



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food
and
Agriculture
Organization
of
the
United
Nations

Organisation
des
Nations
Unies
pour
l'alimentation
et
l'agriculture

Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная
организация
Объединенных
Наций

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

WESTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC FISHERY COMMISSION (WECAFC)

FIFTEENTH SESSION

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 26-28 March 2014

FIRMS-WECAFC partnership

1. The WECAFC-FIRMS Workshop on marine resources and fisheries inventories was held in Corpus Christi, United States of America, on 1 and 2 November 2013. The Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI) hosted the session at the venue of its sixty-sixth annual conference. This workshop aimed at promoting the application of the FIRMS framework within the Caribbean and Central American region.
2. One of Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF)'s key principles is that decision-making in fisheries management should be done on the basis of the best available knowledge. During the workshop, FIRMS has been identified as a tool that can support the implementation of EAF and enhance management, by providing accurate data and information on the state of stocks and the status of fisheries and their management, through an inventory approach.
3. The need for a better formalization of FIRMS/WECAFC collaboration was evidenced and this has been addressed by preparing an ad hoc "FIRMS-WECAFC Annex 2 to the FIRMS Partnership Arrangement". The Annex 2 was discussed and technically reviewed during the WECAFC sixth session of the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) for endorsement by the fifteenth session of WECAFC. The Annex 2 to the FIRMS Partnership Arrangement is available as Appendix D of the report of the sixth session of the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) (Reference Document WECAFC/XV/2014/Ref.3).
4. Through the Annex 2, the proposed FIRMS partnership framework builds on WECAFC coordinating role in the region and the existing close collaboration with CRFM and SICA/OSPESCA. This regionally recognized and well-established synergy between the three organizations is an added value for a successful implementation of FIRMS in the region. As a follow-up to the SAG, CRFM and OSPESCA were contacted by the WECAFC and FIRMS Secretariat with the intent to formalize their participation in this FIRMS collaborative framework. The identification of persons able to act as subregional focal points for respectively CRFM and OSPESCA will be the first step of the process.
5. During the workshop Ms. Nancie Cummings (NOAA) was identified as a potential candidate to become the WECAFC regional focal point for FIRMS, acting as Liaison

Officer between FIRMS Secretariat and WECAFC actors in the validation phase of the information collected, and coordinating the input from the sub regional focal points. Action was taken to formalize the agreement with NOAA.

6. The FIRMS framework implemented in WECAFC in close collaboration with CRFM and OSPESCA, is expected to be a key instrument in the operationalization and strengthening of CLME+ Strategic Action Programme (SAP) and its associated Decision Support System (DSS). FIRMS fact sheets, primary products of the above described process, deliver key information on fisheries to policy makers, stakeholders, etc. FIRMS information standards can evolve to take into account specific requirements of the CLME+, e.g. to strengthen the basis for management and socio-economic indicators of major interest for the DSS. Notably, this collection of fact sheets provides the basis for dynamic subregional or regional syntheses such as the Marine Resources State and trends summaries.
7. The cost estimate of FIRMS implementation in WECAFC with 34 members involved over a period of four years amounts to USD150 000, including capacity building through workshops and remote assistance from FIRMS Secretariat for the initial development of the inventories, translation of the site into Spanish, assistance for the first round of updates, attendance to the FIRMS Steering Committee meeting, and implementation of specific application requirements (e.g. for CLME+ DSS).
8. The complete FIRMS-WECAFC Workshop report is made available as Reference document WECAFC/XV/2014/Ref.5 and is being published as FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 1060.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR THE COMMISSION

9. The Commission is invited to endorse the “FIRMS-WECAFC Annex 2 to the FIRMS Partnership Arrangement”.
10. The Commission is further invited to identify sources of funding and other support for the implementation of FIRMS in the region as per Annex 2.