. They would fall under the same regional vessel type and few fleet segments (0-6 / 6-12).
The definition of multigear was recalled: vessels that are not specialized in a particular gear and can operate different geartypes in the day or over the year. Marc Taconet indicated that the driver to assign a national vessel type in one or another regional fleet segment is the boat structural characteristics: is the boat designed for operating this particular one or two geartypes ? If yes, should fall under the fleet segment for this vessel type (trawler, gillnetters etc...). If no, should be considered as multigear.
The definition of multigear could be improved, such as “"vessels which physical structure make them non-specialized in the exclusive operation of one or two fishing geartypes, and make them able to operate different geartypes in the day or over the year.”
But the group agreed that the question of multigears should be reviewed and addressed in the FDS WG second meeting.
The Bahamas representative asked about the positioning of the motherships in the archipelago: mothership are supporting vessels for smaller dinghies targeting conchs and lobsters.
The category “Motherships” should be used[1].
A question on the definition of decked / undecked was asked. This will be discussed during the FDS-WG corresponding sessions with contributions from WECAFC.
Marc Taconet recommended that all vessels operating in the national waters and WECAFC area of competence are characterized and reported in the list provided to the Secretariat. The question of foreign vessels and high seas vessels was asked: if these fleets are known and described, they should be added to the mapping.
Link to the presentation: https://data.d4science.net/dzbU

**(Post Prep session meeting) Focus proposed by the Secretariat for the session:**

- Review submissions by countries and highlight where revisions are needed

[1] During the session, it was indicated that the category “other fishing vessels” should be used. However post-session cross-check with the revised ISSCFV tells that the category “Motherships” should be used

- Evaluate possible need for modification of the regional Fleet segment classification
- Steps towards inclusion of mappings in the Regional Database

**Online Technical Preparatory Session 2**
**Sub area and divisions**
**31 July 2020**

The second technical preparatory meeting, held on 31 July, concerned proposals for defining the sub-areas and divisional sub-area boundaries in the WECAFC area of competence.
A draft FDS-WG paper, outlining options for the proposed boundaries, was circulated prior to the meeting to accompany a presentation delivered by Mr James Geehan (FAO). The draft paper, and materials related to this topic, can be found at https://data.d4science.net/1a48,
The presentation focused primarily on two options detailed in the draft paper:

- Option 1: base the statistical limits on officially recognized treaty lines and 200 nautical mile boundary lines. In places where no treaties exist, the statistical boundaries have been delimited according to simple longitudinal or latitudinal straight lines.
- Option 2: avoid basing statistical divisions on treaty lines, strictly speaking, and instead (i.) propose simple longitudinal/latitudinal statistical limits as close as possible to these treaty lines in addition to (ii.) the 200 nautical mile outer boundaries.

The presentation also provided a background on the two options in the context of the 1978 legacy boundaries, and more recently the activities of the Data Collection Reference Framework; the rationale and guiding principles (e.g., scientific and ecological) in drafting the proposed boundaries; and a number of variants to accommodate specific and localized deviations from the common guiding principles. Mr Geehan also confirmed consultation has also taken place with the FAO Legal Office and FDS-WG Task Force regarding the two proposed options prior to the preparatory session.
**Q&A Session**:
Discussions following the presentation largely concerned clarifications over the delineation of specific boundaries, and in particular the variants presented for the Bahamas, and Trinidad and Tobago. Most participants expressed a preference for boundaries aligned with EEZ areas to facilitate the ease of reporting, while acknowledging the importance of statistical areas taking into account the ecological considerations and the priorities of other, related, workstreams such as the WECAFC Species-WG.
**Recommendation**: A request was also made for additional, more detailed, maps of the boundary options and variants in order to facilitate the feedback from WECAFC members. A deadline for feedback was set for 14 August (subsequently postponed to 18 September), with a summary of the feedback received to be presented during the Online Technical Preparatory Session 4 (see below).

**Online Technical Preparatory Session 3**
**WECAFC List of main and Reference Species and Annotation of Important Subareas**
**17 August 2020**

The third FDS-WG technical session convened 17 August and addressed the WECAFC 'List of Species' in context of the Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF). A background document summarizing the presentation was circulated prior to the meeting. In addition, the 'List of Species' was provided to meeting participants. Copies of the presentation and 'List of Species' can be accessed at the following link: https://data.d4science.net/1a48.

The presentation began with an overview of the WECAFC competence regarding species and stocks and a review of the need for improved information and statistical data in the WECAFC region. Background on the development and structure of the 'List of Species' was delivered recognizing that at a minimum critical requirements and functionalities included:

- Capabilities to define, identify and locate individual species and stocks by subarea,
- Flexibilities to monitor evolving needs at the national and regional, and
- Recognition of the requirement of the political will to develop and support efficient modernized information systems incorporating global agreed standards.

As background on developing the list of species, two points were emphasized: 1) Structure and basis for the 'list' and 2) General principles agreed in developing the list and these are found in https://data.d4science.net/1a48.

Ms Nancie Cummings (NOAA) finalized the presentation focusing on three remaining steps:

1. ***The status of the 'WECAFC List of Species':***

- Initial review **completed during FDS-WG 1 (May 2018) and FDS-WG1 intersessional period May 2018-now) (CRFM and OSPESCA Secretariats),**
- An i**nterim DCRF (iDCRF)** was endorsed during WECAFC-17,
- An **interim List of Main Species was endorsed during WECAFC-17,**
- A pending action on the "List of Main Species" is the annotation **important subareas/divisions by FDS-WG, SAG, WECAFC members.**

2. ***Approach to Continued evaluation of the 'Main list of species":***

- **Countries can jointly agree to add species** to the List of main species (e.g., elevating from the list of 'other reference species')
- **Countries may identify species not relevant** to their sub-regional/national situation, these species would then not be considered part of the List of main species list in these sub-areas,
- The **criteria or bases for adding species and/or removing species** in the main list by subarea should be documented.

It was emphasized in the remaining review of the 'species list' that:

- **Specific tasks of the DCRF could be applied to the 'list of main species' by subareas**
- **Specifically, that excluding some specific tasks of the DCRF for species excluded in the same subarea was a provision and,**
- **Consensus on WECAFC subareas remained under discussion.**

3. ***Requests of participants:***

- The FDS-WG convener requested further feedback from the FD-WG members on the List of main species and other Reference species, **including the annotation of important subareas by species** for data collection and reporting prior to the convening of the FDS-WG2 (October 2020)
- Additionally, it was again shared that information needed for the 'Annotation of **subareas' could be found in the document "WECAFC boundaries_310720" reviewed during session 2**
    - (document provided in FDS-WG online preparatory session 2 and found at https://data.d4science.net/1a48),
- **The List of main and other Reference species was provided as document iDCRF_Appendix2.3_15August'**

**Questions/Answers**
The session 3 presentation was received generally well by participants with only a few questions that mainly related to clarifications as to the annotation of WECAFC subareas. Technical session (2) focused on WECAFC subarea proposals (31 July). It was discussed that there was remaining work and considerations underway to further refine the subareas proposal and that work would take place during technical session 4 (scheduled as a wrap up session on 3 September). In the meantime, however Ms Cummings asked the participants to continue to review the 'Main list of species' as found in **iDCRF_Appendix2.3_15August' and provide written feedback on a) elevation of species to the main list, and b) annotation of important subareas by species by 11 September (2020).**
During the ensuing time since online technical session 2 (17 August 2020) additional feedback was received by several countries as follows:

- **CRFM**
    - The categories given seem to include all species.
    - Also FAO has included the CRFM only groups, I assume under the umbrella of cooperation. What about OSPESCA only working groups - they have some, I think apart from the one listed under basis 3?
    - The DMTWG, and RWG IUU do not cover any species, and so looks odd in the list.
    - FAD WG could include a broad set of species, although certain species could be associated with FAD usage.
    - The basis 4 (I.e., species for which subregional management bodies (e.g., CRFM, OSPESCA) have working groups, is weak, but arguably could easily be rationalized on the various WG TORs. That said, there are omissions in the list of working groups for basis 3, as not all WECAFC groups are listed. If WECAFC does not become a RFMO, what happens to basis 3 -we do not apply it for the moment? The CRFM PWG should be included for basis 3 instead arguably. I would have thought that WECAFC would repeat the relevant groups, where they satisfied more than one basis.

Response
The WECAFC secretariat was consulted and an updated list of WGs obtained and used to update the "Main List of Species'. DMTWG, and RWG IUU WGs have been removed from the list and the new CRFM PWG added. Convener adds that the list of OSPESCA WGs needs updating.

- **St. Lucia**

St. Lucia inquired as to 'What assessment will be carried out for these species which is different from what ICCAT is currently undertaking. Reason for submitting this type of data to WECAFC'.

Response
Reporting to WECAFC would not be done independently from reporting to ICCAT to ensure double reporting is not an issue or to add unnecessary burden to countries. In the anticipated process, in the case of tunas countries would collect the relevant data and archive in their country data base and the data could simultaneously upload to ICCAT and/ or WECAFC regional data base as needed depending on specific country needs.

- **Trinidad**

Indicated as follows "it is noted that we are required to identify the sub-areas for the species but that this will depend on the particular sub-area delineation. As you know Trinidad and Tobago can be in any one or any combination of sub-areas 31.3.1, 31.5 and 31.6, and we are still in internal discussions to determine our position on this. Even if internally we are able to put forward our country position by 11 Sep 2020, the final decisions on the boundaries of these 3 sub-areas would be dependent on the views of the other WECAF members and in particular Venezuela which would also be directly impacted by the boundaries of these sub-areas. Are we therefore expected to use the sub-areas which we propose TT to be in when identifying the sub-areas in which the species are found"?

Response
We understand that internal discussions are continuing regarding the sub-areas proposal and until formal feedback on the preferred boundaries is received that the use of draft FAO sub-area codes (mentioning option 1 or option 2 reference) should be used to identify relevant subareas by species for data collection

- **Bahamas**
  - Data should be supplied for conch and lobster within all WECAFC subareas including: 31.1, 31.3, 31.8, 31.7, 31.6, 31.5, 31.2 and 31.4.

  - Recall that range expansions and/ or reductions are expected as a result of climate change. All commercial catches of the main species and other species should be reported in all sub-areas, where practical, in an effort to assist with tracking changes in ranges or the proportions of stocks that fall within different sub-regions.

  - The Bahamas will not be reporting flying fish commercial catches as there are no catches in Bahamian waters; however, the Bahamas would consider supporting regional studies on stock structure and climate change related changes in ranges.

  - I did not see the WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM/CITES/CFMC WORKING GROUP ON SHARK CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT listed among the regional working groups in the document **iDCRF_Appendix 2.3_15August.** There was a proposed regional plan of action and declarations that resulted from the work of this group as seen in the appendices of the attached regional report. I do not know the current status of the working group, the plan or the declarations, but despite The Bahamas not allowing the commercial fishing of sharks,

consideration should be given to asking countries to provide commercial statistics for the sharks and rays listed in the attached document, if they are not listed already. The list can be found on the page numbered 98.

- Bahamas further noted during the 'subarea' sessions that: It is good that ecoregions were considered, however the limitations of this approach should be borne in mind. Genetic studies over the last 10 years a lot has been revealed about sub-populations of two species that we will be focusing on (i.e., queen conch and Caribbean spiny lobster). I recall that one of the reasons for the current effort to attribute catches to subareas is for stock assessments. However, for stock assessment reasons, data groupings by sub-area and within sub-areas should vary by species"

- **Suriname**

Submission of five species is requested:

We propose the addition of these species

| Local_name_Surir | ASFIS_3 | ASFIS_English_name | Scientific_nan |
|---|---|---|---|
| bang bang; grey snapper | YNA | Acoupa weakfish | *Cynoscion acoupa* |
| kandratiki; seatrout; trout | YNV | Green weakfish | *Cynoscion virescens* |
| dagoetifi; bangamary | WKK | King weakfish | *Macrodon ancylodon* |
| lane snapper | SNL | Lane snapper | *Lutjanus synagris* |
| red snapper | SNC | Southern red snapper | *Lutjanus purpureus* |

**(Post Prep session meeting) Focus proposed by the Secretariat for the session:**
**It was recognized that additional review of the List of species was needed in order to refine / annotate the species list in consideration of subareas and application/exclusion of specific tasks of the DCRF. Two initial needs were identified:**

- Review submissions by countries and WGs for additional species, and sub-areas for species, and proceed with countries endorsements for the proposals. The use of the FIRMS map viewer will help to obtain additional input on annotation of area by species.
- A strategy for the consultation of relevant Working groups, for the list of species and their sub-areas and identification of specific DCRF tasks.

**Online Technical Preparatory Session 4 (with three main topics)**

**4.1. Fishery Resource Monitoring System (FIRMS), Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF) Matrix, and WECAFC Subarea Proposal Wrap-up**
**3 September 2020**

**WECAFC-FIRMS stocks and fisheries inventory**
Mr Aureliano Gentile (FAO) delivered a presentation on status of the WECAFC stocks and fisheries inventory. The talk recalled about the FIRMS partnership and the FIRMS products & services in support of fishery management. An assessment of WECAFC-FIRMS reporting status was also provided. As of today, there are 440 inventoried marine resources with 78 reports published as marine resource fact sheets, 29 of them were updated in the last year mainly for the Gulf of Mexico, USA waters; Spiny Lobster in Brazil, Colombia, Gulf of Mexico, Florida, Cuba, and most recently Seabob in French Guiana. The sources of information which were utilized are public reports of: WECAFC SAG, OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CFMC Working Group, SouthEast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR), and CRFM Continental Shelf Fisheries Working Group, as well as other stock assessment reports. Regarding the fishery module, there are 581 inventoried fisheries with 31 reports published as fishery fact sheets. The sources of information which were utilized are public reports and personal communications of: Department of Fisheries - National Ministries, Fishery Research Institutes (e.g. IFREMER), and other fishery reports (e.g. FAO, fisheries country profiles, CRFM Fishery Reports).
In summary, ten countries produced 31 published fisheries fact sheets within the period 2016 – 2020, namely: Bahamas (3), Belize (2), Dominica (1), French Guiana (3), Jamaica (3), St Kitts & Nevis (5 with a second update for 2020), St Lucia (7), St Vincent and the Grenadines (3), Trinidad & Tobago (2), and Turk and Caicos (2). The stocks and fisheries inventory contributes to the WECAFC Regional Database towards a dashboard of stock status and fishery indicators for the region.
**Recommendation**: it was recalled and reaffirmed the recommendation made by the WECAFC/CRFM/IFREMER Working Group on Shrimp and Groundfish of the Northern Brazil-Guianas Shelf (Paramaribo, Suriname, 26-27 November 2019):
Countries provide, in a timely manner, available fishery data and information on the priority species - as delineated in the WECAFC ad interim DCRF - and for the related stocks and fisheries inventories, to populate and maintain the WECAFC regional database which supports needs for stock assessment, fisheries management plans and a decision support system.
Among issues/challenges, it was mentioned the need of increasing the data coverage encouraging the WECAFC countries for their contribution in a timely manner.

**Q&A session**
Q: How are the information in FIRMS and the statistical database connected?
A: FIRMS inventories are complementing the DCRF catch and effort statistics with some quantitative and qualitative descriptors and indicators. This information is collated in support of management decision processes. The value of FIRMS within the WECAFC context, is to aid in the development of a regional database in support of stock assessment and fisheries management plans. FIRMS allow the acceleration of data sharing on stocks and fisheries, collating statistics and information, which can then facilitate the production of reports and summaries interfaces including the WECAFC-FIRMS map viewer.

Q: What is required in terms of feedback from member countries?

A: Data call – a mechanism is required to facilitate timely data contributions by individual countries.
It was stressed that timely data collection is of utmost importance, the reporting systems do not serve their proper purpose if only old data is disseminated. FIRMS products are most useful when updated in a timely fashion, particularly in support of management. It is a matter of figuring out how these data calls can work according to the country's/region's individual needs.

Two main needs were highlighted: 1) need for a structured/regular call to countries who have already provided inventory updates, and 2) further capacity building to those countries not currently contributing data.

Link to Presentation: https://data.d4science.net/Sbon
FIRMS Inventory Template for Marine Resources and Fisheries: https://data.d4science.net/4D1B

**(Post Prep session meeting) Focus proposed by the Secretariat for the session:**

- Summarize inputs by countries, highlight latest submissions, introduce the FIRMS online survey, and introduce the WECAFC map viewer
- Discuss opportunity of adding fishery inventories as reference list in DCRF annex, with reference to possible addition of FIRMS fishery Ids (optional) in certain Tasks of the DCRF
- Discuss a recommendation for initiating a Data Call Process

### 4.2. Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF) Matrix

The Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF) Matrix, developed in 2019 by FAO[2], was presented to WECAFC members during the FDS-WG-1 meeting and which included a call for countries to test the matrix and its suitability for fisheries in the WEAFC region.

During the technical preparatory session 4, an update on the SSF-Matrix was presented by Mr James Geehan (FAO) – including a summary of the feedback received to date from WECAFC members (i.e., Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Dominican Republic, and St. Lucia).

The comments made by the FDS-WG-1 have been presented to the internal FAO group for discussion and, where possible, incorporated into the next iteration of the SSF-matrix. For example:

i. recording of multi-gear vessels: in the future the matrix will allow users to 'check' one or more boxes when there is different gear involved, or when any other category covers multiple options;
ii. other issues, such as the unclear concept of cooperatives in the vessel ownership category, a remain under consideration.

The presenter repeated the call for further case-studies in the WECAFC region in order to fully test the matrix and provide additional feedback to FAO. From a national perspective, the importance in trying to develop a tool to characterize small-scale and large-scale fisheries was also reiterated, including:

- informing policy and governance (legislation, access and tenure);
- economic (taxation, subsidies, special preference);

[2] CWP26 (Rome, May 2019): http://www.fao.org/fi/static-media/MeetingDocuments/cwp/cwp_26/11e.pdf; Illuminating Hidden Harvest (Rome, 2018): http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ssf/documents/ProgramBrief_2018-09_IlluminatingHiddenHarvests.pdf

- management (regulation, gears, zoning) considerations.

**Recommendation/actions agreed**: A follow-up call was issued for WECAFC members to complete the SSF-matrix prior to the FDS-WG meeting. A summary of the responses will then be collated, and feedback compiled for the approval of the FDS-WG before being submitted to FAO for consideration.

Link to the presentation: https://data.d4science.net/VJSZ

**Post Prep session meeting) Focus proposed by the Secretariat for the session:**

- Summarize list of countries which submitted highlighting latest submissions
- Present a synthesis of the level of adequation of the SSF matrix to the WECAFC region and what would need to be changed in the SSF matrix for it to be of practical application for the region
- Discuss a recommendation for submitting to FAO for consideration

### 4.3. Update on the proposals for WECAFC sub-areas and divisional boundaries

Mr James Geehan (FAO) provided an update on proposals for the WECAFC sub-area and divisional sub-area boundaries, following the call for feedback to WECAFC members during the 2nd technical preparatory session.

All materials related to this session, including copies of the original statements from each of the countries or organizations responding to the call for feedback, can be accessed at: https://data.d4science.net/Sbon. In addition, as a post session action, a WECAFC-FIRMS data viewer is also available to enable users to access the proposed boundaries and customise the display, at:
http://wecafc-firms.d4science.org/data-viewer/index.html (see Options 1 and 2 under the Legend tab close to the top).

The list of responses received are listed below:

1. Bahamas (*Dept. of Marine Resources, Bahamas*)
2. Bermuda (*International Fisheries, DEFRA, UK*).
3. Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (*CRFM*).
4. Colombia (*Dirección de Asuntos Económicos, Sociales y Ambientales*).
5. France (*Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation*).
6. Organización del Sector Pesquero y Acuícola del Istmo Centroamericano (*OSPESCA*).
7. St. Lucia (*Ministry of Agriculture, Food Production, Fisheries, Co-operatives and Rural Development*).
8. Trinidad and Tobago (*Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries*).

Overview of feedback on the proposed boundaries

Although there was no overall consensus for either option 1 (*e.g., Bahamas, Jamaica, CRFM*) or option 2 (*e.g., Colombia, Trinidad and Tobago*), most WECAFC members expressed a preference to follow the following driving principles for establishing WECAFC sub-areas:

*(a.) utilize EEZ boundary lines (where they exist), in combination with (b.) simple longitudinal and latitudinal straight lines in the case of statistical areas where there is no clear demarcation of the maritime boundaries to avoid issues of undefined/disputed maritime spaces. Locally in specific cases, other considerations including countries' data collection capacity or important ecosystem boundaries, could constitute decisive criteria for opting on the final boundaries.*

As Option 1 is more closely aligned with EEZs, data reporting would more naturally reflect catches in their EEZ. Most fleets are also likely to have the capacity to estimate with precision catches caught inside/outside their EEZ, as compared to specific longitude/latitude locations in relation to the more generalized boundaries proposed by Option 2.

A number of specific issues noted in the feedback received are also are detailed below:

1. Variant: Trinidad and Tobago: Further discussions took place regarding the boundaries for Trinidad and Tobago, including additional variants developed in response to feedback during the second technical preparatory meeting. Notably, whether the Trinidad and Tobago EEZ should be sub-divided along LME or ecoregion boundary lines, grouping Tobago with the Lesser Antilles islands, and Trinidad with the northern South American continental shelf and Gulf of Paria.

- *Update*: Feedback pending. FAO is continuing to support Trinidad and Tobago while internal discussions are on-going and until formal feedback on the preferred boundaries is received.

2. Variant: Northern Bahamas: A suggested variant was presented during the second technical preparatory meeting in order to better accommodate the LME boundary in this area (i.e., by encompassing Grand Bahama and Great Abaco islands in area 31.1).

- *Recommendation (by Bahamas)*: Bahamas confirmed their preference for Option 1, mostly for practical reasons. In the absence of a high level of accuracy concerning catch locations, it would be difficult to attribute catches that occur near Option 2 boundaries, or also according to the proposed boundary of the suggested boundary.

3. Honduras EEZ (comment submitted by OSPESCA): Options 1 and 2 current divide the EEZ of Honduras into two areas two (31.8 and 31.7.4), which may complicate the reporting of national statistics that are presented globally. Feedback received from OSPECA recommended that either:

(i.) sub-areas 31.7.4 and 31.8 are merged so that all Central American countries remain in a single sub-area; or

(ii.) Honduras is located entirely within sub-area 31.7.4, and Belize and Guatemala to sub-area 31.8.

- *Update*: Further consultation with OSPESCA is currently being sought regarding Honduras, and to ensure that feedback from OSCPECA members is sufficiently taken into consideration prior to the FDS-WG.

4. French Guiana EEZ (comment submitted by France): While Suriname and French Guiana are clearly included in the area 31, a small part of the French Guiana EEZ also lies within Area 41. In terms of data reporting it would be impossible to separate the fisheries data of French Guiana in two parts (areas 31 and 41).

- Recommendation (by France): For reporting purposes, the statistics for French Guiana should be assigned wholly within Area 31.

5. Southern limit of FAO Major Fishing Area 31 (comment submitted by France): Related to (4) above, the southern limit of FAO Major Fishing Area 31 is located north of the mouth of the Amazon and does not really make sense from the perspective of fish stocks. For example, the species and stocks of Para/Amapa sates in Brazil, French Guiana, Suriname, Guyana and of the eastern part of Venezuela (between the Venezuelan-Guyana border and the Orinoco river in Venezuela) all share common stocks. For this reason, the WECAFC WG on Shrimp and Groundfish include all of these countries, along with

Trinidad. Moving the southern limit of Area 31 south by 10° (i.e., from 5°N to 5°S latitude) would make more sense from fish-stock perspective.

6. Northern limit of FAO Major Fishing Area 31 (comment submitted by Bermudas): could it be considered that the northern limit of FAO Major area 31 be moved northward to avoid splitting the northern part of Bermuda's EEEZ between areas 31 and 21.

7. Lesser Antilles (comment submitted by France): Regarding sub-area 31.3 proposed in which the French Antilles waters would be included, and is a very large area encompassing different ecosystems, **the proposed division 31.3.3** corresponding more or less to the ecoregion Eastern Caribbean/Lesser Antilles, **would be the preferred level for the fisheries statistics**. This would allow to appreciate and map better effort distribution which is important in the long term from a fisheries management perspective. Also, the fisheries statistics would be more meaningful at that level (e.g., definition of marine ecoregions).

**(Post Prep session meeting) Focus proposed by the Secretariat for the session:**

- Review the driving principles for establishing WECAFC sub-areas and divisional sub-areas and seek consensus.
- Present (using the WECAFC maps viewer) the leading proposal according to the above principle. Zoom in the regions subject to further discussions and seek a decision for boundaries in these regions.
- Discuss a recommendation for SAG and the Commission, or any other plan to move forward

**Online Technical Preparatory Session 5**
**Data Collection Framework (DCRF) and standards**
**10 September 2020**

Ms Nancie Cummings (Convener of the FDS-WG) delivered a presentation on WECAFC Interim Data Collection Reference Framework and its current version.5. This included an introduction on the history and the need for the DCRF, an overview of DCRF aim and purpose, the description of general principles and structure (six main Tasks) agreed in the development of the DCRF, the approach followed for the evaluation of the Interim DCRF, and the Consultation process. She concluded with a pathway of what the next steps will be towards a fully operational DCRF: 1) promote increased interaction FDS-WG with thematic WGs; 2) promote provision of national data and statistics to the Regional Data Base according to DCRF framework; 3) further tailor the DCRF and associated data sharing polices in consideration of the use of relevant data sets.
The pending action on the "iDCRF" is the final review and collation of inputs on the iDCRF. The convener of the FDS-WG requested written feedback on the 'interim DCRF and all Appendices

**Q&A session**

The nature of comments and inputs of FDS-WG Members which require modifications to the DCRF are herewith summarized: :
1) Geartype to be added to Tasks related to fishing operations; it will also be important in order to address the multigear nature of most fisheries
2) Fishing days as unit of fishing effort should be refined
3) Fishing mode to be revised to accommodate Hand collection from shore;
4) Better indications on whether Biological measurements and counts of discards are at sea or at landing places
5) There are challenges to know which vessels are active or not, consider an approach to distinguish "Active vessel" in a registry, from "Aactually active vessel". Consider optional inclusion of Geartype and target species, and/or Fishery
6) Socio-economic sector is also important and socio-economic aspects are to be refined, including on ways to handle rate of employment at higher time resolution, and age classes to be considered in light of Youth and Decent work;
During the session, polls were conducted which indicate:

- Only one third of the participants have carefully reviewed iDCRF since FDS-WG1
- Participants generally believe (83%) that the iDCRF is an advanced document which however still requires adjustments
- A majority (60%) can provide data for the regional overview of catches and capacity (Task 1)
- Quite good capacities (however 86% with some restrictions) to provide data on Catch and Effort
- A good majority (70%) can provide vessel registry and fleet engagement by fishery (Task 3)
- Relatively limited capacities to provide biological data, with 82% experiencing restrictions with only the priority species being monitored (Task 4).
- A majority (57%) declared being able to provide data on threatened and vulnerable species however with restrictions
- A big majority (82%) would be able but confronted with restrictions in the provision of socio-economic data

**Recommendations**: it was agreed that the FDS-WG will focus on addressing areas of weaknesses and revisions proposed to the DCRF. The iDCRF document will be made available as a shared document prior to FDS-WG2 for members to further review and provide comments.

**Post session action**: in providing the document for shared review, further proposals were made by FAO Secretariat for improving DCRF v.5 for consideration by the Members:
7) Task I is erroneously defined – also if compared with the GFCM Task I * reference, and propose to remove the effort and fishing mode from this Task
8) For Task II, Catch by species by country by sub-area by year is missed, an equivalent to the Regional catch statistics of CECAF, RECOFI, GFCM, etc. i.e., a breakdown by sub-area of the Global Catch statistics for all species. Currently Task II Catch and Effort requires data by fleet segment/geartype/fishing mode etc., which can be quite demanding and can work for the more important species, but probably not for all. Hence the proposal to add this Task.
9) The effort for this new version should focus on operationalizing the DCRF, this requires addressing following aspects: articulate the Tasks on well-defined objectives, with scope clearly aligned with capabilities of the Member countries and fit for purpose, and informative and acceptable/workable Data and sharing rules. In this respect, it is suggested for each task to:
- Add an "Objective" header,
- Add a "Scope" header
- Added "rules" at the end of "Data access and sharing rules"
See in the comments and edited text for certain Tasks, some examples of what is expected in these fields. The terms used there should be aligned with those of the "Data access and sharing policies" document
10) Additional considerations for the FDS-WG2:
- Addition of more generic fields across the board:
- Further, along with the CWP reference harmonization work, integrate fields for Standard Units
- Add a Source field (e.g. how was the catch data recorded and as an example we have "logbook" for Fleet 1 and "observer" for Fleet 2. Beach recording, or Processing plant are other options.)
- Add a Notes field
- There is the need to work on the Metadata part as well
- Considerations including the Fishery concept (with reference to FIRMS), adding the field 'FIRMS Fishery' identifier in certain Tasks, and consider adding fisheries inventories as a Task?
- Recognize the need for improvement of the Appendices:
- Need to improve the appendices by grouping in clusters the concepts that belong to the same kind. E.g. Fishing Gear and Fishing Mode are part of the same cluster (hence two sections of the same appendix) as contributing to the Fishing effort concept.
- Sub-areas remain for FDS_WG2 a separate document, and will be re-integrated in DCRF as an outcome of FDS_WG2
-Adding an appendix which basically introduces FIRMS fisheries and present a table of FIRMS fisheries and related IDs
- Consideration of whether we integrate in DCRF the "Data access and sharing policies" document, or keep separate

Link to presentation: https://data.d4science.net/576S

**Post Prep session meeting) Focus proposed by the Secretariat for the session:**

- A consolidated DCRF document will be made available prior to the session
- Review main type of modifications proposed in response, and seek consensus

- Seek additional inputs (prior to post Prep session follow-up) on annotation of DCRF task by species and summarize
- Discuss a recommendation for SAG and the Commission, or any other plan to move forward

**Annex 1: FDS-WG Online technical preparatory sessions calendar**

| Session | Date | Topic | Presenter |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 17 July | Vessel mapping matrix | Yann Laurent |
| 2 | 31 July | WECAFC Sub-areas and division | James Geehan |
| 3 | 17 August | List of main species and WECAFC | Nancie Cummings |
| 4 | 3 September | SSF Matrix,WECAFC-FIRMS Inventories, Subareas Proposals Wrap up | James Geehan Aureliano Gentile Bracken van Niekerk |
| 5 | 10 September | Data Collection Reference Framework | Nancie Cummings Marc Taconet |

**Annex 2a: list of participating countries/territories and organizations**

| **Country** | Session 1 | Session 2* | Session 3 | Session 4 | Session 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Antigua & Barbuda** | | | | | |
| **Bahamas** | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| **Barbados** | | | | | 1 |
| **Bermuda** | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| **Belize** | | | 1 | | |
| **Brazil** | | | | | |
| **Colombia** | 1 | | | | |
| **Costa Rica** | | | | | |
| **Cuba** | | | | | |
| **Dominica** | 1 | | | | 1 |
| **Dominican Republic** | 1 | | 1 | | |
| **European Community** | | | | | |
| **France / French Guinea** | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| **Grenada** | 1 | | | | |
| **Guatemala** | | | | | |
| **Guyana** | | | | 1 | 1 |
| **Haiti** | 1 | | 1 | | |
| **Honduras** | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| **Jamaica** | 1 | | | 1 | |
| **Japan** | | | | | |
| **Korea, Rep. of** | | | | | |
| **Mexico** | | | | | |
| **Netherlands** | | | | | |
| **Netherlands Antilles / Curacao** | 1 | | | | 1 |
| **Nicaragua** | 1 | | | | |
| **Panama** | | | | | |
| **St. Kitts & Nevis** | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| **St. Lucia** | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| **St. Vincent & the Grenadines** | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Spain** | | | | | |
| **Suriname** | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| **Trinidad & Tobago** | | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| **United Kingdom / Montserrat** | | | 1 | | 1 |
| **United Kingdom / Turks and Caicos Islands** | 1 | | | | |
| **United States of America** | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| **US / Virgin Islands** | 1 | | | | |
| **Venezuela, Bolivian Rep. of** | | | | | |
| **Participating countries** | 19 | * | 13 | 12 | 15 |
| **CRFM** | 1 | | | 1 | 1 |
| **FAO** | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| **UNDP/CLME** | 1 | | 1 | 1 | |
| **Participating institutions** | 3 | * | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| **Participating countries and international institutions** | **22** | * | **15** | **15** | **17** |

* Information for Session 2 is not available. Members are requested to edit Annex 2 if they attended session 2

**Annex 2b: list of participants**

Working group members are kindly requested to check the record of their participation compiled in this table, and in particular for session 2.

| **Country** | **Name** | **Institution** | **Session** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | **1** | **2*** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| Antigua & Barbuda | | | | | | | |
| Bahamas | Mr Lester Gittens | Department of Marine Resource | x | | x | x | x |
| Barbados | Mr Christopher Parker | Ministry of Agriculture | | | | | x |
| Bermuda | Ms Joanna Pitt | Department of Environment and Natural Resources | x | | x | x | x |
| Belize | Mr Kenneth Esquivel | Belize Fisheries Department | | | x | | |
| Brazil | | | | | | | |
| Colombia | Mr Julio Cesar Sierra Salamanca | Autoridad Nacional de Acuicultura y Pesca | x | | | | |
| Costa Rica | | | | | | | |
| Cuba | | | | | | | |
| Dominica | Mr Derrick Theophille | Fisheries Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries | x | | | | |
| Dominica | Mr Kurt Hilton | Fisheries Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries | x | | | | x |
| Dominican Republic | Mr Jose Infante | Fisheries Department, Dominican Council of Fishery and Aquaculture | x | | x | | |
| Dominican Republic | Ms Jeannette Mateo Perez | Recursos Pesqueros Consejo Dominicano de Pesca y Acuicultura (CODOPESCA) | x | | | | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| European Community | | | | | | | |
| France | Mr Sebastien Demaneche | Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer (IFREMER) | x | | x | x | x |
| Grenada | Ms Christine Gloria Mathurine | Fisheries Department | x | | | | |
| Guatemala | | | | | | | |
| Guyana | Mr Kadeem Jacobs | Fisheries Department, Ministry of Agriculture | | | | x | x |
| Haiti | Ms Emeline Durand Romelus | | x | | x | | |
| Honduras | Mr Jose Julian Suazo Cervantes | Despacho ministerial, Secretaría de Agricultura y Ganadería | x | | x | x | x |
| Jamaica | Ms Anginette Murray | Fisheries Division, Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries | x | | | x | |
| Japan | | | | | | | |
| Korea, Rep. of | | | | | | | |
| Mexico | | | | | | | |
| Netherlands | Mr Yoeri de Vries | Fisheries and Economic Affairs for the Caribbean Netherlands | x | | | | x |
| Nicaragua | Ms Nora Palacio Alegria | Instituto Nicaraguense de la Pesca y Acuicultura (INPESCA) | x | | | | |
| Panama | | | | | | | |
| St. Kitts and Nevis | Ms Nikkita Browne | Department of Marine Resources | x | | x | x | x |
| St. Lucia | Mrs Patricia Hubert-Medar | Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Natural Resources and Co-operatives | x | | x | x | |
| St. Lucia | Ms Makeba Felix | Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Natural Resources and Co-operatives | | | x | | x |
| St. Vincent and the Grenadines | Ms Cheryl Jardine-Jackson | Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Rural Transformation, Industry and Labour | x | | x | x | x |
| Spain | | | | | | | |
| Suriname | Mr Mario Yspol | Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries | x | | x | x | x |
| Trinidad and Tobago | Ms Lara Ferreira | Fisheries Division Trinidad | x | | x | x | x |
| Trinidad and Tobago | Ms Louanna Martin | Fisheries Division Trinidad | | | x | x | x |
| Trinidad and Tobago | Ms Elizabeth Mohammed | Fisheries Division Trinidad | | | x | x | x |
| Trinidad and Tobago | Ms Nerissa Lucky | Fisheries Division Trinidad | | | x | x | x |
| Turks and Caicos Islands | Ms Kathy Lockhart | Department of Environment and Coastal Resources | x | | | | |
| United Kingdom | Mr Alwyn Ponteen | Ministry of Agriculture, Trade, | | | x | | x |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Lands, Housing and the Environment | | | | | |
| United States of America | Ms Nancie J. Cummings | National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) | x | x | x | x | x |
| Venezuela | | | | | | | |
| Virgin Islands | Ms Abbi E. Christopher | Ministry of Natural Resources and Labour | x | | | | |
| OSPESCA | Ms Nely Serrano | Organización del Sector Pesquero y Acuícola del Istmo Centroamericano (OSPESCA) | | | | | |
| UNDP/GEF CLME+ Project | Mr John English Knowles | UNDP/GEF CLME+ Project | x | | x | x | |
| FAO - HQs | Mr Marc Taconet | Fisheries statistics and information Branch | x | x | x | x | x |
| FAO - HQs | Mr James Geehan | Fisheries statistics and information Branch | x | | | x | x |
| FAO - HQs | Mr Aureliano Gentile | Fisheries statistics and information Branch | x | x | x | x | x |
| FAO - HQs | Mr Yann Laurent | Fisheries statistics and information Branch | x | x | x | x | |
| FAO - HQs | Ms Bracken van Niekerk | Fisheries statistics and information Branch | x | | x | x | x |
| FAO - WECAFC | Ms Yvette Diei Ouadi | Subregional Office for the Caribbean | | | x | | |
| CRFM | Ms June Masters | Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) | x | | | x | |
| CRFM | Ms Maren Headley | Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) | | | | x | x |

* Information for Session 2 is not available.