



منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food  
and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
of  
the  
United  
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Organisation  
des  
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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

### Draft Report of the WECAFC Performance Review

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document gives the results of the performance review of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC). An analysis of WECAFC activities is provided, a SWOT analysis is shown, and the results of the online survey are presented. Conclusions and recommendations are made in key areas for consideration by Members at the 15<sup>th</sup> session.

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## List of abbreviations and acronyms

ABNJ	Areas beyond National Jurisdiction
ACP	Africa, Caribbean, Pacific
Art.	Article
CANARI	Caribbean Natural Resources Institute
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CARIFICO	Caribbean Fisheries Co-Management (JICA project)
CBMC	Consortium on Billfish Management and Conservation in the Western Central Atlantic
CCRF	Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
CERMES	Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies
CFMC	Caribbean Fishery Management Council
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CNFO	Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations
CLME	Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (Project)
CLME+	Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystem
COFI	Committee of Fisheries (FAO)
CRFM	Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism
EAA	Ecosystem approach to aquaculture
EAF	Ecosystem approach to fisheries
EBM	Ecosystem Based Management
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
FAD	Fish Aggregating Device
FFO	fisherfolk organizations
FIRMS	Fishery Resources Monitoring System
GCFI	Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HQ	Headquarters (FAO)
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
IFREMER	Institut Français de Recherche pour l'Exploitation de la Mer
INFOPESCA	Centro para los servicios de información y asesoramiento sobre la comercialización de los productos pesqueros de América Latina
IGFA	International Game Fish Association
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (fishing)
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MAGDELESA	Moored fish Aggregating Device in the Lesser Antilles
MCS	Monitoring, Control and Surveillance
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (USA)
NPOA	National Plan of Action
OLDEPESCA	Latin American Organization for Fisheries Development
OSPESCA	Central America Fisheries and Aquaculture Organization
PEW	The Pew Charitable Trusts
PIF	Project Identification Form (GEF)
RAA	Aquaculture Network of the Americas
RFB	Regional Fishery Body
RFMO	Regional Fishery Management Organization
SAG	Scientific Advisory Group (WECAFC)
SAP	Strategic Action Programme (CLME+)
SSF	Small Scale Fisheries

SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TBF	The Billfish Foundation
TCP	Technical Cooperation Programme (FAO)
USA	United States of America
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNGA	UN General Assembly
UWI	University of the West Indies
WECAFC	Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission
WG	Working Group

## Introduction

The role, obligations and stature of Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs), including Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), in fisheries governance are growing steadily. This is reflected, inter alia, in: a. The international fisheries instruments; b. the expanding number of new RFBs established or under negotiations in recent years; c. the strengthened cooperative action among RFBs with common interests; and d. the innovative policy, legal and institutional reforms that many RFBs are taking, mainly in an effort to rebuild depleted stocks or prevent further decline. The contribution of RFBs to fisheries governance is further shown by their wide ranging activities to implement the international fisheries instruments and their increasingly harmonized and coordinated approaches to current and emerging issues.

Renewed attention to the importance of the effective performance of these bodies is reflected in numerous international fora including the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and the biennial meetings of RFBs as well as the reviews by individual RFBs of their performance and mandates and consequent reforms. In this context, the fourteenth session of WECAFC requested a performance review for the last five years. In addition, the thirtieth session of COFI instructed FAO to carry out a review of the activities of the FAO bodies. The present review is a result of these two requests. The performance review was carried out from October 2013 to January 2014. Ms. Helga Josupeit, Senior Fishery Officer, FIPI, FAO, was the main author of the review, with inputs from Ms. Judith Swan, consultant, FIPI.

The review was based on desk study of the documents prepared by WECAFC during the past five years, and the results of an online survey. The WECAFC Secretariat at the FAO Subregional Office for the Caribbean (SLC) was instrumental in dissemination of the online survey and in contacting stakeholders to request their feedback. Mr. Raymon Van Anrooy, Secretary, WECAFC and sub-regional fisheries officer, FAO, Barbados, provided additional background information to the FAO review team.

The first draft of this report was reviewed by the WECAFC Reorientation and Strategic Planning Workshop, which was held in Guadeloupe on 29-30 January 2013. The comments and suggestions from the workshop have been incorporated in this draft.

## WECAFC Activities

As WECAFC does not have a management mandate, the work of the Commission is focused on producing and transferring knowledge in order to improve policy and management through research, collection of information, capacity building and provision of technical and scientific fisheries advice.

Within WECAFC, the channels of policy advice and capacity-building have been: the Sessions of the Commission, which are typically used to present and discuss issues, approaches and instruments; the activities of the WGs; the workshops and expert consultations; and the projects implemented, directly or indirectly, under the auspices of WECAFC. Most of the activities carried

out in recent years were done under partnership programmes with other RFBs (e.g. Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), Central America Fisheries and Aquaculture Organization (OSPESCA), Caribbean Fishery Management Council (CFMC) and/or donors (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), Institut Français de Recherche pour l'Exploitation de la Mer (IFREMER), FAO Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), European Union (EU), World Bank).

Under current funding constraints, the Commission has focused much of its efforts on the operations of its WGs, on a small number of projects funded under the FAO trust fund and the TCP, and on coordination and collaboration activities with other actors involved in sustainable development and marine and coastal resource management in the WECAFC area. Most WGs are active and encounter with participation of most of the countries interested in these subjects. They provide follow-up between sessions, which is valuable since regular meetings increase coherence and continuity, as well as awareness.

WGs are based on species or themes such as spiny lobster, recreational fisheries, queen conch development of sustainable moored FAD Fishing in the Lesser Antilles (recently, a project – Moored fish Aggregating Device in the Lesser Antilles (MAGDELESA) - on the sustainable development of anchored FAD fishing was finalised), flying fish in the Eastern Caribbean (a recent follow-up from WECAFC and from the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem Project (CLME) case study on flying fish, which is being implemented under the technical leadership of the CRFM Secretariat), management of deep-sea fisheries, and spawning aggregations.

Important achievements of the Commission and its partners in 2012 were in the fields of developing a methodology for economic impact assessments of recreational fisheries in the Caribbean; supporting the development of a strategy, action plan and programme proposal on disaster risk management, climate change adaptation in fisheries and aquaculture in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) region; preparation of management advice to Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) on Queen Conch; and promoting the EAF and the international guidelines for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries.

WECAFC has recently been assigned an important regional level fisheries advisory and management role in the Strategic Action Programme for the sustainable management of the shared living resources of the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf LME (CLME+). The implementation of this programme that will likely start in 2014, will be supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded CLME+ project.

## **WECAFC Decision-making Process and Practices**

The WECAFC Secretariat is subject to the direction and supervision of Members that come together for the purpose of addressing their common interests and desire to obtain sustainable benefits or address other objectives from their fisheries. In addition, being a FAO fisheries body, the organization is also under the scrutiny of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and under the supervision of FAO senior technical staff and management of the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department. Being only an advisory committee, the decision making power is limited to non-binding (voluntary) measures and recommendations. This would change if Members decide to convert WECAFC into a regional fisheries management organization.

The WECAFC decision making process is extremely transparent. All workplans are presented and discussed in the SAG for adoption by the WECAFC Commission. The financial aspects are under FAO rules and monitoring. Information on budget allocations, extra-budgetary resources and Members' needs were made available to the Members in background documents to the Session.

All working documents for the Sessions were provided in the 3 official languages of the Commission (English, French and Spanish) and were made available well in advance of the Sessions, to enable the Members to participate effectively and be well-prepared for the Sessions.

At the moment, the WECAFC Secretariat is composed of the FAO sub regional fisheries officer based in Barbados with a half time secretary. Given the size and diversity of the region and the range of fisheries issues the Secretariat is woefully underresourced. In the survey responses it emerges very strongly that the present incumbent, Mr. Van Anrooy, is considered as very responsive to requests from Members, always ready to assist where possible /practicable. It is indicated that he has a genuine interest in working with countries and forging synergies among partners in the interest of the implementation of the core objectives of WECAFC and FAO. In various comments it was underlined that with his presence in the region, the work of WECAFC has become new impetus and given the limited size of the Secretariat, its work performance is generally judged as excellent.

The performance review team noted that the FAO regular programme allocation to WECAFC has been dwindling in recent years, which has been caused by a general decline in availability of funds in FAO, but also by a remarkable disinterest by the organization in its Article VI regional fishery bodies in recent years. However, there are indications of positive changes, such as the Commissioned review of all FAO fishery bodies by next COFI. In the new strategic framework of FAO, RFBs have received high prominence under Strategic Objective 2 “Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner”, under OO3 “Stakeholders develop, adopt, and implement international governance mechanisms and related instruments for sustainable agricultural sector production systems”. This should result in increased budgetary allocation to all FAO bodies, including WECAFC.

The role of WECAFC as a forum for discussion on fisheries issues is mentioned frequently in the survey responses as a very positive aspect and one of the reasons for the existence of WECAFC. However, a number of Members and key stakeholders would like to see WECAFC converted into an RFMO.

The online survey asked the Members and other stakeholders about the future of WECAFC. The main question in this respect was whether WECAFC should remain an advisory body (continue to be Art. VI body) or should become an RFMO as a FAO Article XIV body, with a mandate to make legally binding decisions. On this subject there is no convergence among the stakeholders of WECAFC. Nearly 40% of the respondents in the survey Members are in favour of the latter option, WECAFC becoming an RFMO, while the majority of the respondents (60%) are satisfied with the present situation and do not see a need to change the status of WECAFC. Not one of the respondents indicated that WECAFC could be abolished.

With regard to financial implications for Members, especially in relation to transforming WECAFC into a fisheries management organization, they Members are expected to be large. The majority of the respondents, especially those representing government, clearly indicated that there are no financial provisions for this in the present economic situation.

The SAG can only provide policy guidance. It is too small to be a proper scientific review body for such a large region. Most scores with regard to the exploitation level of the resources are influenced by data limitations. This observation underlines the fact that statistics are very poor in the region, especially for those fisheries resources considered as not economically important. It becomes evident that the SAG is potentially a powerful mechanism, which is underutilized at present.

There are not yet sufficient elements to evaluate the WGs, given their recent reactivation; however, it becomes apparent that they need more technical assistance to determine the status of the resources and their fisheries to support management decision making and prepare informed recommendations.

There is a tendency to extrapolate the few existing studies to all the countries of the region. It should be noted that some working groups have not yet been properly re-activated, especially for what concerns the participation of government officials in the work of the Groups. For instance the WG on Spiny Lobster should meet more often and should also attempt regional stock assessments where appropriate. On the other hand, the activities of the WG on Queen Conch are

highly appreciated as it is commonly accepted as the basis for CITES discussions, and is often cited also outside the region as an example that should be followed for other species under CITES listing, such as sharks.

## SWOT Analysis

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated, competent and highly motivated Staff at the Secretariat</li> <li>• Independent non-political entity therefore fairness and transparency</li> <li>• Reactivation of the Commission and leadership</li> <li>• Current visionary leadership</li> <li>• Full regional representation and wide geographic coverage</li> <li>• Good coordination in the region with other regional fisheries bodies and the ability to bring together and work with other regional fisheries management bodies and their Members.</li> <li>• Excellent regional coordination</li> <li>• Providing a regional forum for discussion</li> <li>• Strong link with technical expertise in FAO HQ</li> <li>• Good collaboration with the fisheries authorities, scientists and the private sector</li> <li>• Good programmes and projects, good interaction with different stakeholders for agreements and strategic alliances</li> <li>• Avenue for Members to voice regional concerns over scientific matters impacting each Members' community.</li> <li>• Crossing language barriers and economic groups at regional level (e.g. CARICOM, SICA)</li> <li>• Impartiality and forthrightness when dealing with delicate issues subjects such as Queen Conch and CITES</li> <li>• Excellent in Data Management and providing information</li> <li>• Providing assistance allowing Members to attend regional conferences</li> <li>• Supporting the Implementation of the CCRF in the region</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understaffing of the Secretariat</li> <li>• Secretariat staff expertise not in some fields that are now in the work plan</li> <li>• The budget of the WECAFC is small and the contributions from FAO regular programme have been decreasing</li> <li>• Inability to access international funding to undertake key activities and limited capacity to attract financial resources to get its work doneNo decision making capacity</li> <li>• WECAFC is not a fisheries management body; the management mandate is implicit but not practical</li> <li>• No fiscal or enforcement authority</li> <li>• Not well supported by the Members</li> <li>• weak collation and sharing of information</li> <li>• Lack of money for the implementation of its programme of work.</li> <li>• Institutions responsible for fisheries in the WECAFC Members are generally weak and have limited human, technical and financial resources</li> <li>• Fisheries administrations in Members are not high priority within the governments, thus also WECAFC and its mandate (fisheries) are low on the agenda of the governments</li> <li>• Little follow up on decisions of WGs, instable financing for WG activity implementation.</li> <li>• Fish resources available are limited, close to overexploitation in some cases; very limited scope for increasing exploitation levels</li> <li>• Weak statistics in many Members do not give correct value to the importance of fisheries in the countries</li> <li>• scientific advice is impacted by the lack of reliable information, which might be sometimes quite misleading</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncoordinated research efforts and limited sharing of information on responsible fisheries and its management among WECAFC Members, due to absence of regional plans</li> <li>• Interdisciplinary approach not yet implemented in projects</li> <li>• Limited facilitation and participation in international meetings</li> <li>• Programming of the meetings too much ad hoc and largely based on availability of extra-budgetary resources</li> </ul>
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is donor interest to assist the WECAFC region on fisheries issues, especially in the EU, United States of America (USA), Norway and Japan</li> <li>• Increase political commitment and political will for the development and management of fisheries through increasing awareness on the social and economic value, impact and benefits of the sector</li> <li>• WGs are an asset of which better use could be made</li> <li>• The close collaboration with FAO HQ and its technical expertise is an asset that could be expanded further</li> <li>• The ABNJ project is an opportunity for the region, especially for the WECAFC WG on deep sea fisheries management in the high seas</li> <li>• The Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy creates new opportunities for WECAFC</li> <li>• CLME+ SAP has assigned certain roles and activities to WECAFC for regional level implementation</li> <li>• Video/teleconferencing (including skype) can reduce communication and travel costs and staff time of the Secretariat</li> <li>• The WECAFC website can play a more prominent role in communicating the achievements and news about WECAFC</li> <li>• The new strategic framework of FAO support multi-disciplinary approaches and linkages with hunger eradication ,food security and poverty alleviation programmes and initiatives</li> </ul>
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The current economic crisis will result in (temporary) reduced donor funding and limited FAO regular programme funding in the coming years</li> <li>• Interest in RFBs is very low in FAO HQ at the moment, while the importance of RFBs is recognized by FAO Members in many global fora</li> <li>• The quality of the work and uptake of advice and recommendations is constrained by the very small and overburdened Secretariat</li> <li>• The large number and wide variety of fisheries related requests (e.g. also in aquaculture, trade, fisherfolk strengthening, fish quality and safety, credit and insurance, economics, etc) causes that the few staff resources available in the Secretariat are spread out too thin</li> <li>• Inadequate representation at the national level of WECAFC and its activities</li> <li>• At the moment the performance of WECAFC depend on the dedication of one person, in case he is leaving the present excellent work can be jeopardized.</li> </ul>

## Results of the Performance Review online survey, including the Relevance of WECAFC Activities to the Needs of Its Members

The WECAFC performance review survey was distributed to Members and other stakeholders<sup>1</sup> in the region from 24 October 2013 to 8 December 2013, in English, French and Spanish. The invitation to participate was sent to over 300 stakeholders, and 71 filled in the online survey, which is quite a significant share. Out of the 71 questionnaires, some 21 were filled in by official representatives of WECAFC Members, i.e. chief fisheries officers, fisheries directors and national

<sup>1</sup> Responses came from Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, France (including French Guyana, Guadeloupe and Martinique), Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands (Aruba, Bonaire), Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom (Anguilla, Montserrat, Turks and Caicos, Bermuda), United States of America (including Puerto Rico), and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

focal points. In the following, the replies will be divided among Members, representatives and other stakeholders.

## Priorities of Members for Cooperation through WECAFC

Table 1: Priorities of Members for cooperation through WECAFC (5 = most important, 1 = least important, "no opinion" not accounted for)		
	Members	Others
a) Promotion of fisheries management approaches (ecosystem, precautionary)	4.5	4.2
d) Management of small-scale, artisanal and subsistence fisheries	4.3	3.6
w) Implementation of international fisheries instruments, including the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, related instruments and the FAO Port State Measures Agreement	4.3	4.2
dd) Seek funding for long term effective functioning of the Commission	4.2	4.4
i) Development of regional guidelines and best-practice approaches for fisheries and aquaculture	4.1	3.9
x) Implementation of International Guidelines, including Deep-Sea Fisheries, Bycatch and Discards, Flag State Performance, Small Scale Fisheries, Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests	4.1	4.1
o) Collect, exchange, analyse data and marine fishery information (statistical, biological, environmental, socio-economic)	4.1	4.4
c) Management of specific species (Queen Conch, flying fish, lobster, grouper, shrimp, billfish)	4.0	4.3
y) Development of National Plans Of Action (NPOAs) or Regional Plans of Action (RPOAs) (e.g. fishing capacity, sharks, seabirds, IUU fishing)	4.0	3.8
ff) Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner (FAO Strategic Objective 2)	3.9	3.7
j) Cooperation in monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS)	3.9	4.2
cc) Provide a forum for exchange of scientific fisheries information	3.9	4.4
z) Support fisheries interests in marine zoning processes and development of marine protected areas	3.9	3.4
m) Strengthen human capacity (e.g. government staff, fishers and management of fishers' organizations etc)	3.9	3.9
s) Fish quality and safety- implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary standards	3.9	3.4
bb) Improve fisheries governance in its widest sense	3.9	4.0
ee) Contribute to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition (FAO Strategic Objective 1)	3.9	4.0
f) Management of high seas fisheries in the WECAFC Area	3.8	3.6
n) Strengthen institutional capacity (e.g. fisheries divisions and ministries)	3.8	3.8
u) Climate change adaptation capacity in the fisheries sector	3.8	3.6
b) Management of transboundary and straddling fish stocks	3.8	4.3
h) Aquaculture development and management	3.8	3.3
p) Coordinate fisheries research	3.8	4.0
ii) Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises (FAO Strategic Objective 5)	3.7	3.7
hh) Enable more inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems at local, national and international levels (FAO Strategic Objective 4)	3.7	3.6
gg) Reduce rural poverty (FAO Strategic Objective 3)	3.7	3.8
e) Management of recreational fisheries	3.6	3.0
v) Support access to financial services (insurance, credit, micro-finance, investment) for fisheries and aquaculture	3.6	3.0



k) Legal and policy advice	3.6	3.7
t) Disaster risk management capacity in the fisheries sector	3.6	3.5
g) Management of deep sea fisheries in the WECAFC Area	3.5	3.2
q) Modernization of fishing craft, gear, techniques and post harvest technologies	3.5	3.3
l) Harmonization of legislation	3.5	3.6
r) Support fish and fishery products marketing and trade	3.4	3.4
aa) Assistance in preventing and resolving fisheries disputes between Members and within Members	3.2	3.6

Overall, all the major activities carried out by WECAFC in the recent past or envisaged for the next five years have received good scores with regard to their relevance for Members and for other stakeholders. The three activities that obtained the highest score were Promotion of fisheries management, management of small-scale, artisanal and subsistence fisheries and the Implementation of international fisheries instruments, including the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, related instruments and the FAO Port State Measures Agreement. The ones that scored lowest, but still higher than 3 on average, were harmonization of legislation, support fish and fishery products marketing and trade, and assistance in preventing and resolving fisheries disputes between Members and within Members.

As WECAFC is a FAO body, it was also interesting to see the importance given by Members to the new Strategic Objectives of FAO. Overall the priorities given by Members were lukewarm, with an average going from 3.6 to 3.9.

The online survey also requested the evaluation of the performance of WECAFC against the activities that are considered within the mandate of WECAFC. A four point scale ranging from Excellent, good, fair to poor, and a category for no opinion, was used.

## Evaluation of WECAFC mandate and activities

Table 2: Evaluation of WECAFC mandate and activities (Excellent = 2, good = 1, fair = 0, poor = -1, "no opinion" not accounted for)		
	Members	Others
w) Promote implementation of international fisheries instruments, including the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries	1.2	1.3
x) Promote implementation of the FAO Port State Measures Agreement	1.1	0.5
h) Promote management of small-scale, artisanal and subsistence fisheries	1.1	0.9
g) Promote management of specific species (Queen Conch, flying fish, lobster, grouper, shrimp, billfish)	1.0	1.5
a) Promotion of fisheries management approaches (ecosystem, precautionary)	1.0	0.7
c) Help fisheries managers to develop fisheries management systems that take due account of environmental, social, economic and cultural concerns	0.9	0.6
n) Facilitate building human capacity (e.g. government, fishers' organizations etc)	0.8	0.4
e) Keep under review the state of the fishery resources and related industries	0.8	0.3
b) Contribute to improved governance through institutional arrangements that encourage cooperation among Members	0.8	0.9
bb) Provide a forum for exchange of scientific information and findings on fisheries for the production of management advice	0.8	1.0
f) Promote management of transboundary and straddling fish stocks	0.7	0.9
i) Promote management of recreational fisheries	0.7	0.4
s) Promote and encourage the use of fishing craft, gear, techniques, post harvest technologies in accordance with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries	0.7	0.3
cc) Provide a forum for discussion among fisheries managers and generate regional advice and recommendations	0.7	1.2
m) Promote and facilitate the harmonization of legislation and compatibility of conservation and management measures	0.7	0.6
o) Facilitate strengthening of institutional capacity (e.g. fisheries divisions and ministries)	0.7	0.3
v) Promote disaster risk management capacity in the fisheries sector	0.7	0.4
ff) Improve fisheries governance in the widest sense	0.6	0.6
d) Help fisheries managers to implement fisheries management systems	0.6	0.2
l) Provide legal and policy advice	0.6	0.6
p) Collect, exchange, analyse data and marine fisheries information (statistical, biological, environmental, socio-economic)	0.6	0.6
dd) Provide financial support to enable participation of Members and regional experts in international conferences and meetings	0.6	0.5
ee) Seek funding for long term effective functioning of the Commission	0.6	0.4
j) Promote aquaculture development and management	0.6	0.2
y) Development of National Plans Of Action (NPOAs) or Regional Plans of Action (RPOAs) (e.g. fishing capacity, sharks, seabirds, IUU fishing)	0.5	0.6

k) Promote cooperation and provide advice for monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS)	0.5	0.4
z) Implementation of International Guidelines, including Deep-Sea Fisheries, Bycatch and Discards, Flag State Performance, Small Scale Fisheries, Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests	0.5	0.5
u) Fish quality and safety: promote the implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary standards	0.5	0.1
r) Coordinate fisheries research	0.4	0.3
aa) Assistance in preventing and resolving fisheries disputes	0.4	-0.3
t) Promote fish and fishery products marketing and trade	0.3	-0.1

The evaluation of WECAFC activities versus its mandate is, not surprisingly, in line with the priorities of Members. The role of WECAFC in the promotion of the CCRF, including the Port State Measures Agreement and the management of main commercial species of the area are identified as those activities which are carried out in a good or excellent way.

On the other hand, all activities relating to post harvest issues and the assistance in preventing and resolving fisheries disputes is rated poor or unsatisfactory. For these latter activities several correspondents indicated to have no opinion. Overall the evaluation by representatives of Members of the performance of WECAFC is more positive than the evaluation by other stakeholders. There are very few, but indicative exceptions to this, such as for the promotion of management of the main commercial species, the role of WECAFC as a forum for information exchange and for discussion of fisheries managers.

	Members	Others
w) Promote implementation of international fisheries instruments, including the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries	85%	68%
x) Promote implementation of the FAO Port State Measures Agreement	79%	33%
g) Promote management of specific species (Queen Conch, flying fish, lobster, grouper, shrimp, billfish)	76%	71%
h) Promote management of small-scale, artisanal and subsistence fisheries	75%	43%
a) Promotion of fisheries management approaches (ecosystem, precautionary)	70%	62%
b) Contribute to improved governance through institutional arrangements that encourage cooperation among Members	70%	54%
c) Help fisheries managers to develop fisheries management systems that take due account of environmental, social, economic and cultural concerns	68%	46%
m) Promote and facilitate the harmonization of legislation and compatibility of conservation and management measures	63%	48%
e) Keep under review the state of the fishery resources and related industries	61%	30%
ee) Seek funding for long term effective functioning of the Commission	59%	28%
f) Promote management of transboundary and straddling fish stocks	58%	60%
i) Promote management of recreational fisheries	58%	30%
n) Facilitate building human capacity (e.g. government, fishers' organizations etc)	58%	38%
d) Help fisheries managers to implement fisheries management systems	56%	32%
o) Facilitate strengthening of institutional capacity (e.g. fisheries divisions and ministries)	56%	35%
s) Promote and encourage the use of fishing craft, gear, techniques, post	56%	28%

harvest technologies in accordance with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries		
bb) Provide a forum for exchange of scientific information and findings on fisheries for the production of management advice	55%	58%
cc) Provide a forum for discussion among fisheries managers and generate regional advice and recommendations	55%	58%
j) Promote aquaculture development and management	53%	25%
l) Provide legal and policy advice	50%	44%
r) Coordinate fisheries research	50%	33%
v) Promote disaster risk management capacity in the fisheries sector	50%	32%
z) Implementation of International Guidelines, including Deep-Sea Fisheries, Bycatch and Discards, Flag State Performance, Small Scale Fisheries, Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests	50%	40%
dd) Provide financial support to enable participation of Members and regional experts in international conferences and meetings	50%	46%
ff) Improve fisheries governance in the widest sense	48%	40%
y) Development of National Plans Of Action (NPOAs) or Regional Plans of Action (RPOAs) (e.g. fishing capacity, sharks, seabirds, IUU fishing)	47%	34%
k) Promote cooperation and provide advice for monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS)	44%	38%
aa) Assistance in preventing and resolving fisheries disputes	44%	14%
u) Fish quality and safety: promote the implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary standards	41%	21%
p) Collect, exchange, analyse data and marine fisheries information (statistical, biological, environmental, socio-economic)	40%	43%
t) Promote fish and fishery products marketing and trade	33%	24%

A large number of respondents evaluated the performance of WECAFC as good or excellent with regard to some key the main activities. More than 80% of the respondents indicated that the performance of WECAFC with regard to implementation of the CCRF and the FAO 2009 Port State Measures Agreement is very good. More than 70% of the respondents declared that the work in the field of the EAF and SSF is either good or excellent. It can be noted that overall the Members have a more positive opinion of the performance than other stakeholders.

Evaluations were lower for all post-harvest activities. This does not come as a surprise, as WECAFC is primarily a fisheries management - focused organization and not much work has been carried out with regard to utilization and marketing of fishery products. It comes more as a surprise that, in the fields of collection, exchange, and analysis of data and marine fisheries information (statistical, biological, environmental, socio-economic), only 40% of the Members and 43% of the other stakeholders judge the performance of WECAFC as good or excellent.

## Performance of WECAF Secretariat

	Members	Others
f) Information sharing and communication with Members	1.2	0.8
g) Organization of regional workshops and WG meetings	1.2	1.0
c) Transparency and openness	1.1	1.0
h) Project development, support and implementation	1.1	0.6
d) Facilitating cooperation between Members and with other organizations	1.0	0.9
e) Seeking funding support for implementation of the WECAFC Work Programme	0.9	0.6
a) General assistance provided	0.8	0.9
b) Technical capacity/assistance provided	0.7	0.8

The evaluation of the performance of the Secretariat was overall very positive. The comments captured were highlighting the important boost given to the WECAFC achievements since the arrival of the new secretary. In the evaluation of the performance and the relevance of activities, the organization of regional workshops and WGs meetings was given highest priority as evident from Table 4. This activity ranks highest for both the Members and also for the other stakeholders. For Members, the information sharing and communication also receives outstanding comments, while for other stakeholders the facilitating of cooperation between Members and other organizations receives a high standing. All over the score given to the various activities is quite balanced. Technical assistance scores slightly lower than the other activities of the Secretariat. In this context, the limited manpower, as mentioned in various comments plays a major role. With more technical staff in WECAFC the technical and general assistance to Members could be improved significantly.

## Performance of WECAFC SAG

	Members	Others
Composition in terms of Members of the SAG	1.1	0.6
Review and contribution to the report on the situation, trends and prospects of fisheries in the WECAFC Region	1.1	0.5
General advice generated for the Commission	1.0	0.7
Review and contribution to the report on the status of stocks in the Commission area	1.0	0.4
Quality of scientific advice provided	0.9	0.7
Provision of adequate scientific advice on the WGs	0.9	0.7

The responses to the question on the performance of the WECAFC SAG show an interesting difference between the respondents. While the Members evaluate very positively all the functions of the SAG, the other stakeholders have a very low opinion of the work of the SAG. It appears that WECAFC should do more public relations work in the region with regard to the functions and performance of the SAG.

## Performance of WECAFC WGS

	Members	Others
c) IFREMER/WECAFC WG on the Development of Sustainable Moored Fish Aggregating Device Fishing in the Lesser Antilles	1.3	0.6
b) CRFM/WECAFC WG on Flying Fish in the Eastern Caribbean	1.3	0.8
d) CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM WG on Queen Conch	1.3	0.8
a) OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CFMC WG on Caribbean Spiny Lobster	1.1	0.8
f) WECAFC WG on Brazil-Guianas Shrimp and Groundfish	1.0	0.5
e) CFMC/WECAFC Spawning Aggregations Working Group	0.8	0.3
h) WECAFC WG on the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries	0.7	0.0
g) WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM/CFMC WG on Recreational Fisheries	0.7	0.4
i) Committee for the Development and Management of Fisheries in the Lesser Antilles	0.5	-0.1

The evaluation by the Members of the performance of the WECAFC WGs is markedly better than that of the other stakeholders. Overall, despite the different levels of scoring, it becomes apparent that four WGs (namely those on FADs, flying fish, Queen Conch and spiny lobster) are considered to be performing very well, while the other five (namely those on Brazil-Guianas Shrimp and Groundfish, on Spawning Aggregation, on Management of Deep Sea Fisheries, on Recreational Fisheries and on the Development and Management of Fisheries in the Lesser Antilles are) considered to be performing not very well.

It is expected that many of the low ratings given especially by other stakeholders than Members were caused by non-acquaintance with the work of the WGs. A number of the groups are fairly new and recently established and as such the regional level visibility of some of the work of the groups has been low. Moreover, the survey asked about participation in the activities of the WGs and it was clear that only few of the respondents had participated in those WGs that received the lowest ranking in the table above.

It should be noted that the Committee for the Development and Management of Fisheries in the Lesser Antilles has not met formally in the last decade and the recently established WECAFC WG on the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries has not organized a meeting as yet.

## Usefulness of WECAFC Advice and Recommendations

	Members	Others
d) CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM WG on Queen Conch (or its predecessor)	47%	32%
a) OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CFMC WG on Caribbean Spiny Lobster (or its predecessor)	39%	30%
b) CRFM/WECAFC WG on Flying Fish in the Eastern Caribbean (or its predecessor)	35%	29%
c) IFREMER/WECAFC WG on the Development of Sustainable Moored Fish Aggregating Device Fishing in the Lesser Antilles	28%	7%
e) CFMC/WECAFC Spawning Aggregations WG (or its predecessor)	27%	17%
i) Committee for the Development and Management of Fisheries in the Lesser Antilles	12%	7%

g) WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM/CFMC WG on Recreational Fisheries	11%	10%
f) WECAFC WG on Brazil-Guianas Shrimp and Groundfish	6%	26%
h) WECAFC WG on the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries	6%	4%

When Members were asked whether they have implemented the advice from the WGs, the evaluations of the Queen Conch and the spiny lobster WGs were quite positive, and more than one third of the Members indicated that they were “always” and “frequently” the advice of the WGs. The extremely weak performance evaluation of the Deep Sea Fisheries WG did not come as a surprise, as the life span of this WG is very short, and no meetings were held so far. In 2014, funds are made available by external donors, and the performance of this WG will improve.

## WECAFC Sessions and Members Follow-up

Table 8: WECAFC Sessions and Members follow-up (share of responses “good” and excellent” - “no opinion” not accounted for)		
	Members	Others
b) General advice and recommendations generated by the 14th Session (2012)	70%	54%
j) Communication and information exchange from the Members with the WECAFC Secretariat	65%	50%
a) General advice and recommendations generated by the 13th Session (2008)	63%	38%
e) Communication of WECAFC decisions to stakeholders at national level/maintaining a national network related to the work of the Commission	63%	32%
d) Provision of requested fishery information and statistics to FAO/WECAFC by the Member countries	60%	13%
h) Assignment of WECAFC national focal points and Members/experts to participate in WGs	60%	40%
i) Implementation at national level of WECAFC resolutions	46%	27%
f) Implementation at national level (in your country) of advice generated by WECAFC	44%	26%
c) Implementation of the advice and recommendations from the last 2 Sessions by the Member countries in general	33%	18%
g) Implementation at national level (in your country) of the Work Programme of WECAFC	33%	24%

The evaluation of the recommendations of WECAFC Sessions and their implementation in countries scores better among Members than those relating to the the WGs. The highest percentage of responses “excellent” or “good” was given for the recommendations from the two recent WECAFC Commission meetings and to communication and exchange between the Secretariat and the Members. However, the main response to most parts of this question is “no opinion”. The lowest appreciation is for the national implementation of the Work Programme of WECAFC, which is mainly caused by limited resources, both financial and manpower in the national administrations.

## Decision-Making Process of WECAFC and Coordination and Cooperation

Table 9: DECISION MAKING PROCESS of WECAFC and COORDINATION and COOPERATION How do you rate the current situation? (Excellent = 2, good = 1, fair = 0, poor = -1, "no opinion" not accounted for)		
	Members	Others
d) Coordination and cooperation with relevant international organizations on matters of common interest	0.9	0.8
e) Promote liaison between Members and competent institutions within the WECAFC Area	0.9	0.7
g) Role in the development of the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem Strategic Action Plan (CLME+ SAP)	0.9	0.6
f) General role in the Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy (CCCFP)	0.8	0.2
c) Procedures for decision making at the Session (by consensus)	0.8	0.6
b) Procedures for inter sessional decision making	0.4	0.0
a) Level of authority of the Commission for decision making (i.e. advisory decisions only, no conservation and management measures may be adopted)	0.4	0.0

The response of Members to the decision making process of WECAFC was quite positive. Members valued highest the coordination and cooperation with relevant international organizations and the liaison function of the WECAFC. The role in the development of the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem Strategic Action Plan (CLME+ SAP) was also highlighted as important. On the lower end one finds of the scale the authority of the WECAFC, not being a management organization and the intersessional decision making. The ranking of the decision making process was similar among Members and other stakeholders, with overall the Members more positive.

## Strategic Reorientation process of WECAFC

Table 10: Which subjects should get highest priority in the ongoing Strategic re-orientation process of WECAFC? (5 = most important, 1 = least important, "no opinion" not accounted for)		
	Members	Others
a) Development and management of responsible small-scale, artisanal and subsistence fisheries and aquacultur	4.6	4.2
d) Provision of Technical Advice (through its WGs)	4.5	4.4
h) Development and adoption of regional guidelines and best practices	4.5	4.0
n) Collaborative development and management projects	4.4	4.1
j) Cooperation in monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) at regional level	4.4	4.2
k) Information exchange	4.4	4.5
l) Data collection and analysis	4.3	4.2
m) Collaboration in Fisheries Research	4.3	4.2
g) Support regional implementation of international fisheries instruments and guidelines	4.2	4.1
e) Provision of Legal and Policy Advice and harmonization of legislation in the region	4.0	4.1
i) Strengthening of human and institutional capacity for fisheries conservation and management	4.0	4.1
f) Preparation of voluntary advice on fisheries management to Members	3.8	3.7



c) Preparation of binding recommendations on fisheries management and conservation to Members	3.7	4.1
b) Become a Fisheries Conservation and Management Authority for transboundary and straddling stocks, high seas and deep sea fisheries	3.5	4.3

The overall rating of the activities proposed for the re-orientation of WECAFC future work received high scores. The four most important activities were SSF, provision of technical advice, development of regional best practices and collaborative development assistance. The idea of transforming WECAFC into a management organization with a mandate to take legally binding measures and the role for deep sea and high seas stocks received far lower scores. The implications of these responses will be discussed in more detail in the background document Strategic Re-orientation of WECAFC, background, guidance, strategic options for the strategic re-orientation of WECAFC.

## Improving the functioning of WECAFC

Table 11: Percentage of positive reply with regard to improving the functioning of WECAFC ("yes", "no opinion" not accounted for)		
	Members	Others
a) Removal of non-participating /non-attending Members from the membership (similar to the FAO Committee on Fisheries - COFI procedures).	29%	29%
b) Incorporation of options in the Rules of Procedure for sanctioning Members if they don't follow-up regionally agreed advice.	13%	44%
c) Add to the WECAFC Bureau Functions: "to develop and review project proposals for submission (by FAO and/or WECAFC chairperson) on behalf of the Commission to potential donors".	86%	59%
d) Insert an obligation for WECAFC Members to report to every fair Session on the follow-up of WECAFC advice and recommendations at national level.	59%	69%
e) Enable WECAFC Members to vote through electronic means on important inter-sessional decisions.	69%	59%

The question on the proposals for improving the functioning of WECAFC gave some interesting insights. The use of electronic means for voting processes received an enthusiastic 69% of positive replies<sup>2</sup> by Members. The obligations of Members to report to every regular Session on follow-up of WECAFC advice and recommendations also scored well with 59% positive replies. The technical function of developing and reviewing project proposals for submission to donors received an outstanding 86% of consensus. On the other hand, sanctions for Members or removal of non-participating Members did not receive positive responses from the majority of respondents.

<sup>2</sup> In the calculation of the percentage the replies "no opinion" were not taken into account

## Participation in meetings

Table 12: Participation in meetings (percentage of “frequently” and “always” responses, “don’t know” not accounted for)		
	Members	Others
a) WECAFC Sessions	40%	13%
b) Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) Sessions	15%	12%
c) OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CFMC WG on Caribbean Spiny Lobster (or its predecessor)	25%	14%
d) CRFM/WECAFC WG on Flying Fish in the Eastern Caribbean (or its predecessor)	11%	11%
e) IFREMER/WECAFC WG on the Development of Sustainable Moored Fish Aggregating Device Fishing in the Lesser Antilles	16%	5%
f) CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM WG on Queen Conch (or its predecessor)	47%	18%
g) CFMC/WECAFC Spawning Aggregations WG (or its predecessor)	11%	5%
h) WECAFC WG on Brazil-Guianas Shrimp and Groundfish	6%	5%
i) WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM/CFMC WG on Recreational Fisheries	18%	3%
j) WECAFC WG on the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries	0%	0%
k) Committee for the Development and Management of Fisheries in the Lesser Antilles	17%	5%

The above table evaluates the participation of Members (the reply from other stakeholders is really not very relevant here) with regard to “frequently” and “always”. The highest participation in this sense was reported for the WG on Queen Conch, this is not a surprise, as the results of this WG have a direct impact on Queen Conch production and trade, as Queen Conch is under the appendix 2 of CITES and its management is closed monitored by the international community. Quite positive is the participation in the WECAFC Sessions, where 40% of the Members replying to the survey have frequently participated. For all other WGs and especially for the SAG the participation is quite disappointing. The latter is logical as only selected experts are normally invited to participate in SAG Sessions.

## Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

WECAFC largely depends on the Secretariat in terms of supporting, initiation and implementation of the activities. However, the coordination of a RFB in such a complex and diverse region would require more human resources than has been effectively made available to WECAFC. Indeed, there are difficulties pertaining particularly to this region, including capacity issues with high levels of economic disparity between Members, great diversity (ecologically, linguistically and culturally) and large fragmentation (along linguistic and political lines, but also within linguistic and subregional political groupings). Overall, there is a general appreciation of the present work of the WECAFC Secretariat. The responses show that the present secretary is considered a very dedicated, competent and highly motivated, very responsive and active person, who managed to revive the activities of WECAFC, after a period of stasis. Many replies of the online survey noted that there is a mismatch between the budget available to the Secretariat and the potential need to carry out all the activities agreed in the programme of work. The need to increase the number of people working in the Secretariat was underlined in various comments.

WECAFC has no management mandate and is hence not responsible for the actual management of fisheries in the region. The apparent decline in abundance in several species of fish and marine animals caught in the region tends to suggest that some regional management needs are not met. Also, uncertainty about the status of many stocks remains high and the collection and processing of fisheries-related data needs to be substantially improved as well as increased. Indeed, while

sound scientific information and analysis are necessary for sustainable management advice, the Caribbean region suffers from insufficient application of science to policy-making and management. On the other hand, the advice generated by both the main Sessions of WECAFC, the WG recommendations and the SAG information frequently does not find national application. In the comments, many Members indicate that this is mainly due to the limited relevance, but also due to the financial constraints in the national fisheries administrations.

The role of WECAFC is appreciated with regard to the implementation of the CCRF and the relevant instruments, especially the Ports States Measures Agreement. The management of shared commercial species such as spiny lobster and Queen Conch is also important and is appreciated by the stakeholders. While the importance of SSF is highlighted in the prioritization of activities, the performance of WECAFC in this field is not outstanding. The post-harvest sector is neglected by WECAFC, however it really never was a priority area of activities.

The ownership of WECAFC Members in the organization becomes apparent from the answers to the questionnaire. This is very important for the future of the organization. Already the mere fact that 72 respondents were willing to answer all the rather lengthy questions demonstrates the deep interest in the functioning of the organization.

The survey shows, however, that there is generally no willingness of Members to financially contribute to the functioning of the body. The present financial situation of most Members of WECAFC does not allow for such contribution. The attendance of Members at meetings and involvement Members in WECAFC is very uneven and on average quite low. In addition to coastal States in the region, there is also a small number of other States from outside the region that joined WECAFC during its early stages and that are still, technically speaking, Members of the Commission, although they do not participate in its work.

The recommendations from this performance review are to increase the availability of financial resources and the number of staff working in the WECAFC Secretariat. In the present time, FAO is not in a position to increase its contribution from regular programme, therefore any additional budget needed has to come from extra-budgetary sources. The SAP of the CLME will probably help with some funds for the implementation of the above mentioned activities. GEF funding is about to become available for the high-seas fisheries management activities.

The review of the level of implementation of the workplan as adopted by the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of WECAFC shows that over 80% of the envisaged activities have been implemented, and the reasons for shortcomings in the implementation are generally caused by external factors.

The collaboration in the region among the various actors is already working quite well, and the regional level coordination function of WECAFC has to be underlined. Further strengthening and increased institutionalization of this function is needed in the future.

Unfortunately, apart from the WG meetings, there are insufficient inter-sessional activities, mostly due to budget constraints and limited manpower. Information exchange and inter-sessional communication has been highly rated by respondents to the review. The present website of WECAFC is not sufficient for this purpose. The website is hosted in FAO and has the aim to simply describe WECAFC as a RFB, together with some other 50 similar bodies all over the world. It is strongly recommended that WECAFC sets up an own website, for the storage and dissemination of all information created by the WECAFC Secretariat and by Members, of relevance for the region.

An important role with regard to fisheries resource evaluation and management is played by the SAG. However, the evaluation of the SAG was not very positive. The main role, review and contribution to the report on the status of stocks in the Commission area, was rated as not sufficient. It became clear that the number of Members of the SAG has to be increased and that more public relations work has to be carried out. The establishment and maintenance of a WECAFC website, which gives detailed information on the status of the resources in the WECAFC area, will be essential. In this regard, it is important to mention that WECAFC will

soon join FIRMS, this collaboration will be important to improve the presentation of statistical data from the region. The evaluation recommends speeding up this partnership.

The performance of the WGs is quite positive, especially for those covering commercial species such as spiny lobster and Queen Conch. It is recommended that this good work should be continued and even strengthened. The deep sea fisheries work, which did not figure well, should be strengthened, and there are indications that this will materialize soon, in view of the funding made available for this activity during 2014. It is recommended that the WGs that have been dormant for a number of years should be eliminated.

In conclusion, WECAFC has a unique strength as a forum in this very fragmented area to share information on activities, proposals and priorities. It also helped to build bridges between Members' institutions which could otherwise find it difficult to communicate and collaborate (e.g., EU, France, Japan and USA use it as a bridge with the region; it also serves as a bridge between USA and Cuba). Then, the WECAFC Membership range and coverage, mandate, technical back-up and sustainable (although limited) funding by FAO, political convening power and capability to provide a valuable linkage between fisheries science and management are valuable assets. This very important social capital should not be wasted.

### **Suggested Actions for the Commission**

1. The Commission is invited to consider, discuss and, as appropriate, to endorse the draft report of the WECAFC Performance Review.
2. The Commission is further invited to propose follow-up activities in line with the conclusions and recommendations of this performance review.