



REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR FISHERIES (RECOFI)

Fifth Session

Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 12–14 May 2009

ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL REPORTS

I. INTRODUCTION

This document, along with its Appendixes, provides a summary of the functioning and administration of the Secretariat, including issues such as staffing, meetings and publications (Administrative Report). The document thereafter reviews the status of ratification of the RECOFI Agreement, presents the status of the contributions made by members to the Commission's budget, including the status of arrears and provides the statement on expenditures made or committed during the intersessional period (Financial Report).

II. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Functioning of the Secretariat

Organization of the Secretariat

At its Fourth session in May 2007, the Commission identified and discussed a number of standing problems constraining the Commission's functions, among which the strengthening of the Secretariat. In this respect, in November 2007 FAO designated the Senior Fishery Officer assigned at the Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa in Cairo (FAO RNE) to act as Secretary of RECOFI. The Senior Fishery Officer took charge of his duties in February 2008.

The FAO also nominated the Technical Secretary of the Working Group on Fisheries Management (formerly Working Group on Fishery Statistics). The Technical Secretary will support and assist in the establishment of this new Working Group and in the revision of the former Working Group on Fishery Statistics.

The Commission continued to benefit from the support provided by the Technical Secretary of the Working Group on Aquaculture (WGA) and the Information Officer who coordinated the development of the Regional Aquaculture Information System (RAIS). The RECOFI fishery statistics database was regularly maintained and updated thanks to the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Information and Statistics Service (FIES). The Secretariat further relied on consultancies to address specific issues (e.g. fishery statistics, fishery legislation, information

technology applications, animal health, etc.). Lastly, the Secretariat continued to benefit from the efficient services provided by the bilingual Secretary/Administrative Assistant.

RECOFI intersessional meetings and meetings at which the Secretariat was represented

The Secretariat coordinated and actively contributed to the preparation and the running of nine meetings/events, including the meetings of the Commission's subsidiary bodies (Working Group on Aquaculture and Working Group on Fisheries Management), the participation in and reporting of the Twenty-ninth session of the Regional Conference for the Near East (Egypt, March 2008), and the joint FAO/RECOFI Workshop on Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (Oman, April 2009). Hence, a significant part of the meetings agreed upon by the Commission was satisfied. Arrangements are underway for the convening in July 2009 of the Regional Workshop on Stock Indicators and Stock Status Reporting and of the third meeting of the WGFM tentatively planned for October 2009.

The Secretariat also participated in meetings of partner organizations or entities, notably the Regional Workshop on “Fish Trawling Management (A Review of World Experiences) through the Introduction of By-catch Reduction Technologies and Change of Management” (Kish Island, Islamic Republic of Iran) and the Eleventh session of the Scientific Advisory Committee of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (Marrakech, Morocco, December 2008). The Kish workshop was organized by the FAO and Iran in April 2008, within the framework of the FAO/GEF/UNEP global project Reduction of Environmental Impact from Tropical Shrimp Trawling. RECOFI was represented at the Twenty-eighth session of the Committee on Fisheries (Rome, Italy, March 2009) and at the Second meeting of the Regional Fisheries Body Secretariat Network (Rome, Italy, 9–11 March 2009).

In response to a request made by some RECOFI members as well as by other FAO RNE member countries, five experts from five RECOFI countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates) participated in the regional workshop “The Use of Geographical Information System in Fisheries Management” jointly organized by the FAO RNE and the Tunisian National Institute of Marine Sciences and Technology (Tunisia, July 2008).

Publications

During the intersessional period, the Secretariat produced the following technical and scientific documents: seven were distributed, as technical documents to concerned experts and were partly available on the RECOFI website, three were also published in the FAO Fisheries Report series, and two will be published during 2009. RECOFI publications included the CD release of the information tool “Fisheries Landing Visualizer – Trends and Pattern of RECOFI Capture Fisheries Production” (CD-Rom, stand-alone version). The list of publications is provided in Appendix 1 of this document.

Ad hoc activities/contributions supporting the work of the Commission

- *Regional Aquaculture Information System (RAIS)*: continued its support. A close monitoring and input were regularly provided by the FAO/RECOFI Secretariat to advance the progress in the establishment of RAIS and to enhance the coordination between the regional network of experts and RAIS national coordinators.

- *Aquaculture Legal and Policy Framework Project*: the relevant project proposal was developed by the WGA and approved by the Commission at its Fourth session in 2007. The project was intended to be funded by the RECOFI members on an equal share contribution basis. Four

Members (Bahrain, Islamic Republic of Iran, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates) confirmed to the FAO their commitment to fund the project; however, contributions were deposited solely by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Consequently, the Secretariat was not in the position to proceed further with the finalization of the administrative and operational framework of the proposed project.

Others

Several other tasks that are coordinated directly by the Secretariat are not detailed here. These include liaison and communication with the Focal Points of the member countries, strengthening the cooperation with the FAO technical departments and partner organizations, and the coordination of editing, translation and distribution of documents. Most importantly, the Secretariat ensured the preparation and release of all the meeting's and session's working documents. Overall, about thirty working documents were produced by the Secretariat to support the work of the Commission and of its Working Groups.

The following should however be noted:

Bureau of the Commission: The Bureau of the Commission is supposed to be highly instrumental in assisting and advising the Secretariat for the implementation of the work plan and for dealing with critical issues that may arise during the intersessional period. In consideration of the relevance of the Bureau's role, the Secretariat decided to describe and highlight it in a purposely prepared document (*RECOFI/V/2009/7*).

Visibility of RECOFI activities and outputs: the Secretariat is taking action to enhance the visibility of the work of the Commission. Press releases are a very useful contribution to the publicizing of a specific action. Starting from early 2008, press releases have been issued at the start of all actions and initiatives. The RECOFI website (<http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/recofi>), although simple and basic, has been maintained and is being gradually improved. It is currently the primary vehicle through which the Secretariat makes information available to the Commission and the general public; failure to maintain and further develop it with necessary human and financial means would result in higher costs for conveying key information to stakeholders.

Status of acceptance of the 1997 amendments to the RECOFI Agreement

As of the 31st December 2008, eight members have deposited their instruments of acceptance (Appendix 2).

III. FINANCIAL REPORT

Status of the contributions to the RECOFI 2007–2008 budget

In May 2007, the Commission adopted a budget for the 2007-08 biennium amounting to USD 160 000. This did not include the estimate of the FAO Regular Programme contribution to RECOFI.

The FAO sent, through diplomatic channels, the “Call for fund letter” on the 18 April 2008. A reminder, followed by individual recalls, was sent by the Secretariat on the 23 of July 2008 to

concerned Parties. As of the 31st of December, the actual income from contributions for 2008–09¹ amounted to USD 29 995 (equivalent to 75% of the expected annual total contribution).

The status of contributions can be summarized as follows:

- Four Members (Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia) deposited their instruments of acceptance and have paid their contribution in full;
- Four Members (Bahrain, Iran, Qatar, United Arab Emirates) deposited their instruments of acceptance but have not yet fully paid their contribution.

As shown in Appendix 3 of this document, the balance of accumulated pending contributions against the 2007–08 and 2008–09 RECOFI fiscal years, as of the 31 of December 2008, amounted at USD 70 187.83. This represents a 17% increase compared to the previous biennium.

Financial statement

RECOFI Member countries contribute USD 5 000/year each. The core budget of RECOFI takes the form of a multi-lateral trust-fund project with the FAO symbol MTF/REM/001/MUL and title “Support to the Secretariat of RECOFI”. The project started in April 2003 and since then has been renewed on a yearly basis. Its budget is revised regularly in order to monitor annual contributions by Member countries and the cash flow of expenditures. The book-keeping activity continued to be ensured through the FAO central accounting system (based on Oracle).

Table 1 below provides an overview of the financial statement of the Commission’s budget since 2003 and as of December 31, 2008², and the liquidation of total expenses as of December 31, 2008. Total expenses (USD 260 958) include expenses settled up to the end of December 2008 (USD 168 283), existing commitments (USD 60 357) made until the end of April 2009 and a provision of USD 32 318 earmarked as a forecast for the cost of the Fifth RECOFI session (interpretation, in-session translation of draft report, travel, printing and miscellaneous).

Table 1: Financial Status in US Dollars (2003- May 2009)

Income (contributions)	303,822
Total Expenses	260,958
Expenses (<i>up to end December 2008</i>)	168,283
Commitments (<i>2009</i>)	60,357
Forecast (<i>2009 5th session</i>)	32,318
Balance	42,864

The financial delivery by main activity during the period from 2007 to May 2009 is provided in Table 2. Expenditures can be divided in three broad categories: i) expenses related to the functioning of the Secretariat (51% of total expenses, 52% of which are related to the Commission’s plenary sessions in 2007 and 2009); ii) activities in support of the WGA (30%); iii) activities in support of the WGFM (19%). The main expenditure chapters, based on the FAO/Oracle trust funds standard budget line allocations, are summarized in Appendix 4.

¹ RECOFI fiscal year is from the 1st of May to the 30th of April.

² Funds deposited for the implementation of the Aquaculture Legal and Policy Framework Project are not included.

Table 2. Financial delivery by activity during the intersessional period (US Dollars)

	2007	2008	2009 (provisional)	Total
Aquaculture Working Group	18 574	22 234	16 342	57 150
Fisheries Management Working Group		8 765	26 623	35 388
Secretariat	24 493	23 391	49 710	97 594
Total	43 067	54 390	92 675	190 132

Status of RECOFI extra-budgetary resources

The overall budget adopted by the Commission at its Fourth session included the funds made available as extra budgetary resources (i.e. from voluntary contributions by some members). Utilization of these funds is summarized below.

Kuwait support to the Development of the Regional Aquaculture Information System

Following the kind offer made by Kuwait at the Third session of the Commission (Doha, Qatar, May 2005) in support of the initiative, the amount of USD 30 000 was received in a single instalment in 2007. These funds were used to cover the costs related to the design, development and testing of RAIS, including on-the-job training of the RAIS Regional Centre staff. The detailed description of RAIS activities is given in RECOFI/V/2009/Inf.5)

Aquaculture Legal and Policy Framework Project

The project proposal was developed by the WGA, approved in principle by the Commission at the Third session (2005) and further endorsed at the Fourth session (2007). It was expected that each RECOFI member would contribute on an equal share basis, consisting of USD 22 500 each. As of December 2008, only Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates had deposited their contribution, which amounts to 29% of the planned total funds required to implement the project. While awaiting the fulfilment of contributions to the budget, the Secretariat did not proceed further with the finalization of the administrative and operational framework of this activity.

IV. SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMISSION

The Commission may wish to review the administrative and financial reports and provide general guidance. The Commission is also invited to note and assess the remittance of contributions by members and the related status of arrears, *particularly in consideration of the overall functioning of the Commission and implementation of its work plan.*

List of publications

1. Technical documents available on RECOFI website:

- Report of the Fourth Session of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI), Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 7–9 May 2007. FAO Regional Office for the Near East. *FAO Fisheries Report*. No. 847. Rome, FAO. 2007. 48p.
- Regional Commission for Fisheries. Report of the regional technical workshop on aquatic animal health (Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 6-10 April 2008). FAO Regional Office for the Near East. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. 876. Rome, FAO. 2009. 119p.
- Report of the Second Session of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management. Cairo, Egypt, 27–30 October 2008. FAO Regional Office for the Near East. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. 889. Rome, FAO. 2009. 65p.
- Stamatopoulos, C. Improving the utility and diffusion of fisheries statistical data among RECOFI Members. Regional Commission for Fisheries, FAO Regional Office for the Near East, Cairo. 2008. 56p.

2. Published documents:

- Report of the Fourth Session of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI), Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 7–9 May 2007. FAO Regional Office for the Near East. *FAO Fisheries Report*. No. 847. Rome, FAO. 2007. 48p.
- FAO/Regional Commission for Fisheries. Report of the Regional Technical Workshop on Aquatic Animal Health (Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 6–10 April 2008). *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. 876. Rome, FAO. 2009. 119p.
- FAO. Report of the Second Session of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management. Cairo, Egypt, 27–30 October 2008. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. 889. Cairo, FAO. 2009. 65p.
- Regional Commission for Fisheries. Trends and Pattern of RECOFI Capture Fisheries Production (1986–2006). FAO Regional Office for the Near East. CD-Rom prepared for and presented at the Second Session of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management, 27–30 October 2008, Cairo, Egypt.

3. Documents in preparation

- FAO/Regional Commission for Fisheries. Report of the Regional Technical Workshop on Sustainable Marine Cage Aquaculture Development. Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 25–26 January 2009. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. 892. Rome, FAO. 2009. (In preparation).
- FAO/Regional Commission for Fisheries. Report of the fourth meeting of the Working Group on Aquaculture. Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 27–28 January 2009. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. 895. Rome, FAO. 2009. (In preparation)

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- FAO/Regional Commission for Fisheries. Report of the FAO/RECOFI Workshop on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing. Muscat (Sultanate of Oman), 30 March – 2 April 2009. FAO Regional Office for the Near East. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. Cairo, FAO. 2009. (In preparation).

Status of acceptance of the RECOFI Agreement

Members	Acceptance
Kingdom of Bahrain	17 October 2008
Islamic Republic of Iran	6 December 2001
Republic of Iraq	20 August 2008
State of Kuwait	19 May 2006
Sultanate of Oman	19 December 2001
State of Qatar	12 July 2000
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	3 November 2000
United Arab Emirates	26 February 2001

APPENDIX 3

Status of contributions on 31 December 2008

Members	Outstanding 31/12/07	Due for 2008- 2009 ¹	Received 31/12/08	Outstanding 31/12/2008
BAHRAIN	5,000.00	5,000.00		10,000
IRAQ		5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00
IRAN, Islamic Republic of	15,076.57	5,000.00		20,076.57
KUWAIT	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00
OMAN, Sultanate of	15.00	5,000.00	4,995.00 ²	20.00
QATAR	25,035.22	5,000.00	5,000.00	25,035.22
SAUDI ARABIA, Kingdom of	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	15,056.04	5,000.00	5,000.00	15,056.04
TOTALS	60,182.83	40,000.00	29, 995.00	70,187.83

¹ RECOFI fiscal year is from the 1st of May to the 30th of April.

² A minimal negative balance can be noted for Oman probably due to bank transfer charges.

Expenditures met during the intersessional biennium (US Dollars) including 2009 commitments and forecast up to May (inclusive)

Expenditures	2007-2009
Staff costs (General Services)	23,821
Consultancies	54,824
Travel	75,329
Contracts	3,713
General Operating Expenses	5,084
Charge backs (<i>interpretation & reporting</i>)	19,585
Other Miscellaneous	7,776
Total	190,132