

## **REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR FISHERIES**

**Report of the**

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### **FIFTH MEETING OF THE RECOFI WORKING GROUP ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT**

**Tehran, Iran (Islamic Republic of), 9–12 October 2011**



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## PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This is the final report of the fifth meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management that was held at the Howeyzeh Hotel in Tehran, Iran (Islamic Republic of), from 9 to 12 October 2011.

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Report of the fifth meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management. Tehran, Iran (Islamic Republic of), 9–12 October 2011.

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### ABSTRACT

This document contains the report of the fifth meeting of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM), which was held in Tehran, Iran (Islamic Republic of), from 9 to 12 October 2011. The WGFM addressed and made decisions on matters concerning relevant follow-up to the sixth session of RECOFI and the fourth session of the RECOFI WGFM. An update on the programme of work and budget for the biennium for 2011–12 in relation to the WGFM was considered and arrangements for a number of activities finalized in terms of dates, locations and funding. A proposal by the Sultanate of Oman on illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the RECOFI region was addressed again and Members undertook to follow up on assessing IUU fishing in their respective countries through the completion of a questionnaire that would be circulated prior to the sixth meeting of the WGFM in Qatar in October 2012. The WGFM considered in detail progress towards the implementation of the RECOFI Recommendation on Minimum Data Reporting (Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1). A preliminary review of stock and fisheries status indicators to be produced from the RECOFI fishery management database, building on past work, was reviewed and progressed. The meeting considered a RECOFI scientific working group to provide scientific advice to the Commission on aquaculture and fishery management. This matter will be addressed further at the seventh session of RECOFI in May 2013. The final substantive item addressed on the agenda was RECOFI cooperation with the Fishery Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS). The next meeting of the WGFM will be held in Qatar from 21 to 23 October 2012.



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## OPENING OF THE MEETING

1. The fifth meeting of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) was held at the Howeyzeh Hotel in Tehran, Iran (Islamic Republic of), from 9 to 12 October 2011. The meeting was convened by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and RECOFI. The meeting was attended by 16 delegates from five Members of Commission and 12 observers. A list of delegates and observers is attached as Appendix B.
2. On behalf of the Iran Fisheries Organization, Mr Abbas Amini, Director General, Office of Head, Public Relations and International Affairs, Tehran, Iran (Islamic Republic of), called the meeting to order. He expressed the desire that it should be a very successful meeting furthering the goals and objectives of RECOFI.
3. Mr Mehdi Shirazi, Deputy Director General, Public and International Relations, Iran Fisheries Organization, Tehran, Iran (Islamic Republic of), welcomed delegates and observers to the meeting. He wished all delegates an enjoyable stay in the Islamic Republic of Iran.
4. Mr Ali Asghar Mojahedi, Director General for Fishing and Fishers Affairs, Iran Fisheries Organization, Tehran, Iran (Islamic Republic of), welcomed warmly all delegates and observers to the meeting. He underscored the central role of regional cooperation in the management of common fisheries resources. He added that RECOFI had taken effective steps to promote regional cooperation. He thanked FAO and the RECOFI Secretariat for their support. Mr Mojahedi noted that the projects and activities initiated by the WGFM were starting to show results. He added that the participation of Members at this meeting indicated that there was willingness to continue to work within the RECOFI framework. Mr Mojahedi's statement is in Appendix D.
5. Mr Piero Mannini, RECOFI Secretary and Senior Fisheries Officer, FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa, Cairo, Egypt, made a statement on behalf of Mr Saad Al-Otaibi, Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for the Near East and North Africa, FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa, Cairo, Egypt. He reiterated the need for greater regional cooperation in fisheries and, in particular, through RECOFI to enhance fisheries conservation and management, and governance in its convention area. He added that the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries stressed the importance of cooperative management for shared stocks such as those found in the RECOFI area. Mr Mannini pointed out that the Commission was a convenient and valid mechanism for encouraging regional cooperation in fisheries. He drew attention to the FAO Conference for the Near East that was held in December 2010. *Inter alia*, it called on Members to strengthen RECOFI. He noted that limited funding continued to be a constraint and concern for the Commission. Mr Al-Otaibi's statement is in Appendix E.
6. The Secretary of RECOFI conveyed apologies to the meeting from the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates for their inability to attend. He advised the meeting also that the Chairperson of the WGFM, Mr Abdulkarim H. Radhi, Head of Fisheries Assessment Section and Focal Point of the WGFM, Directorate of Fisheries Resources, General Directorate for Protection of Marine Resources, Public Commission for Protection of Marine Resources, Environment and Wildlife, Manama, the Kingdom of Bahrain, was unable to participate in the meeting.
7. The Secretary of RECOFI called for nominations for a chairperson for the meeting. The delegate from the State of Kuwait nominated the Islamic Republic of Iran. This nomination was seconded unanimously by the other delegations. Mr Ali Asghar Mojahedi, Director General for Fishing and Fishers Affairs, Iran Fisheries Organization, Tehran, Iran (Islamic Republic of), assumed the Chair.

## **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MEETING**

8. The Agenda, attached as Appendix A, was adopted. The list of documents for the session is attached as Appendix C.

9. The Chairperson invited the Secretary of RECOFI to explain administrative arrangements for the meeting. He referred to the good progress being made by RECOFI in addressing a number of fundamental issues affecting the promotion of regional cooperation and the more effective management of common fish stocks in the RECOFI area. The Secretary expressed his confidence that the meeting would be a very successful one. He encouraged all delegates and observers to work with commitment and flexibility to ensure that the meeting completed its work.

10. The Chairperson then invited Mr David Doulman, Technical Secretary of the WGFM and Senior Fishery Liaison Officer, FAO, Rome, Italy, to address technical issues associated with the meeting. He recalled that Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1, entitled “Recommendation on minimum data reporting in the RECOFI area”, adopted by the Commission at its sixth session was binding on Parties and that Members were required, with effect from 1 January 2012, to take steps to implement it. He stressed the importance of the work being undertaken on data reporting and related matters that would underpin the implementation of the Recommendation. He noted that the programme of work for the 2011–12 biennium had been endorsed by the sixth session of RECOFI. Mr Doulman recalled that the Commission had agreed that the WGFM would be convened on an annual basis. He observed that the agenda for each successive meeting had become progressively more complex because of the nature of the issues being addressed. He urged the meeting to ensure that all agenda items were addressed fully and that the follow-up work required to implement decisions was undertaken.

## **MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE SIXTH SESSION OF RECOFI**

11. The Secretary of RECOFI introduced document RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/2. It is attached in Appendix F.

12. The Secretary highlighted the main outcomes and decisions of the Commission at its sixth session. He explained that RECOFI had reviewed work undertaken since the fifth session in 2009, including the Commission’s financial and administrative reports, selected issues of particular relevance for the region, the functioning of the Commission including its consolidation and development, and the adoption of the work programme for the 2011–12 biennium.

13. The WGFM noted with satisfaction that the Commission had adopted its first fisheries management recommendation, Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1, and that in accordance with Article V of the Agreement for the Establishment of RECOFI, the Commission agreed that the Recommendation would take effect on 1 January 2012.

14. It was recalled that Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1 originated from the pivotal work implemented under the auspices of the WGFM during the FAO/RECOFI Regional Workshop on Fishery Stock Indicators and Stock Status, Tehran, Iran (Islamic Republic of), from 26 to 29 July 2009.

15. The WGFM was informed that the sixth session of the Commission had noted that the current level of Members’ contributions was only sufficient to fund the implementation of a limited number of priority activities, and that the Commission agreed on a threefold increase (i.e. from USD5 000 to USD15 000) of the Members’ annual contributions from 2013 provided that all arrears were paid in full by 31 December 2011. Following a request of clarification on how the Secretariat will follow up this Commission decision, the Secretary explained that in early 2012 the status of Members’ contributions to RECOFI, including the settlement of arrears, would be reported to Members for their information, and appropriate action, as necessary. The WGFM

expressed the desire that the RECOFI budget would be increased, as agreed by the Commission, without delay.

#### **MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE RECOFI WORKING GROUP ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AND THE INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS AMONG RECOFI MEMBERS**

16. The Technical Secretary of the WGFM presented documents RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/3 and RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/4. They are appended as Appendixes G and H, respectively.

17. With respect to document RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/3, the Technical Secretary drew the meeting's attention to the outcomes of the fourth meeting of the WGFM that was held in Muscat, Oman, from 3 to 5 October 2010. It was noted that the WGFM had addressed a comprehensive agenda reviewing and consolidating decisions and extending work that had been agreed by the WGFM and RECOFI. He noted that WGFM continued to streamline its approach and method of work while focusing on issues necessary to ensure the more effective conservation and management of capture fisheries resources in the RECOFI area. The Technical Secretary referred the meeting to Appendix 1 of document RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/3, which outlined the strategy, prioritized objectives, regional activities and regional projects together with indicative costs and funding sources, project ranking and anticipated major outputs for the projects.

18. The Chairperson recalled that the fourth session of the WGFM had been one of the most important meetings held in view of the adoption of Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1. This sentiment was reiterated by other Members who noted that the work of the WGFM was gaining momentum and that, as might be expected, additional challenges were being encountered. It was pointed out that most fish stocks in the RECOFI area were in a state of decline and this situation was a matter of grave concern. The WGFM agreed that this problem must be confronted in a proactive manner. In addition, it was noted that there had been major changes in catch compositions in some fisheries, especially for demersal species. The WGFM agreed that the exchange of information among Members on these matters and other management issues was critical to resolve problems of common concern in the RECOFI area.

19. The Secretary of RECOFI commented on capacity development in the region and the high priority that Members assigned to this matter. He recalled that RECOFI had been instrumental in launching a number of capacity-development initiatives. However, for maximum effect, Members should ensure that the most qualified personnel available should be nominated to participate in these different capacity-development exercises.

20. The Technical Secretary presented document RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/4. It summarized the informal consultation among RECOFI Members that took place at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy, on 9 May 2011. This meeting had been scheduled as a special meeting of the WGFM but, owing to a lack of a quorum, an informal consultation was convened to review the document that had been prepared for the meeting. The Technical Secretary expressed his disappointment that the meeting, because of its informal nature, was unable to make a decision on the important matter of the consultant's report for the sixth session of RECOFI.

21. The WGFM was advised that three Members (Iran [Islamic Republic of], Oman and Saudi Arabia) had participated in the informal consultation in Rome, Italy. It reviewed a document entitled "Record of informal consultation among RECOFI Members to consider the consultant's draft report relating to the integration of catch effort data in support of draft Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1". Importantly, the consultancy had concluded that RECOFI Members would be able to meet the data requirements indicated in the draft Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1 with their existing national data collection and collation. However, several minor problems had been identified in the course of the consultancy.

22. The Secretary of RECOFI also expressed his disappointment that the scheduled special meeting of the WGFM was not convened. He added that the work undertaken by the consultant in relation to the regional harmonization of national statistical systems was critical for the ongoing work relating to the implementation of Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1.

#### **UPDATE OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK AND BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2011–12 IN RELATION TO THE WORKING GROUP ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT**

23. The Technical Secretary introduced document RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/5. It is attached in Appendix I.

24. The Technical Secretary recapped briefly on the work of the fourth meeting of the WGFM in October 2010. At that meeting, the regional strategy and prioritized activities for regional fisheries management had been reviewed thoroughly. He noted that the regional strategy had not been altered because it was considered by the meeting that it remained relevant to the fisheries conservation and management goals and needs of the RECOFI area. Nonetheless, the priority objectives had been reduced from a total of seven to five so as to rationalize them. Similarly, the number of projects had been reduced from a total of 20 to 15.

25. The Technical Secretary explained the process by which the Commission had arrived at the prioritized list of WGFM projects, noting that the jointly implemented project with the RECOFI Working Group on Aquaculture (WGA) (capacity development for spatial planning and management) had been assigned highest priority because it was an ongoing project.

26. The four WGFM projects approved by the Commission were:

- a) a preparatory exercise for the implementation of minimum data reporting and establishment of a regional database and information network to support management of major fisheries. This work underpinned preparatory activities designed to support the implementation of the mandatory Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1;
- b) a workshop to develop regional management plans with agreed operational objectives for fisheries management;
- c) a pilot joint assessment of narrow-barred Spanish mackerel and a workshop on the utilization of fishery-dependent data; and
- d) a workshop on social and economic aspects of small-scale fisheries.

27. The Technical Secretary explained that in order to facilitate the smooth implementation of the four projects, decisions concerning terms of reference (TORs) for projects b), c) and d) would have to be agreed by the WGFM together with locations and dates for their implementation.

28. In document RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/5, the Secretariat had proposed that the workshop on social and economic aspects of small-scale fisheries be held prior to the workshop to develop regional management plans with agreed operational objectives for fisheries management. This was proposed because the former workshop would provide input to the latter workshop. This scheduling of implementation did not affect the priority assigned to the four projects by the Commission.

**Table 1 – RECOFI regional projects to be undertaken in the 2011–12 intersessional period**

<b>Working Group</b>	<b>Regional projects</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Locations</b>	<b>Duration (days)</b>	<b>Indicative RECOFI cost (USD)</b>	<b>Status (priority approved by RECOFI)</b>
Joint (with RECOFI WGA)	Capacity building for spatial planning and management	Early 2012	Doha, Qatar	4–5	40 000	Approved
WGFM	Preparatory exercise for implementation of minimum data requirements and establishment of a regional database and information network to support management of major fisheries	Ongoing until mid-2012	N/A	N/A	20 000	Approved. WGFM priority number 1
WGFM	Workshop on social and economic aspects of small-scale fisheries	February 2012	Manama, Bahrain	3–4	10 000	Approved. WGFM priority number 4
WGFM	Workshop to develop regional fisheries management plans with agreed operational objectives for fisheries management	June 2012	United Arab Emirates	3–4	15 000	Approved. WGFM priority number 2
WGFM	Regional workshop on bycatch reduction and management and evaluation and promotion of options of gear types with lower ecosystem impacts	December 2012	Kuwait	TBD	15 000	Approved. Implementation will depend on availability of funds
WGFM	Pilot joint assessment of narrow-barred Spanish mackerel and workshop on the utilization of fishery-dependent data	February 2013	Muscat, Oman	4	30 000	Approved. WGFM priority number 3

29. After considerable debate, the WGFM agreed on Table 1 summarizing the details relating to the regional projects including their anticipated implementation locations and dates.

30. Concerning details for two of the workshops, the Secretary of RECOFI was requested to contact the appropriate authorities in the Kingdom of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, respectively, in relation to the workshop on social and economic aspects of small-scale fisheries and the workshop to develop regional management plans with agreed operational objectives for fisheries management to confirm implementation locations and dates. The Secretary was requested to convey this information to RECOFI Members after it had been obtained.

31. In relation to the three workshops to be undertaken in 2012 and 2013, the WGFM agreed as follows:

- Workshop on social and economic aspects of small-scale fisheries (February 2012). The WGFM agreed that there would be merit in extending the coverage of the workshop to include industrial fisheries, as appropriate, while recognizing that a strong focus on small-scale fisheries was needed because of the importance of small-scale fishing in the RECOFI region. Indicative TORs for the workshop could include social issues such as access to resources and fishing opportunities, employment benefits, livelihood security, and overcapacity, while economic issues could address the value of fisheries, domestic consumption, exports, taxation, and the contribution of the fisheries sector to national economic aggregates, etc.

The Secretariat noted that this was the first time that the WGFM would address specifically social and economic issues in its work. It was therefore important that a strong output was forthcoming as an input for the workshop to develop regional management plans with agreed operational objectives for fisheries management. The Secretariat stressed the need for national focal points to make every effort to ensure that Members nominated experts with a strong social and economic background for the workshop, including fisheries economists if possible.

The WGFM agreed that in preparation for the workshop, Members should compile a country report of existing social and economic information from 2005 for the fisheries sector. In the event that information was not available, best estimates should be provided. To facilitate consistency in reporting, a template of information to be provided by Members will be developed by the Secretariat and distributed well in advance of the workshop.

- Workshop to develop regional management plans with agreed operational objectives for fisheries management (June 2012). The WGFM reaffirmed that the workshop should be held in advance of the sixth meeting of the WGFM in October 2012 so as to ensure that the workshop's outcome would be reported to the seventh session of the Commission in 2013. It was pointed out that this workshop would be the first to be convened by RECOFI to address the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF).

The WGFM decided to amend the title of the workshop from “Workshop to develop regional fisheries management plans with agreed operational objectives and conservation measures for fisheries management” to “Workshop to develop regional fisheries management plans with agreed operational objectives for fisheries management”.

The WGFM was aware that fisheries conservation and fisheries management were necessarily and strongly interconnected in the fisheries governance discourse. The meeting recognized that fisheries conservation strategies and measures were essential components of the EAF and the ecosystem approach to aquaculture (EAA). However, in consideration of the time constraints for the workshop and the need to develop regional fisheries management plans with agreed operational objectives for fisheries management, the WGFM agreed that the workshop should focus primarily on addressing the development of regional fisheries management plans. There was general consensus in the WGFM on the value of placing more emphasis on regional fisheries conservation in the Commission. The merit of organizing a specific workshop to address fisheries conservation measures and strategies in the RECOFI region was discussed.

The WGFM agreed that the TORs for the workshop to develop regional fisheries management plans with agreed operational objectives for fisheries management should include:

- a) obtaining up-to-date information on the fisheries management systems adopted by Members;
- b) reviewing current fisheries management plans and management measures enforced by Members, including threats to management posed by illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing;
- c) compiling available information in accordance with Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1, including the preliminary compilation of indicators;
- d) assessing the suitability and applicability of the proposed indicators;
- e) presenting and sharing information acquired by Members through the implementation of fishery appraisal surveys, including those recently carried out by Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, Iran [Islamic Republic of] and Oman in the Arabian Sea;
- f) taking account of the outcomes of the social and economic workshop; and
- g) taking due consideration of management needs from the conservation viewpoint.

The Secretariat underscored the need to ensure that all issues relevant to the EAF should be addressed in the workshop in a balanced way while not losing sight of the purpose of the workshop (i.e. to support the implementation of Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1).

- Pilot joint assessment of narrow-barred Spanish mackerel and workshop on the utilization of fishery-dependent data (February 2013). The WGFM agreed that this was an important workshop for RECOFI Members because of the significance of narrow-barred Spanish mackerel in the region. It was further agreed that the workshop's TORs would address biological parameters, distribution patterns, status of stocks, catch capacity, etc. In addition, it was stressed that a good understanding of fishing operations and regulations in force was required in order to ensure that there was an appropriate interpretation and utilization of fishery-dependent information. To facilitate consistency in reporting, the WGFM agreed that Members would prepare a country report prior to the workshop along the lines of a template to be provided by the Secretariat.

The delegate from the Sultanate of Oman advised the meeting that his delegation would require additional time to provide input to the TORs. This information would be provided to the Secretariat within the next two weeks. The delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran indicated that his delegation would make available, for an assessment exercise at the workshop, length/frequency data for the past ten years.

The Secretary of RECOFI noted that, as the workshop would be convened in 2013, there was adequate planning time and that complete data in conformity with Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1 should be prepared. He encouraged all Members to make their best efforts that these data were compiled in advance of the workshop so that they could be presented and utilized during the workshop.

32. With respect to the suggested actions by the WGFM concerning the:

- review of the regional strategy and prioritized activities in Appendix 1 of document RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/3;
- review of proposed projects in the list of projects in Appendix 1 of document RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/5;
- inclusion of additional projects; and
- reduction in the number and scope of projects,

the meeting recalled that these matters had been considered in detail at the fourth meeting of the WGFM in October 2010. For this reason, the WGFM agreed that these issues should be addressed again in depth at the sixth meeting of the WGFM scheduled for October 2012.

## **RECONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSAL BY THE SULTANATE OF OMAN ON ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING IN THE RECOFI REGION: ESTABLISHMENT OF A DATABASE OF VIOLATIONS**

33. Mr Mohammed Al-Siyabi, Director of Fish Statistics and Information, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Muscat, the Sultanate of Oman, introduced document RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/6. It is attached as Appendix J.

34. The WGFM recalled that, following a request from the sixth session of the Commission, the Sultanate of Oman had revised the proposal to conduct a feasibility study to review the development of regional databases for violations that could be further developed to include a list of vessels authorized to fish by Members and the establishment of a fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) information exchange scheme. In connection with the revised proposal submitted by the Sultanate of Oman, the WGFM discussed also the merit of Members conducting preliminary assessments of the extent and impacts of IUU fishing in their respective national jurisdictions. It was envisaged that these preliminary assessments would build on the information presented and gathered at the FAO/RECOFI Regional Workshop to Combat IUU Fishing, held in Muscat, Oman, from 30 March to 2 April 2009.

35. The ensuing discussions in the WGFM demonstrated that Members had different perceptions of the extent and impacts of IUU fishing occurring in international waters as well as in waters under national jurisdictions. The Secretary of RECOFI summarized briefly the work and main outcomes of the workshop and commented that participants had assessed and agreed, although not quantified, that IUU fishing had significant impacts in the region and was a crime of regional concern.

36. Members agreed that they should carry out a survey on the status and extent of IUU fishing in their respective countries. The delegate from the Sultanate of Oman agreed to draft a questionnaire that would be circulated to Members for their review and comment prior to the sixth meeting of the WGFM in Qatar in 2012. Furthermore, the WGFM agreed that Members would make a brief presentation on IUU fishing in their respective countries at the sixth session of the WGFM.

## **PROGRESS TOWARDS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOFI RECOMMENDATION ON MINIMUM DATA REPORTING**

37. Ms Sachiko Tsuji, Senior Fishery Statistician, FAO, Rome, Italy, and Mr Marc Taconet, Senior Fisheries Information Officer and the Fishery Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS) Secretary, FAO, Rome, Italy, presented document RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/7. It is attached in Appendix K.

38. Members reported on progress following the data workshop that was held in Cairo, Egypt, from 10 to 11 July 2011, in the context of their preparation of historical catch and effort data.

39. The delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran reported that historical catch and effort data from 2007 were being processed and would be available in 2012. The delegate indicated that the preparation to retrieve data older than 2006 would require substantial time to transform the data and classifications from the previous system in use to the new system. The delegate expressed the willingness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to share catch and effort information for those fisheries that were not listed under the Recommendation on Minimum Data Reporting. These data, based on industrial demersal trawl, mid-water trawl, paired-purse seine and beach-seine gear, could have significant importance for fisheries management in the region.

40. The delegate from the Republic of Iraq advised the WGFM that it would submit landing data at wholesale markets from 2004 immediately following the meeting.



41. The delegate from the State of Kuwait stressed Kuwait's commitment and understanding of the need for good information. It was explained that three organizations were involved in data collection relevant to minimum data reporting. However, the delegate confirmed that Kuwait would find a collective solution to submit the required information in a prompt manner.

42. The delegate from the Sultanate of Oman submitted data from 2004 during the meeting. The remainder of the data, from 1985, would be provided in early 2012.

43. The delegate from the State of Qatar confirmed that the country's data collection scheme at landing sites had been operating smoothly. Since 2011, the data collection scheme had incorporated also monitoring at the central market. The WGFM was advised that Qatar should have no problem in reporting fishery specific catch and effort information starting in 2012. It was recalled that Qatar had already submitted fishery-specific catch and effort data based on experimental data collection in 2009 and 2010.

44. In the process of consolidating data submitted by Members, the WGFM was advised that the Secretariat was facing some difficulties in linking names of species and species groups with the FAO standard codification for fisheries (ASFIS). The Secretariat requested Members' inputs to evaluate the links developed by the Secretariat. The WGFM was advised that the preliminary consolidated catch and effort database would be distributed to Members for their evaluation in terms of its structure and functionalities once the problem of species and species groups was resolved.

45. The WGFM recognized the need to strengthen national and regional capacities in relation to species identification, especially for groupers and emperors. The WGFM agreed to consider the species identification workshop and training as a project of high priority in the 2013–14 biennium. This activity could be linked with the revision and updating of the FAO field guide of species identification in the region. The WGFM noted specifically the need for national focal points to facilitate the nomination of participants with the appropriate levels of expertise and experience to ensure that such workshops were effective.

46. The WGFM was advised that, at the present time, there was no standard data collection protocol to fulfil minimum data reporting requirements. Although it was recognized that Members were responsible for establishing suitable data collection and monitoring systems as well as for the quality assurance of data submitted, the WGFM agreed it was useful for Members to describe their data collection procedures as a means of facilitating better and more accurate interpretation and analysis of information submitted. During the meeting, the general difficulty in collecting size information of catch separated by fishery was noted. However, the WGFM agreed that the exchange of size composition data could be deferred until such time when the utilization of this information would be reviewed and defined more clearly. The WGFM called upon the Commission to provide technical support to assist RECOFI Members.

47. The WGFM sought clarification regarding the rationale for harmonizing the RECOFI aquaculture and capture fisheries information systems. It was noted that aquaculture and capture fisheries were very different activities. Aquaculture production was low in comparison with capture fisheries production in the region, and there was much more information available on capture fisheries. The arguments supporting harmonization were premised on having a single entry point to capture and aquaculture information in the RECOFI area. Moreover, such an approach would benefit from synergies between the two and would build on the facilities and experiences developed by both systems.

48. The WGFM recognized that Members needed to decide whether the consolidation and dissemination of information should be delegated to the Secretariat or whether this task should be

handled by Members themselves. The Secretariat pointed out that a distinction should be made between content management and system maintenance.

49. The Secretary of RECOFI referred to the experience of the Regional Aquaculture Information System (RAIS), recalling that the development phase was undertaken with Kuwait hosting the system and FAO providing technical support. However, the adult phase of RAIS now faced the challenge of continuous maintenance and allocation of a regular budget. In terms of lessons learned, firm commitments for accepting the burden of long-term maintenance would have to be pledged by a Member willing to host the system. In the absence of such a commitment, RECOFI would have to provide funding for the task.

50. The delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran expressed an interest in hosting the capture fisheries information system, similar to RAIS, as part of the main RECOFI Information Network. The Iranian delegation agreed to provide a proposal for such a system at the sixth meeting of the WGFM for its consideration.

51. The Secretary of RECOFI reminded the WGFM of the obligation to establish the information network during the first half of 2012. The WGFM agreed that FAO would take steps towards hosting the main components of the RECOFI Information Network, including maintenance of formal document registries and the shared database, to the extent that funds permitted.

#### **PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF STOCK AND FISHERIES STATUS INDICATORS TO BE PRODUCED FROM THE RECOFI FISHERY MANAGEMENT DATABASE**

52. Ms Tsuji presented document RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/8. It is attached in Appendix L.

53. The WGFM recalled the general requirements for the EAF and the importance of defining proper operational objectives, reference points to trigger management actions and corresponding indicators to monitor the status of targets and implementation of actions. The WGFM also recognized the importance of careful analysis of basic information, including consolidated catch and efforts statistics, biology and ecology of targeted resources, operational aspects of fisheries, the relationship between possible indicators and targets, potential noises and biases, and procedures to consolidate multiple indicators to select an effective set of indicators. The WGFM agreed to incorporate the indicators into the TORs for the workshop to develop regional management plans with agreed operational objectives for fisheries management. Members were encouraged to undertake preparatory analysis prior to the workshop.

#### **CONSIDERATION OF A RECOFI SCIENTIFIC WORKING GROUP TO PROVIDE SCIENTIFIC ADVICE TO THE COMMISSION ON AQUACULTURE AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT: ROLE, STRUCTURE AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WORKING GROUP ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT**

54. The Secretary of RECOFI introduced document RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/9. It is attached in Appendix M.

55. The WGFM considered the rationale and appropriateness of establishing a multidisciplinary scientific expert group as a subsidiary body of the Commission, in addition to the WGFM and WGA.

56. The WGFM, taking note of the Commission's financial and human resources constraints, deemed the creation of a scientific, technical and economic committee to be appropriate. It was agreed that the multidisciplinary scientific expert group would have a consultative role and would participate in strategy development for fisheries management and aquaculture.

57. The delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran agreed to draft TORs for a multidisciplinary scientific expert group that would be submitted for consideration at the sixth meeting of the WGFM in 2012. In the meantime, the Secretary of RECOFI was requested to contact the Technical Secretary of the WGA, requesting that the WGA consider the establishment of such an expert group.

58. The Secretary of RECOFI advised the WGFM that the Commission at its seventh session in the Islamic Republic of Iran, scheduled to be held from 14 to 16 May 2013, would be informed on the outcomes of the WGFM and WGA discussions on the matter.

### **RECOFI COOPERATION WITH FIRMS**

59. Mr Taconet presented document RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/10. It is attached in Appendix N.

#### **Fisheries inventory**

60. A review of three-dimensional (3D) diagrams showing the identified fishery units in a graphical way led to comments and questions concerning species classification, proposed terminology for vessel types, reality of some fisheries, mistyped scientific names and mechanisms that were foreseen for regional aggregation of national inventories of fisheries.

61. The FIRMS Secretary clarified that the 3D diagrams did not provide a classification of aquatic species but rather a harmonized framework across countries while emphasizing some important species for the region (e.g. narrow-barred Spanish mackerel) or for particular Members (e.g. abalone for Oman). For clarity, the WGFM agreed that species not relevant to a Member's fisheries would be removed. Members agreed to revise the graphs, ensuring the introduction of the three or four most important species in the catches.

62. The FIRMS Secretary explained that the fisheries inventory guidelines provided practical solutions for dealing with potentially complex lists of multiple targets or associated species in the case of demersal fisheries.

63. The FIRMS Secretary clarified that the inventories of fisheries developed nationally would be aggregated regionally according to a harmonized framework. Accordingly, Members retained primary ownership and control of the contents they would supply to RECOFI. As corporate owner of the aggregated inventory, RECOFI would ensure, in collaboration with the FIRMS Secretariat, that agreed conventions and harmonized rules were applied. Without RECOFI's agreement, no information under RECOFI's ownership could be published by FIRMS.

64. Regarding harmonization-related issues, the WGFM agreed that, with the assistance of the FIRMS Secretariat, Members would develop the inventory content in an Excel template with reference to the harmonized framework (3D diagrams). During this process, any harmonization issue that could not be resolved would be recorded and the next meeting of the WGFM would examine the regionally aggregated inventory and decide on reported outstanding harmonization issues.

65. The FIRMS Secretary noted that a successful outcome of the procedure described above should permit the RECOFI inventory to be published in FIRMS. A regional inventory aggregating a minimum of three or four Members' national inventories was deemed acceptable for consolidation for FIRMS publication.

#### **Marine resources inventory**

66. Unlike the fisheries inventory, the FIRMS Secretary stressed that the primary and corporate ownership of the marine resources inventory would remain with RECOFI. In this respect, the

regional priority was to develop an inventory focusing on RECOFI priority species. Members were encouraged to seek inputs from scientists to compile information concerning those priority species.

67. The WGFM noted that progress made by Qatar on the marine resources inventory provided a good illustration of the inclusion of additional species of national interest in the regional inventory. Following the Qatar example, the FIRMS Secretary explained that the FIRMS template was available as an “information collection mechanism” that Members were encouraged to use for compiling information regarding additional species. It was pointed out that national inventories would be used, among others, as sources for decision-making regarding the inclusion of additional species in the priority list of species supporting fisheries of common interest.

68. The development of the marine resources inventory was second priority after the fisheries inventory. Opportunities such as the scheduled workshop on narrow-barred Spanish mackerel could be used to consolidate subsets of the inventory. It was anticipated that the sixth meeting of the WGFM in 2012 would review progress made on the marine resources inventory and decide on possible next steps.

#### **Georeferencing system in the RECOFI area**

69. The FIRMS Secretary presented a map of the region showing existing geographic boundaries including the RECOFI area, FAO statistical areas, exclusive economic zones and large marine ecosystems. He referred to the harmonized framework (3D diagram) indicating that the existing georeferencing systems did not permit differentiation between the Oman Sea and the Arabian Sea, two areas that should be differentiated in the RECOFI inventory process.

70. The WGFM agreed that FAO statistical subarea 51.3 “Western Arabian Sea” should be divided into two divisions: 51.3.1 for the Oman Sea and 51.3.2 for the Arabian Sea (South Western). The approximate limits of the two divisions were indicated and agreed on the map. The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Sultanate of Oman agreed to provide geographic coordinates for the proposed delineation.

71. The WGFM noted that the RECOFI Secretariat will transmit to the Coordinating Working Party on Statistics (CWP) Secretariat a request for formal endorsement by the CWP of the proposed modification, including specification of the limit between the two new divisions, the proposed codes and names, and the rationale for their creation.

#### **Translation**

72. While recognizing that the commonly used language of RECOFI was English, the WGFM, nonetheless, considered it important that material related to the inventories be translated into Arabic and Farsi. The FIRMS Secretary confirmed that the guidelines, Excel template and controlled terms are the materials to be translated.

#### **RECOFI membership in FIRMS**

73. The Secretary of RECOFI stressed the importance of the international visibility of RECOFI, adding that the FIRMS initiative provided an additional means of gaining such visibility.

74. Confident that at least three inventories of fisheries should be available in draft format by the end of November 2011, the WGFM agreed that two RECOFI representatives should attend, as observers and as part of the FAO delegation, the next FIRMS Steering Committee meeting (FSC7) that will take place at FAO headquarters, Rome, Italy, from 12 to 13 December 2011. It was noted that the FIRMS Secretariat would support financially the participation of the representatives in the meeting.

75. The WGFM expected that national inventories of fisheries should be available in draft format and aggregated in a regional inventory by the sixth meeting of the WGFM in October 2012. At that meeting, it was anticipated that Members would make a decision as to whether the regional inventory should be published in FIRMS. In addition, the RECOFI representatives attending the FSC7 would be invited to report to the WGFM. Based on information available, it was anticipated that the WGFM would make a recommendation to the 2013 session of the Commission concerning a possible application for FIRMS' membership.

#### **ANY OTHER MATTERS**

76. The WGFM welcomed a presentation made by a delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran concerning the main results of an ongoing Iranian fisheries appraisal survey. The WGFM agreed that it would be highly desirable and scientifically advisable to achieve full survey coverage of the RECOFI area through the cooperation of Members.

77. The WGFM agreed to revise and update the list of priority species supporting fisheries of common interest in the RECOFI area at the sixth meeting of the WGFM in 2012.

#### **DATE AND PLACE OF THE SIXTH MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT**

78. Noting the Commission's agreement that the sixth meeting of the WGFM would be held in Qatar, the delegate of the State of Qatar advised the meeting that the proposed dates for the meeting would be from 21 to 23 October 2012. The delegate expressed the hope that all RECOFI Members would attend the meeting.

#### **ADOPTION OF THE REPORT**

79. The report of the meeting was adopted on 12 October 2011 at 16.30 hours.

80. The Chairperson, on behalf of the Iran Fisheries Organization, thanked delegates for their active participation in the meeting. He commented that the negotiation and exchange of views and information in the WGFM had been highly productive and would serve to further improve regional cooperation among Members. He also thanked FAO and the RECOFI Secretariat for their efforts in ensuring that the meeting was a success.

81. The delegates from the Republic of Iraq, the Sultanate of Oman and the State of Qatar thanked the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting such an excellent and successful meeting. The delegates also thanked the RECOFI Secretariat for its support prior to, and during, the meeting.



**Agenda**

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the agenda and arrangements for the meeting
3. Main outcomes of the sixth session of RECOFI
4. Main outcomes of the fourth session of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management and the Informal Consultations among RECOFI Members
5. Update of the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2011–12 in relation to the Working Group on Fisheries Management
6. Reconsideration of the proposal by the Sultanate of Oman on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the RECOFI region: establishment of a database of violations
7. Progress towards the implementation of the RECOFI Recommendation on Minimum Data Reporting
8. Preliminary review of stock and fisheries status indicators to be produced from the RECOFI Fishery Management Database
9. Consideration of a RECOFI Scientific Working Group to provide scientific advice to the Commission on aquaculture and fishery management: Role, structure and relationship with Working Group of Fishery Management
10. RECOFI cooperation with FIRMS
11. Any other matters
12. Date and place of the sixth meeting of the Working Group on Fisheries Management
13. Adoption of the report

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### List of documents

RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/1	Agenda
RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/2	Main outcomes of the sixth session of RECOFI
RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/3	Main outcomes of the fourth session of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management
RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/4	Informal consultations among RECOFI Members
RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/5	Update of the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2011–2012 in relation to the Working Group on Fisheries Management
RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/6	Reconsideration of the proposal by the Sultanate of Oman on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the RECOFI region: establishment of a database of violations
RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/7	Report on the progress towards the implementation of the RECOFI Recommendation on Minimum Data Reporting
RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/8	Preliminary review of stock and fisheries status indicators to be produced from the RECOFI Fishery Management Database
RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/9	Consideration of a RECOFI Scientific Working Group to provide scientific advice to the Commission on aquaculture and fishery management: Role, structure and relationship with Working Group on Fisheries Management
RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/10	RECOFI cooperation with FIRMS
RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/Inf.1	List of documents
RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/Inf.2	List of participants
RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/Inf.3	Statement by the Assistant-Director General and Regional Representative for the Near East and North Africa
RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/Inf.4	Report of the sixth session of the Regional Commission for Fisheries. Rome, Italy, 10–12 May 2011
RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/Inf.5	Report of the fourth meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management. Muscat, Oman, 3–5 October 2010
RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/Inf.6	Report of the Workshop on fishery stock indicators and stock status. Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, 26–29 July 2009

**Opening statement**  
**by**  
**Mr Ali Asghar Mojahedi**  
**Director General for Fishing and Fishers Affairs**  
**Iran Fisheries Organization**  
**Tehran, Iran (Islamic Republic of)**

Distinguished guests, Representatives of Member Countries in RECOFI, Esteemed Authorities from FAO-RNE and experts of FAO headquarters and dear colleagues!

Good morning!

On behalf of myself, I would like to welcome you to the Islamic Republic of Iran and wish you very happy moments during your stay in my country. It is a great honour for Iran Fisheries Organization to host fifth Meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management in this International Hotel in Tehran.

Regional cooperation plays a significant role in improving fisheries management status and all of us need this kind of cooperation for enhancing fisheries objectives at regional basis with common resources.

Fortunately, during recent years, RECOFI has taken major steps for preparing an appropriate framework and develop collaboration among member countries. I would like to take this opportunity to appreciate all efforts of FAO-RNE and especially Dr Piero Mannini for his attempts in this regard.

I should emphasise that our achievements in line with predefined goals needs more expertise steps while we are still at the beginning this long road.

Preparing biannual program for priorities of the projects, preparing the first steps for Resources and Fisheries Inventory by countries, preparing an appropriate framework for catch data collection and noting the importance of regional cooperation are among steps taken in recent years by RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management and we have experienced good achievements in these fields.

Achieving predefined goals is possible when all of us take care of our own fisheries activities and task into account all aspects (including national and regional) for required planning and coordination.

Presence of esteemed representatives from member countries, authorities and related senior experts from FAO-RNE and FAO headquarters obviously shows interest of all parties for achieving common goals in the framework of RECOFI.

I wish success for this meeting and hope me and my colleagues at Iran Fisheries Organization of Iran will use all our capabilities to serve goals of this meeting. We are open to all critics, please do not hesitate to suggest your ideas and help us for better performance during this meeting.

In the end, once again I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a happy stay in my country "Iran".

**Opening statement**  
**by**  
**Mr Piero Mannini, Senior Fishery Officer**  
**on behalf of Mr Saad Al-Otaibi**  
**Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative**  
**FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa**

Distinguished Delegates, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to each and all of you on the occasion of the opening of the fifth meeting of the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) kindly hosted by the Iranian Fisheries Organization (SHILAT), Minister for Jihad-e-Agriculture, the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The role and obligations of regional fisheries management organizations, such as RECOFI, in fisheries governance are growing steadily. Simultaneously, strengthening regional fisheries management organizations and their performance still remains the major challenge facing international fisheries governance. Numerous RFMOs are recognizant of the need for greater cooperation between member states and the need to reform their legal and institutional framework. RECOFI is no exception to this situation.

The complex semi-enclosed nature of the RECOFI area makes that the marine fishery resources are shared between coastal countries. Many marine species use different habitats at different stages of their life cycle, which may involve trans-boundary distribution across the RECOFI region. Commission Members share the benefit of exploiting many of the fishery resources as well as the responsibility for their sound management.

The Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries emphasizes the cooperation among States as an essential and unavoidable requirement for the responsible exploitation of shared fishery resources. The fact that many large stocks in RECOFI waters are exploited by fleets from several Member Countries has to be taken into account. The implementing measures decided by these different States should be compatible with one other within a shared fishery. Cooperative fishery research and, above all, management can be really effective when each part foresees benefits equal or superior to those it would expect in a scenario with no cooperation.

The role and function of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations such as the RECOFI are essential to facilitate and reinforce regional collaboration. The sound management and development of the regional fisheries wealth necessarily require the establishment and development of regional and sub-regional cooperation for fisheries and environmental research. RECOFI appears as a convenient and valid mechanism to promote and enhance the regional dialogue and cooperation for the sustainable development of regional fisheries.

Many RFMOs, including RECOFI, recognize the need for more and better scientific data. Nevertheless, action to progress towards fisheries sustainability can certainly be undertaken on the basis of the scientific data and information available at the country and region level.

I wish to draw to your attention that Thirtieth Session of the FAO Regional Conference for the Near East that was held in Khartoum, Sudan, from 4 to 8 December 2010, called upon Member Countries, all of which are also Members of RECOFI, to “Strengthen the Regional Fisheries Commissions, particularly RECOFI in order to ensure sustainable fisheries management and aquaculture development, including the socio-economic component”. Moreover, the Regional Conference also requested FAO to “Continue providing technical support to enhance cooperation among Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq and Kuwait related to the FAO/RECOFI initiative for

sustainable fisheries management by applying the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries". I can ensure you that the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department and the Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa stand ready to assist Member countries in such undertaking.

In the region covered by RECOFI, significant additional investment is needed in research, human resource development, and institutional strengthening and reforms to create the capacity needed for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development and conservation. In this regard, it is noteworthy to stress that the need for capacity development was underscored by all Members at the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development in May 2010. However, I notice with concern that Members are not providing their Commission, RECOFI, with the needed support to increase the regional capacity for appraisal and management of common resources. I think that much more can and should be done. Members should be more actively involved in the work of their Commission to fully benefit from its services.

I must, however, congratulate the Commission and its Members for the progress accomplished in a relatively short time. Also, I wish to underline that the Commission at its Sixth Session in May 2011 noted that the current level of Members contributions was only sufficient to fund the implementation of a limited number of priority activities, and resolved that additional funds would be required if a more ambitious work programme was to be implemented. As a result, the Commission decided to continue applying fixed and equal contribution for Members, and agreed on a three-fold increase (i.e. from USD5 000 to USD15 000) of the Members' annual contributions from 2013 provided that all arrears were liquidated by 31 December 2011.

I noticed with satisfaction that RECOFI is decisively moving from words to facts to assume fully its mandated role as the relevant RFMO in this part of the world and it is not avoiding the challenges posed by its mandate. In fact, the Commission adopted its first fisheries management recommendation, RECOFI/6/2011/1, entitled "Recommendation on minimum data reporting in the RECOFI area" that would take effect on 1 January 2012. I trust that the Commission and its advisory bodies as the WGFM are ready to pursue its responsibilities and duties for the well being of its Members and their fisheries.

I notice you have a demanding agenda that is meaningful of the work carried out since the previous meeting of the WGFM in 2010. I wish you all a full and very productive meeting for the benefit of all.

Lastly, I wish to extend my thanks to those in SHILAT and FAO who have worked together to make possible and organize this event. Special thanks are due to the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting this event.

Thank you very much for your attention.

### **Main outcomes of the sixth session of RECOFI**

#### **PURPOSE**

1. The purpose of this document is to provide information to the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGF) on the outcomes of the sixth session of Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) that was held in Rome, Italy, from 10 to 12 May 2011.

#### **BACKGROUND**

2. RECOFI's sixth session was attended by 18 delegates from all RECOFI Member countries. Observers from Yemen and INFOSAMAK also attended. The Commission reviewed the work carried out since the fifth session in 2009 including RECOFI's administrative and financial reports; considered selected issues of particular relevance for the region, such as fish stock status reporting and trends of fisheries production, aquaculture development prospective, regional strategy for spatial planning for marine fisheries and aquaculture; addressed the functioning of the Commission including its consolidation and development and adopt the work programme for biennium 2011–2012.

#### **MAIN OUTCOMES AND DECISIONS**

3. The main outcomes of the session and decisions taken by the Commission were the following:

- The Commission Members recognized that regional dialogue had been facilitated through Commission activities that had helped Members identify national and regional actions required to move forward with the adoption of regulations and policies to support the sustainable management of shared fisheries resources and development of the aquaculture sector.
- The Commission acknowledged the comprehensive financial report concerning RECOFI's work over the 2009–2010 biennium and noted the significant FAO Regular Programme contributions to support RECOFI's work.
- The Commission agreed that capacity development remained a critical issue in the region and this was essential to enable fisheries personnel to promote policies aimed at facilitating long-term sustainability including the adoption of the ecosystem approach to fisheries.
- The Commission recognized that the establishment of the Regional Aquaculture Information System (RAIS) was a significant accomplishment.
- The Commission endorsed the FAO/RECOFI regional strategy on spatial planning for marine capture fisheries and aquaculture and decided, within available resources, to provide the necessary support for follow-up action for the strategy's implementation.
- The Commission adopted its first fisheries management recommendation, RECOFI/6/2011/1, entitled "Recommendation on minimum data reporting in the RECOFI area". In accordance with Article V of the Agreement for the Establishment of the Regional Commission for Fisheries, the Commission agreed that the recommendation would take effect on 1 January 2012.
- The Commission endorsed the findings and outcomes of the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development (Rome, 11–12 May 2010).
- The Commission concurred that many fisheries management and developmental challenges faced RECOFI. Members were calling upon the Commission more frequently to undertake additional work and for this reason it was necessary to reconsider the annual contributions paid.



- The Commission noted that the current level of Members contributions was only sufficient to fund the implementation of a limited number of priority activities, and resolved that additional funds would be required if a more ambitious work programme was to be implemented.
- In considering options considered by the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development, the Commission decided to continue applying fixed and equal contribution for Members, and agreed on a threefold increase (i.e. from USD5 000 to USD15 000) of the Members' annual contributions from 2013 provided that all arrears were liquidated by 31 December 2011.
- The Commission approved a workplan for the next intersessional period and agreed to support activities focusing on: capacity development for aquaculture and fisheries spatial planning and management; stock status reporting; implementation of minimum data requirements and establishment of a regional database and information network to support management of major fisheries; development of regional management plans with agreed operational objectives and measures for fisheries management; pilot joint assessment of the shared stock of kingfish; fisheries socio-economic appraisal; risk analysis in aquaculture; environmental monitoring in cage aquaculture; and maintenance and development of the RAIS.
- The seventh session of RECOFI will be hosted by the Islamic Republic of Iran during the second week of May 2013.

#### **SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORKING GROUP**

4. The Working Group is invited to consider and comment on the outcomes of the sixth session of RECOFI, with particular consideration to the implications for the WGF work to be implemented during the intersession period.

## **Main outcomes of the fourth session of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. The fourth meeting of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) was held in Muscat, Oman, from 3 to 5 October 2010. It was attended by 14 delegates from six Member States: the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Sultanate of Oman, the State of Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

2. The WGFM addressed a comprehensive agenda, reviewing and consolidating decisions and extending work that had been agreed by the WGFM and RECOFI. The WGFM continued to streamline its approach and method of work while focusing on issues necessary to ensure the more effective conservation and management of capture fisheries resources in the RECOFI area.

### **OUTCOMES**

3. The WGFM's Programme of Work and Budget for the 2011–12 biennium, including its regional strategy and priorities for regional fisheries management, were discussed and in some cases, streamlined. Given RECOFI's very tight budgetary situation, the WGFM agreed to reduce the number of prioritized objectives from seven to five so as to rationalize the number of projects proposed for implementation. The revised strategy, prioritized objectives, regional activities and projects that were submitted to the RECOFI's sixth session (May 2011) for consideration and approval are in Appendix 1.

4. The WGFM recalled that RECOFI at its fifth session (May 2009) had reviewed and agreed on the strategy and approved a number of projects for implementation. Subsequently, in Doha, Qatar, in October 2009, the third WGFM meeting reviewed the strategy and projects approved by RECOFI for implementation. The WGFM noted that all activities agreed by the Commission had been implemented except for the project on the integration of catch and effort data. However, this project was slated for implementation so that its results could be communicated to RECOFI's sixth session (May 2011).

5. With respect to the frequency of WGFM meetings, it was agreed that a recommendation should be made to RECOFI's sixth session that the WGFM meet annually, maintaining the current October schedule for meetings. Despite the additional resources required to support an annual meeting, the WGFM noted that an increase in the frequency of meetings would enable the WGFM to review, update and monitor its activities in a more effective manner.

6. The WGFM deliberated on the outcomes of the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development that took place at FAO headquarters, Rome, Italy, in May 2010. The WGFM noted that the Special Meeting had agreed to make three broad recommendations in relation to the Commission's future technical, institutional and financial needs. The WGFM agreed that RECOFI's consolidation and strengthening was of extreme importance, particularly in relation to ensuring that it had adequate financial resources to undertake its programme of work. The WGFM recognized that should the current level of Members' contributions remain unchanged, this would have a significant impact on the Commission's future work.

7. In relation to stock status reporting, the WGFM adopted a Recommendation on Minimum Data Reporting in the RECOFI Area. This was the first Recommendation<sup>1</sup> adopted by the WGFM.<sup>2</sup> The WGFM noted that considerable work was being undertaken by Members and the Secretariat to assemble the necessary information to support the implementation of the Recommendation. It was seen as the cornerstone underpinning improved capture fisheries management for major shared stocks both at the national level in terms of promoting consistent approaches to management and for enhancing cooperative regional management among RECOFI Members.<sup>3</sup>

8. During discussion concerning stock status reporting, the WGFM noted the urgent need for RECOFI to establish a regional database to maintain information required to support fisheries management as a public asset of the Commission. Moreover, the WGFM reconfirmed the need for further preparatory work identified and agreed at the third WGFM meeting. This work included: (i) a review of national fisheries monitoring programmes to identify areas of improvement in addressing minimum data requirements; (ii) the establishment of common formats for reporting and sharing information; and (iii) a workshop to ensure the smooth implementation of minimum data reporting experimenting with actual data exchanges and examinations.

9. In a document prepared for consideration of the WGFM, the Sultanate of Oman proposed that a feasibility study be undertaken to assess whether a regional database of fishing violations, a list of vessels authorized to fish, and monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) information exchange scheme should be established. The WGFM agreed that the feasibility study would not create commitments for any Member and that its results would be considered at a subsequent WGFM meeting prior to further action was taken.

10. The Omani proposal led to protracted discussion and a number of issues were raised in relation to the need to involve other national agencies responsible for fisheries MCS such as the coastguard if a project moved beyond the feasibility stage. The similarities and differences among Members in terms of the characteristics of their fishery sectors were noted in discussion. Some Members explained that they had comprehensive vessel authorization and MCS systems already in place. The WGFM agreed that the feasibility study should be listed in the projects for implementation by RECOFI. However, the title of the feasibility study was amended by the WGFM to “Feasibility study to review the development of regional databases for violations, establish a list of vessels authorized to fish by Members and the establishment of an MCS information exchange scheme”.<sup>4</sup>

11. The WGFM recalled that at the third WGFM meeting in Doha, Qatar, from 20 to 22 October 2009, the Secretariat convened a second meeting to advance the FAO/RECOFI Initiative to Promote Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of RECOFI. After initial positive work, the FAO/RECOFI Secretariat convened a third meeting at FAO headquarters, Rome, Italy, on 13 May 2010 to take the Initiative further. The WGFM noted these

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<sup>1</sup> The Recommendation was accepted by RECOFI at its sixth session in Rome, Italy, in May 2011 and is now binding on Members.

<sup>2</sup> The WGFM took note of the workshop on “Stock Indicators and Stock Status Reporting” (Tehran, Iran [Islamic Republic of], 26–29 July 2009) that reviewed data and stock status information from the region. The workshop faced difficulty in assembling data and developing a draft protocol on the minimum set of data required to address three major common concerns including: (i) the ecosystem-wide impacts of shrimp trawls, (ii) exploitation levels of finfish resources, and (iii) stock status, especially for narrow-barred Spanish mackerel. The third WGFM meeting (Doha, Qatar, 20–22 October 2009) reviewed and adopted this protocol for minimum data reporting and requested the Secretariat to prepare a draft Recommendation for discussion at the fourth WGFM meeting (Muscat, Oman, 3–5 October 2010).

<sup>3</sup> See document RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/8 “Preliminary review of stock and fisheries status indicators to be produced from the RECOFI Management database”. It provides additional information on work in progress to support the implementation of the Recommendation.

<sup>4</sup> This issue is revisited in document RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/6.

developments and commended the Secretariat for its efforts to promote this subregional initiative. The WGFM also expressed its satisfaction with the excellent progress achieved.

12. The WGFM noted the outcome of the regional seminar entitled “Fish Trade and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Near East and North Africa: Implication of Certification and Traceability Schemes for the Region”. It was convened in Agadir, Morocco, from 22 to 24 June 2010 by the FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa, in partnership with the Centre for Marketing Information and Advisory Services for Fishery Products in the Arab Region. The seminar addressed practical information on catch documentation schemes in fisheries; an introduction to the use of traceability schemes; an understanding of the implications of certification and related schemes; knowledge about the relationship between illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and trade for the region, and information about the role and function of fishery products certification and related schemes as means to combat and deter, prevent, and eliminate IUU fishing. The Seminar approved, by consensus, a statement summarizing the basic considerations and priority issues for the Near East and North Africa Region including key activities aimed at improving cooperation and strengthening the regional response to IUU fishing and related activities.

13. The WGFM expressed interest in the outcome of the seminar and pointed out that many of the priorities and issues relating to IUU fishing and fish trade identified by the seminar were relevant to the RECOFI area. The WGFM agreed that the terms of reference for the feasibility study to review the development of a regional database of violations, establish a list of vessel authorized to fish by Members and promote the establishment of an MCS information exchange scheme should take into consideration the seminar’s final statement.

14. The WGFM was advised that the manager of a FAO project entitled “Fishery Information and Resource Monitoring Systems” (FIRMS) had approached the RECOFI Secretariat with a proposal to hold a regional consultation to update fisheries inventories. If this consultation materialized, the WGFM could take this opportunity to proceed with preparations for establishing minimum data reporting in the region.<sup>5</sup>

15. The WGFM agreed that a special meeting would be convened on 9 May 2011 in Manama, Bahrain, immediately prior to the sixth RECOFI session.<sup>6</sup> The purpose of this meeting was to address outstanding issues that required consideration by RECOFI.

16. The WGFM elected unanimously Mr Abdulkarim H. Radhi, Head of Fisheries Assessment Section, Directorate of Fisheries Resources, General Directorate for Protection of Marine Resources, Public Commission for Protection of Marine Resources, Environment and Wildlife, Manama, the Kingdom of Bahrain, as Chairperson of the Working Group for the next two years.

## **SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORKING GROUP**

17. The WGFM is invited to review the outcomes of the fourth meeting of the WGFM and to comment as appropriate on them, noting that the report was considered by the RECOFI at its sixth session.

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<sup>5</sup> The meeting was held at the Regional Office for the Near East, Cairo, Egypt, in July 2011. A report on the meeting is in document RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/10.

<sup>6</sup> The special meeting was convened at FAO headquarters, Rome, Italy, on 9 May 2011, as scheduled. However, there was not a quorum for the WGFM to meet.

## Appendix 1

**Updated RECOFI Regional Strategy and Priorities for Regional Fisheries Management,  
including a workplan: 2011–12**

STRATEGY: Promotion of sound and effective regional fisheries governance by:

- ensuring that fisheries are exploited and utilized in a responsible and long-term sustainable manner;
- ensuring that fisheries generate maximum social and economic benefits for RECOFI countries; and
- ensuring that ecosystem considerations are incorporated into conservation and management decisions.

PRIORITIZED OBJECTIVES	REGIONAL ACTIVITIES	REGIONAL PROJECTS	INDICATIVE COST AND FUNDING SOURCE (USD)	PROJECT RANKING	MAJOR PROJECT OUTPUTS
<b>1. To implement effective fisheries management through regional cooperation and harmonization, including shared stocks and fisheries of common interest, based on the ecosystem approach</b>	Development and implementation of information systems to support regional fisheries management plans	Preparatory exercise for implementation of minimum data requirements and establishment and maintenance of a regional database and information network to support management of major fisheries (follow-up to Iran workshop)	20 000 (Source: TBI)  Cost of establishment and maintenance of regional database to be determined	1	Initial data set to be incorporated into regional database  Establishment of a regional database
		Review of national fisheries monitoring programmes	40 000 (Source: TBI)	8	Enhanced national fisheries monitoring programmes to support sustainable fisheries management
		Pilot joint assessment of kingfish and workshop on the utilization of fishery-dependent data	30 000 (Source: TBI)	3	Recommendations and options for the assessment of joint stocks
		Pilot joint assessment of ecosystem impact of shrimp fisheries	30 000 (Source: TBI)	7	Recommendations and options for assessing ecosystem impacts of shrimp fisheries
	Development and implementation of agreed management scope, operational objectives and conservation measures (e.g.	Workshop to develop regional management plans with agreed operational objectives and conservation measures for fisheries management	15 000 (Source: TBI)	2	Fisheries management plan  Harmonization and cooperation to strengthen management

<b>PRIORITIZED OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>REGIONAL ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>REGIONAL PROJECTS</b>	<b>INDICATIVE COST AND FUNDING SOURCE (USD)</b>	<b>PROJECT RANKING</b>	<b>MAJOR PROJECT OUTPUTS</b>
	closed areas, seasons, restrictions on species and sizes)				
	Implementation of monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS), including vessel monitoring systems	Project to implement regionally VMS: phase 1 to ascertain feasibility	30 000 (Source: TBI)	14	Report with recommendations and options concerning the implementation of regional VMS
		Annual regional meeting of MCS officers to exchange information of common interest and consider the possibility of promoting a harmonized MCS approach	15 000 (Source: TBI)	13	Strengthened approach to addressing regional MCS problems through enhanced cooperation and harmonization of activities
	Implementation of measures against illegal, IUU fishing including port States measures and flag State performance criteria	Feasibility study to review development of regional databases of violations, establish a list of vessels authorized to fish by Members and the establishment of an MCS information exchange scheme (refer to FAO/INFOSAMAK priorities)	30 000 (Source: TBI)	10	Options and recommendations to address IUU fishing in a more comprehensive and effective manner
	Promotion of bycatch reduction in support of improved utilization	A study to evaluate and promote options to improve utilization of bycatch	15 000 (Source: TBI)	15	Reduced bycatch in fisheries
	Promotion of gear types to mitigate bycatch and ecosystem impacts	Evaluation and promotion of options of gear types with lower ecosystem impacts	15 000 (Source: TBI)	9	Reduced undesirable impact of fisheries on the ecosystem  Greater responsibility and sustainability in fisheries
<b>2. To facilitate human resource development and institutional strengthening to</b>	Workshops, country attachments and other training opportunities to	Applied training programme for fish data collectors for the identification of priority species	25 000 (Source: TBI)	4	Fish data collectors capable of identifying priority species

<b>PRIORITIZED OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>REGIONAL ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>REGIONAL PROJECTS</b>	<b>INDICATIVE COST AND FUNDING SOURCE (USD)</b>	<b>PROJECT RANKING</b>	<b>MAJOR PROJECT OUTPUTS</b>
<b>ensure the capacity to implement sustainable fisheries</b>	enhance human resource development				
<b>3. To promote legal discussion and review and revise fisheries legislation for harmonizing fisheries management, reflecting international instruments</b>	Promotion of the acceptance and implementation of international instruments and harmonization of fisheries laws among Members	Comparative analysis of certain legal issues to promote further harmonization of legislation, building on initial work undertaken by RECOFI and taking into consideration other relevant work	20 000 (Source: TBI)	5	Enhanced understanding of requirements to promote greater harmonization of legislation to support regional approaches to fisheries management
<b>4. To reflect social values and economic consideration in small-scale fisheries</b>	Recognition of the social and economic role including food security and nutrition, played by fisheries and their utilization	Workshop on social and economic aspects of small-scale fisheries	10 000 (Source: TBI)	6	Enhanced understanding of the economic dimensions of the fishing industry in the region with a view to the development of economic indicators
<b>5. To coordinate and promote information exchange and fish trade in the RECOFI Area</b>	Promote better cooperation in regional fish trade including consideration of regional standards for fish exports and imports	Evaluation of certification and related schemes to be investigated together with the relationship between IUU fishing and trade and the estimated value of IUU fishing in the region	20 000 (Source: TBI)	12	Enhanced understanding of impacts of certification and related schemes  Assessment of the effects of IUU fishing on trade  Estimation of the value of IUU fishing in the region
		Workshop to consider regional standards for fish exports and imports as a means of promoting better cooperation and trade	15 000 (Source: TBI)	11	More rigorous standards for fish exports and imports

## **Informal consultations among RECOFI Members**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. At the fourth meeting of the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) in Muscat, Oman, it was agreed that a special meeting of the WGFM should be convened on 9 May 2011 immediately prior to the sixth Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) session. The purpose of the meeting was to consider the findings of a consultant's report pertaining to the integration of catch and effort data to support the implementation of Recommendation RECOFI6/2001/1. Regrettably, on 9 May 2011, there was not a quorum and the WGFM was unable to meet. However, taking advantage of the presence of three RECOFI Members, an informal consultation was held to review the report.

2. This report of this informal consultation was presented to the sixth RECOFI session as document RECOFI:VI/2011/6 Add.1, entitled "Record of informal consultation among RECOFI members to consider the Consultant's draft report relating to integration of catch effort data in support of draft Recommendation RECOFI6/2011/1". There was no recorded discussion of the document in the report of the sixth session of the Commission.

### **REPORT OF THE INFORMAL CONSULTATION**

3. Delegates from the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia met at FAO headquarters on 9 May 2011 to consider the consultant's draft report on the integration of catch and effort data in the RECOFI area (document RECOFI:Special meeting WGFM/2011/Inf.2). Lacking a quorum, the WGFM was unable to convene and it was decided that the meeting should informally consider the draft paper prepared by the consultant.

4. The Secretary of RECOFI reminded the meeting that the integration of catch and effort data was fundamental to sound fisheries management and that the work undertaken by the consultant would support the draft Recommendation on minimum data reporting in the RECOFI area (RECOFI/6/2011/1). The meeting was informed that the consultancy was conducted in the period from February to May 2011. The main purpose of the exercise was to identify eventual data availability problems and to assess the needs of further improvement with effort and cost implications. The consultant travelled to six RECOFI Members prior to the meeting on 9 May 2011 and was expected to visit the remaining two RECOFI Members in the near future to complete the exercise. The draft Recommendation would be addressed at the sixth session of RECOFI.

5. The consultancy concluded generally that RECOFI Members would be able to meet the data requirements indicated in the draft Recommendation with their existing national data collection and collation system. It identified several minor problems that were described briefly with their tentative solution as follows:

- Information on discards and bycatch reduction device (BRD) use: Most Members reviewed did not collect information on discards and the utilization and impacts of BRDs. These were optional reporting items and the WGFM should continue its efforts to identify a suitable and practical way to address the concern.
- Handling of species aggregate: In some cases, catch information was only available as species group (e.g. shrimps, groupers, emperors) in statistical data collection. Such data should be kept as catch in the species group. Disaggregation among species could be conducted as scientific analysis, with additional information such as species composition obtained from independent surveys and appropriate assumptions.



- Effort data: There were cases where the system of collecting efforts had not been well established. One of the most important roles of effort data was to provide stock indicators (i.e. catch per unit of effort [CPUE]) and it was essential to collect both catch and effort data from the same segment for this purpose. For the purpose of stock indicators, partial data, e.g. CPUE from limited gears, could still serve its role. If it was necessary to prioritize, full coverage of effort data was less important than that of catch and effort data originated from one segment.
- Timing of data reporting: National schedules of statistics processing could conflict with the request of data provision before the end of August in the following year (Article 6 of the draft Recommendation). The meeting agreed to seek the Commission's special consideration to allow the reporting of preliminary statistics that were not yet finalized for use by the WGFM.
- Biological and ecological information: Biological and ecological information should be considered as inventories but not as statistical data that required regular reporting. The consolidation of information should also include those made in the past.

6. Taking into account the ongoing process of implementing new fisheries statistical programmes and/or upgrading data collection procedures and databases in some RECOFI Members, the availability and quality of data in the RECOFI region would be improved even more after the finalization of such activities.

7. The meeting noted the importance of maintaining the current momentum to materialize the consolidated data set as soon as possible. Such a data set would become the basis in agreeing to the structure and format of the finalized RECOFI database as well as serve as the temporary solution to support WGFM activities. There was consensus that the meeting recommend to RECOFI that it place the highest priority on setting up such a temporal consolidated data set and that it initiate planning on structure, maintenance scheme, and financial and human resources to maintain the RECOFI database as well as to support improving national data collection capacity.

#### **SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORKING GROUP**

8. The WGFM is invited to review the report of the informal consultations and to comment on it, as appropriate.

**Update of the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2011–12 in relation to the Working Group on Fisheries Management**

**BACKGROUND**

1. The fourth meeting of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) was held in Muscat, Oman, from 3 to 5 October 2010. *Inter alia*, the broad framework of the Regional Strategy and Prioritized Activities for Regional Fisheries Management was reviewed together with the WGFM's programme of work for 2011–12. In undertaking the review, the WGFM recalled that the priority objectives served to promote the Strategy and that the regional activities indicated initiatives to be undertaken to implement the objectives. As a foundation, the projects were the means by which the Strategy, priority objectives and regional activities were implemented.

2. The purpose of this document is to review and update, as appropriate, (i) the Regional Strategy and Prioritized Activities for Regional Fisheries Management, and (ii) progress with the implementation of approved activities by the WGFM. The updated RECOFI Regional Strategy and Priorities for Regional Fisheries Management, including a workplan for 2011–12, is included in Appendix 1 to document RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/3.

**REVIEW OF REGIONAL STRATEGY AND PRIORITIZED ACTIVITIES FOR REGIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF APPROVED PROJECTS**

**Regional Strategy and Prioritized Activities for Regional Fisheries Management**

3. The Regional Strategy was not altered at the fourth WGFM meeting. It was considered that the Regional Strategy remained relevant to the fisheries conservation and management needs of RECOFI Members.

4. The priority objectives were subjected to intense scrutiny and were reduced from a total of seven to five. The two objectives eliminated were numbers 3 (to promote good science to underpin decisions for fisheries management) and 5 (to encourage the reduction of impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity). The rationale for eliminating these priority objectives was to eliminate duplication with objective number 1 (to implement effective fisheries management through regional cooperation and harmonization, including shared stocks and fisheries of common interest, based on the ecosystem approach). Some minor editing of objectives (e.g. the removal of "cultural" from old objective number 6, which is new objective 4, was also carried out.

5. During the review, regional activities were streamlined so that in most cases there would be only one activity for each objective. As much as possible, activities were consolidated to form a single activity for each priority objective. Moreover, the WGFM agreed that, where an activity did not have an associated implementing project, it would be deleted.

6. The WGFM reduced the total number of projects slated for funding from 20 to 15. This reduction was a reflection of the level of funding (from RECOFI and extra-budgetary sources) available to implement projects. The reduction in the number of projects was achieved through the combination of some projects and the elimination of others that the WGFM no longer considered to be of priority. The 15 projects agreed upon by the WGFM are listed in Appendix 1.

### **Implementation of approved WGFM projects**

7. The Joint Working Group on Aquaculture (WGA)/WGFM and WGFM projects approved by the sixth RECOFI session are listed in the table in Appendix 1. The table also includes projects that were approved for implementation by the fourth WGFM meeting but which were postponed by the Commission owing to lack of funding.

8. RECOFI gave highest priority to the funding of the joint WGA/WGFM project on capacity building for spatial planning and management as it is a joint activity and an existing commitment. The project will provide participants with the knowledge to support management and sustainable development of marine capture fisheries and aquaculture. The need for this action was based upon the depletion of many fish stocks in the region and the fact that aquaculture has proved elsewhere to be a suitable method for enhancing productivity of a range of marine species.

9. Capacity development is timely because it represents an important follow-up activity to the RECOFI Technical Workshop on Spatial Planning for Marine Capture Fisheries and Aquaculture (Doha, Qatar, 24–28 October 2010). The main focuses for this capacity-development follow-up will be to illustrate the potential that spatial planning tools can offer and to explore how they may be used more effectively at the national and regional levels to meet the needs of both marine capture fisheries and aquaculture. The capacity-development initiative will be conducted in Doha in early 2012.

10. The Commission's approach to funding allocation for the remaining projects submitted by the WGA and the WGFM was to allocate funds on a more-or-less equal basis among the working groups. This led to a total of four WGFM projects being approved, in order of priority, for implementation. These were :

- a) a preparatory exercise for the implementation of minimum data reporting and establishment of a regional database and information network to support management of major fisheries (to be held in Iran [Islamic Republic of]). This work underpins preparatory activities designed to support the implementation of the mandatory Resolution RECOFI/6/2011/1 entitled "Recommendation on minimum data reporting in the RECOFI area". The Resolution takes effect on 1 January 2012. Progress with the implementation of this project is reported in document RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/7;
- b) a workshop to develop regional management plans with agreed operational objectives and conservation measures for fisheries management (to be held in the United Arab Emirates);
- c) a pilot joint-assessment of kingfish and a workshop on the utilization of fishery dependent data (to be held in Oman); and
- d) a workshop on social and economic aspects of small-scale fisheries (to be held in Bahrain). This project will be implemented if RECOFI or extra-budgetary funding becomes available over the biennium. However, a re-ordering of priorities may be required as the Secretariat is of the view that this workshop should be held prior to the development of regional management plans.

11. The Secretariat proposes that the WGFM reviews and elaborates projects 2, 3 and 4, giving attention to the development of draft terms of reference (TORs) and addressing the sequence of the workshops. There would be merit in convening the workshop on the social and economic aspects of small-scale fisheries prior to the workshop on the development of regional management plans because small-scale fisheries are of core importance to the region in terms of national fisheries management and they could have substantial implications on a range of actions that might be considered within a regional management plan. The workshop for the joint assessment of kingfish and the utilization of fishery-dependent data could be held after 1 January 2012 when the minimum data reporting would be formally implemented.

12. In addition, a fifth WGFM project, comprising a regional workshop on bycatch reduction and the management, evaluation and promotion of options for gear types with lower ecosystem impacts, was approved. This project resulted from an amalgamation of two separate but related projects at the fourth WGFM meeting and the outputs from the project could also have impacts on development of regional management plan. However, the holding of the workshop depends on Kuwait's availability to host it. Kuwait will be invited to provide the WGFM with information concerning the possible implementation of the project.

13. Appendix 1 shows that eight projects have been postponed, not because of their level of desirability, but because of inadequate funding. Several WGA projects were also postponed for the same reason. Nevertheless, the postponed WGFM projects, which were considered carefully at the fourth WGFM meeting, will be retained on a list of "possible projects" for future funding.

14. The status of implementation and the outcomes of the RECOFI-approved projects will be considered in depth at the sixth WGFM meeting in October 2012. The report of this meeting will be available for consideration by the seventh RECOFI session in 2013.

### **IMPACT OF INADEQUATE FUNDING ON THE WGFM PROGRAMME OF WORK**

15. At the fourth WGFM meeting, the outcome of the special meeting on RECOFI consolidation and development and consideration for the WGFM on fisheries management was addressed. In relation to the Commission's financial situation, the WGFM was informed:

**“Financial:** Based on the information contained in the meeting document “Financial and activity scenarios: present situation and future options”, the meeting recognized that RECOFI's financial needs, including the level of Members' contributions, depended on the work programme agreed by the Commission. It was recognized also that the current contribution level (USD5 000 per year) was quite inadequate, particularly when the amount of arrears were taken into account. After having assessed and agreed the Commission's technical and institutional requirements to address fisheries and aquaculture issues in the region, RECOFI should determine how the work programme would be funded. The Commission's core functions and activities should be covered at least by Member contributions while other activities of a project nature could be funded by extra-budgetary funding”.

16. In consideration of this matter, at its fourth meeting, “the WGFM agreed that the consolidation and strengthening of the Commission was of extreme importance, particularly in relation to ensuring that it had adequate financial resources to undertake its programme of work. Delegates recognized that should the current level of Members' contributions remain unchanged, this would have a significant impact on RECOFI's future work.”

17. The outcome of the special meeting on RECOFI consolidation and development was considered by the sixth RECOFI session together with the report of the fourth WGFM session. The funding concerns of the WGFM and the Secretariat were therefore communicated clearly to the Commission. In its deliberations, RECOFI:

- concurred that, as a result of many fisheries management and developmental challenges being faced, RECOFI Members were calling on the Commission more frequently to undertake additional work and for this reason it was necessary to reconsider the annual contributions paid;
- noted that the current level of Members' contributions was only sufficient to fund the implementation of a limited number of priority activities, and resolved that additional funds would be required if a more ambitious work programme was to be implemented;

- endorsed the findings and outcomes of the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development (FAO headquarters, Rome, Italy, 11–12 May 2010); and
- decided to continue applying a fixed and equal contribution for Members, and agreed on a threefold increase (i.e. from USD5 000 to USD15 000) of the Members' annual contributions as from 2013 provided that all arrears were liquidated by 31 December 2011.

18. RECOFI made a conditional decision that is unlikely to lead to an increase in contributions because all arrears will not be cleared by 31 December 2011. This means that despite the recognition of Members' very low contributions to the Commission, the lack of a reasonable contribution will continue to handicap RECOFI's work.

19. This funding situation will also continue to have profound negative implications for the work of the WGFM. Members have recognized this constraint at past meetings and the elaboration of a realistic RECOFI work programme for capture fisheries intended to promote long-term sustainability will be jeopardized.

20. It was recognized that there is unlikely to be an increase in funding for the Commission, in the short to medium terms, either from an increase in Members' contributions or from extra-budgetary funding. This being the case, it would appear prudent to reduce and streamline the WGFM work programme, considering for inclusion only a small number of projects that are likely to be funded with RECOFI's meagre resources.

#### **SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORKING GROUP**

21. The WGFM is invited, as appropriate, to:

- review the Regional Strategy and Prioritized Activities in Appendix 1 of document RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/3 and assess whether changes should be introduced;
- review and comment on progress with the implementation of the four RECOFI approved projects including the development of draft terms of reference for projects 2, 3 and 4;
- review the postponed projects in the list of projects in Appendix 1 to this document to ascertain whether they should be retained on the list;
- consider whether additional projects should be added to the list of projects;
- ascertain whether the workshop on social and economic aspects of small-scale fisheries, scheduled to be held in Bahrain, is likely to be held (location, timing and funding source) in the 2011–12 biennium;
- ascertain whether Kuwait will be in a position (location and timing) to host the regional workshop on bycatch reduction and the management, evaluation and promotion of options for gear types with lower ecosystem impacts in the 2011–12 biennium; and
- discuss, given the bleak outlook for increased RECOFI funding to implement projects in the current and next biennia, the reduction in the number and scope of projects approved by the WGFM.

**RECOFI regional projects to be undertaken in the  
2011–12 intersessional period**

<b>Working Group</b>	<b>Regional projects</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Duration (days)</b>	<b>Indicative RECOFI cost (USD)</b>	<b>Status</b>
Joint (with RECOFI WGA)	Capacity building for spatial planning and management (WGA/WGFM training)	Early 2012	Doha, Qatar	4–5	40 000	Approved
WGFM	Preparatory exercise for implementation of minimum data requirements and establishment of a regional database and information network to support management of major fisheries	Ongoing till mid-2012	N/A	N/A	20 000	Approved. Number 1 priority for WGFM
WGFM	Workshop to develop regional management plans with agreed operational objectives	June 2012	United Arab Emirates	3–4	15 000	Approved. Number 2 priority for WGFM
WGFM	Pilot joint assessment of kingfish and workshop on the utilization of fishery-dependent data	TBD	Oman	4	30 000	Approved. Number 3 priority for WGFM
WGFM	Workshop on social and economic aspects of small-scale fisheries	February 2012	Manama, Bahrain	3–4	10 000	Approved. Number 4 priority for WGFM.
WGFM	Regional workshop on bycatch reduction and management and evaluation and promotion of options of gear types with lower ecosystem impacts	May 2012	Kuwait	TBD	15 000	Approved
WGFM	Applied training programme for data collectors for the identification of priority species	TBD	TBD	TBD	25 000	Postponed
WGFM	Pilot joint assessment of ecosystem impact of shrimp fisheries	TBD	TBD	TBD	30 000	Postponed
WGFM	Review of national fisheries monitoring programmes	TBD	TBD	TBD	40 000	Postponed

Working Group	Regional projects	Date	Location	Duration (days)	Indicative RECOFI cost (USD)	Status
WGFM	Feasibility study to review development of regional databases of violations, establish a list of vessels authorized to fish by Members and the establishment of an MCS information exchange scheme.	TBD	TBD	TBD	30 000	Postponed
WGFM	Workshop to consider regional standards for fish exports and imports as a means of promoting better cooperation and trade	TBD	TBD	TBD	15 000	Postponed
WGFM	Evaluation of certification and related schemes to be investigated together with the relationship between IUU fishing and trade and the estimated value of IUU fishing in the region	TBD	TBD	TBD	20 000	Postponed
WGFM	Annual regional meetings of MCS officers to exchange information of common interest and consider the possibility of promoting a harmonized MCS approach	TBD	TBD	TBD	15 000	Postponed
WGFM	Project to implement regionally VMS: phase I to ascertain feasibility	TBD	TBD	TBD	30 000	Postponed
WGFM	A study to evaluate and promote options to improve utilization of bycatch	TBD	TBD	TBD	15 000	Activity to be absorbed by the regional workshop on bycatch reduction and management and evaluation and promotion of options of gear types with lower ecosystem impacts
WGFM	Comparative analysis of certain legal issues to promote further harmonization of legislation, building on initial work undertaken by RECOFI and taking into consideration other relevant work	TBD	TBD	TBD	20 000	Project removed from list because of possible duplication with GCC work

**Reconsideration of the proposal by the Sultanate of Oman on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the RECOFI region: establishment of a database of violations**

**BACKGROUND**

1. The steps recommended in relation to the development of a record of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing violations in the RECOFI region during the fourth meeting of the on Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) held in Muscat, Oman, 3–5 October 2010 have been considered in the sixth session of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) held in Rome, 10–12 May, 2011. As stated in paragraph 36 of the report: “the Commission agreed to an alternative proposal by the Sultanate of Oman that i) the matter be revised at the next WGFM meeting that is scheduled in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, 9–12 October 2011, ii) the concept for the study be modified to incorporate, as a first step, preliminary assessments by the Members of the extent of IUU fishing in their respective national jurisdiction, and iii) a framework for future work related to IUU fishing, and how it should be addressed, should be elaborated for consideration and adoption by the Commission.”

**CONTENT OF THE REVISED PROPOSAL**

2. Following the agreement reached at the Commission meeting, the Sultanate of Oman would like to submit the revised proposal that includes the following elements to the WGFM meeting for review and consideration:

- a preliminary assessment (prior to the consideration of the steps proposed in the initial proposal) by the Members of the extent of IUU fishing in their respective national jurisdictions. The assessment could be initiated (as a starting point) by evaluating the outcomes of the FAO/RECOFI Regional Workshop to combat IUU Fishing, Muscat, Oman, 30 March–2 April, 2009; and
- based on the assessed outcomes, the WGFM should develop an appropriate framework to addressing IUU fishing in the region. To develop a regional framework it is suggested that WGFM should consider: (i) the agreed steps stated in the fourth meeting of the WGFM held in Muscat, Oman, 3–5 October 2010 in addressing the issue; and (ii) similar frameworks followed by other regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) so that efficiency and consistency could be maintained.

**SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORKING GROUP**

3. The Working Group is invited to:

- review the revised proposal along with the actions stated above and provide recommendations to the Committee for appropriate actions and final decisions to address IUU fishing.



## **Report on the progress towards the implementation of the RECOFI Recommendation on Minimum Data Reporting**

### **PURPOSE**

1. The purpose of this document is to inform the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) on progress achieved towards the implementation of the Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1, entitled “Recommendation on minimum data reporting in the RECOFI area”, as adopted by the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) at its Sixth Session (Rome, Italy, 10–12 May 2011) and that, in accordance with Article V of the Agreement for the Establishment of the Regional Commission for Fisheries, the Commission agreed it would take effect on 1 January 2012.

### **BACKGROUND**

2. The third meeting of the WGFM in Doha, Qatar, agreed the terms of reference of consultancy toward integration of catch and effort data in the RECOFI Area (Appendix O of WGFM3/2009) with a specific emphasis on agreed minimum data requirements. This evaluation survey on national data collection systems was held during April and May 2011, and its findings were reported to the special meeting of the WGFM convened on 9 May 2011 immediately prior to the sixth RECOFI session, based on the agreement at the fourth meeting of the WGFM in Muscat, Oman. The outcomes of the meeting are described in RECOFI:WGFM5/2011/4.

3. As a second step, the RECOFI Workshop on Minimum Data Collection and Reporting (Data Workshop) was convened in Cairo, Egypt, from 10 to 11 July 2011 in conjunction with the RECOFI/FIRMS Workshop on Resources and Fisheries Inventory (Cairo, Egypt, 12–14 July 2011). The purposes of the Data Workshop were to: (i) review the results of first exercise to consolidate national catch and effort data according to the Recommendation on Minimum Data Reporting; and (ii) plan for the further development of the RECOFI Fishery Management Database and supporting information network.

4. The Data Workshop was chaired by Mr Abdulkarim Habib Al Radhi, Directorate of Fisheries Resources, WGFM Chairperson and Head of Fisheries Assessment Section, Public Commission for the Protection of Marine Resources, Environment and Wild Life, Manama, the Kingdom of Bahrain. Ms Sachiko Tsuji, Senior Fishery Statistician, FAO, Rome, Italy, acted as Technical Secretary of the Workshop. The list of participants is in Appendix 1.

### **OUTCOMES OF THE DATA WORKSHOP**

#### **Review of the consolidation exercise of national catch and effort data by fisheries**

5. Prior to the meeting, Members submitted their national catch and effort data for recent years in the most convenient formats with readily available species and fisheries classifications. Six Members participated in the exercise: Bahrain, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. It was confirmed that the data submitted by Bahrain, Oman and Saudi Arabia satisfied the mandatory catch and effort data reporting requirement. While Qatar allocated catch into traps and gillnets based on historical knowledge of major species caught by each gear, it has implemented the new catch and effort data collection system at three landing sites starting in 2011, in addition to traditional full enumeration of catch at the central market. When those data become available, Qatar is expected to be able to fulfil data reporting requirements completely. Data submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran did not include species composition of catch separated by fisheries. The previous evaluation survey indicated that although Kuwait has difficulty to provide fishing effort data, with the exception of shrimp trawl, Kuwait is in the

process of implementing the new data collection system. Data submitted did not separate catch according to fisheries.

6. The delegates from each Member had an individual informal session with the RECOFI Secretariat and technical experts during the meeting. The main findings through the consultation are given in Appendix 2.

7. In general, the exercise indicated that Members have either had the required competence to fulfil the mandatory requirement of minimum data reporting or modified their data collecting systems to accommodate the need. Many Members encountered some difficulty in preparing length frequency data for Spanish mackerel, especially in the absence of clear guidance on suitable sampling procedures and the amount of measurement required. Despite the intensive amount of Spanish mackerel size data collected under the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) project during 2002 and 2007, data collection was suspended at the completion of project, except in Bahrain. Difficulties in species identification of emperors and groupers were also noted, and some Members are currently in the process of enhancing the capacity of species identification of field enumerators.

8. The Data Workshop recognized the value of size data of catch, either as length/weight frequency or average size, to define size selectivity of different gear types and operations that would be useful for developing fishing strategies, as well as providing useful indicators of the exploitation status of stocks. The Data Workshop agreed to seek the possibility to collect size information on commercially important species, including shrimps, groupers and emperors, in addition to Spanish mackerel. It was recognized that the data collection on size would require additional training and that the fishers would not permit enumerators to handle fish for this purpose. It was pointed out that Members could learn from one another's experience to determine the most suitable and cost-effective procedures.

#### **Timeframe of preparatory activities**

9. The Data Workshop considered the list of activities required toward implementation of the Recommendation with a timeframe. It agreed to conduct the second round of the consolidation exercise at the time of the fifth meeting of the WGFM in October 2011. This exercise should concentrate on assembling historical catch and effort data and on exploring the potential utilization of data collected to show the stock and fishery status. Owing to technical difficulties encountered and a lack of clear guidelines, it was proposed to defer the consolidation of length data for Spanish mackerel until after the fifth meeting of the WGFM, or even later. In addition, the need was noted for the WGFM to agree on logistics, functionalities and responsibility of the RECOFI Fishery Management Database and supporting information network.

10. Lessons learned from the GCC project on Spanish mackerel were noted by the Data Workshop. Problems included: (i) participation being limited to GCC countries only, i.e. not full coverage of countries active in the fishery; and (ii) the lack of political commitment to implement management action at the regional level. The new attempts under RECOFI should overcome these obstacles. An assessment Spanish mackerel workshop, one of the WGFM approved activities for 2011–12, could be held once all the required data are submitted. The Data Workshop considered it preferable to convene this workshop prior to the sixth meeting of the WGFM in 2012. The RECOFI assessment workshop should utilize fully the past assessment results, including data and information used for the 2010 GCC assessment workshop and the projects achievements. The Sultanate of Oman, the host country of the 2010 GCC Spanish mackerel stock assessment workshop, was requested to provide the first set of such data and information to the Secretariat. This information would be supplemented by the other Members.

11. Potential benefits of consolidating fishing effort of different gear types with a standardized effort were considered in the Data Workshop. While the consolidation of effort from different

gear types would be useful to indicate overall fishing capacity of Members and the region, combining catch per unit of effort (CPUE) from different gear types and fisheries was discouraged strongly when using them as stock indicators. The Data Workshop considered it useful to initiate discussion on a set of indicators to be produced from the consolidated catch and effort data at the fifth WGFM meeting.

12. The Data Workshop noted that, in order for RECOFI to agree on the regional management measures at the next session of the Commission in 2013, it is necessary that in 2012 the WGFM agrees on stock conditions of priority species/species groups and develops a proposal for management. This indicated the need to initiate discussion on how to utilize data collected through minimum data reporting and what kind indicators should be developed to show the stock status of priority species/species groups as well as fishery management conditions to submit to the Commission as the WGFM. There was general agreement for all Members to submit the historical data back to the year 2000 as soon as possible but no later than the end of August 2011. The Secretariat would distribute the consolidated database to all Members at the beginning of September in the most convenient way at that time for analyses and development of a proposal to be tabled at WGFM5 in October 2011.

13. After this consideration, the timetable indicated in Appendix 3 was accepted as an indicative timeframe towards full implementation of the Recommendation and development of a regional management scheme.

#### **Brainstorming on regional database and information network**

14. The Data Workshop exchanged informal views on desirable locations, formats, functionalities and responsibilities to establish and maintain the RECOFI Regional Fishery Management database and supporting information network.

15. With regard to the database, the Data Workshop noted that many miscellaneous tasks would be involved in the maintenance and quality control of a regional consolidated database, including the administrative burden of sending notifications, monitoring submissions and pursuing late submissions, and the provision of technical capacity in harmonizing formats and ensuring the quality and coherence of consolidated data. The Data Workshop expressed a preference to utilize FAO's technical capacity for database maintenance and consolidation at least until data exchange and processing procedures had become an established routine. The possibility for one of the Members to take responsibility for hosting and maintaining the regional database would be kept open as a potential future option. FAO technical experts assured they would provide technical backstopping until the regional database becomes operational in 2012 and agreed to advise on the possible service and associated costs at the fifth WGFM meeting.

16. In relation to the information network to support information sharing among Members, the Data Workshop agreed on the need to establish an interactive Web page to: (i) allow search and extraction of data and information; (ii) upload and download files; and (iii) enable simple information sharing. The Data Workshop noted that it was desirable to develop one RECOFI Web site by integrating WGFM requirements into existing instruments for cost-effectiveness and better and focused visibility. However, the Workshop could not decide whether the future RECOFI Web site should be based on RAIS or the FAO RECOFI page. FAO was invited to develop a proposal for a range of services with technical specifications that FAO could provide, with cost implications, when expanding the existing FAO RECOFI page. FAO was also invited to evaluate the possibility of expanding RAIS.

17. The delegate from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia volunteered to develop a proposal for the fifth WGFM meeting on a range of analytical functionalities required for developing an agreed regional fishery management scheme and measures. The Data Workshop noted the need to raise

RECOFI's attention on both the financial and human costs required to support such a network in a sustainable way. The meeting closed its discussion at 12:30 on 11 July 2011.

## **REGIONAL DATABASE AND INFORMATION NETWORK**

18. Following the invitation by the Data Workshop, the Statistics and Information Service of FAO's Fisheries and Aquaculture Department (FIPS) examined the functions of the regional database and information network required to support the implementation of the RECOFI Recommendation on Minimum Data Reporting together with the services that FIPS could offer with a range of indicative costs.

19. Consideration was made based on the aspects of:

- feasibility of implementation (and cost of development) – what tools, components or systems are readily available, those that need further modifications, those that require new development, etc; and operationally speaking, how easily can the required coordination among various services be mobilized;
- sustainability related risks – mechanism to ensure continuous updating and upgrading, mechanism to ensure consistency of operation, security of resource availability in the long run, etc;
- cost of maintenance – communication management, processing and quality control of disseminated contents, management and quality control of tools and systems including their updating and upgrading, etc;
- extent of integration – comparability among different RECOFI data and information components, extent of linkage and harmonization between fishery management and aquaculture components.

20. The Recommendation indicates the need to establish at a minimum two additional data sets, in addition to the existing RECOFI capture production data set, i.e. one data set on catch and effort by gear corresponding to Paragraphs 2, 3, 4-a- (i) and (iii), and 5, and the other for length composition of catch corresponding to Paragraph 4-a-(ii) and (iii). It would be preferable to set up one consolidated database containing different data sets together with common data handling tools that allow search, extraction, and aggregation of data easily according to the users' need. Currently, a preliminary integration of pre-submitted data has been developed on the same principle, including application with FishStatJ as a common dissemination tool together with the existing RECOFI capture production data.

21. In addition, a mechanism would be needed to share the information submitted under Paragraph 4b (survey and research work on narrow-barred Spanish mackerel) and Paragraph 7 (plans, protocols and results of surveys). FIPS would propose that the latter information be managed through a bibliographic management system such as the Electronic Information Management System (EIMS), which is a standard tool within FAO and currently supporting RECOFI documents and meeting report dissemination.

22. Appendix 4 shows the possible contents of the RECOFI information network when expanding the existing RECOFI Web page under the Fisheries Global Information System (FIGIS). The table in Appendix 4 also shows the tools currently available within FIPS to support content dissemination. The Web page of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM, [www.gfcm.org/gfcm/en](http://www.gfcm.org/gfcm/en)) was developed by FIPS and then maintained by the GFCM Secretariat, which could be referred to as a model case of a FIGIS-based regional organization Web site. The preference between a FIGIS-based system and the Typo-3 based system that underpins the RAIS Web site would depend on how much end users, i.e. RECOFI Members, would like to have direct control on disseminated contents. The FIGIS-based option would be secure and protected within a broader frame and require only minimum development costs, as most of tools are already available. However, in this case, FIPS would recommend that Members

only submit contents to the Secretariat and leave the uploading responsibility to either the designated officer in the RECOFI Secretariat or FIPS. Alternatively, the Typo-3 based content management system would allow direct inputs and control on the publishing process by the Members, but many components and related plug-in facilities would have to be developed. Also, in this case, FAO could provide technical advices during the development phase but would not take a long-term responsibility of continuous system updating.

23. Management of information exchanges and data-set preparation require several steps including intensive communications with Members for ensuring timely submission and follow-up clarification of submitted information, quality control and data processing (including collation of codes and classifications used and format translation), and packaging for dissemination, such as data set preparation for application tools as well as uploading to Web page. This may correspond to about 2–5 person month's work if the tasks were covered by the RECOFI Secretariat and 0.5–1.0 person month's work if covered by FIPS, according to the amount of data and information processing required. This only covers the tasks required under the regular implementation of the Recommendation, excluding development costs. In addition, the maintenance of the information network will require about the equivalent in terms of human resources, i.e. about 2–5 person month's work in the Secretariat, or 0.5–1.0 person month's work for outsourcing to FIPS.

#### **SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORKING GROUP**

24. The WGFM is invited to review the progress towards the implementation of the RECOFI Recommendation on Minimum Data Reporting in the RECOFI area and to comment on it, as appropriate. In particular, the WGFM is requested to provide guidance to the Secretariat on:

- the time schedule and action plan indicated in Appendix 3; and
- which option to proceed with, in logistics, functionalities and responsibility of the regional database and information network to support the fishery and aquaculture management of the RECOFI Region, especially through the implementation of RECOFI Recommendation on Minimum Data Reporting.

## Appendix 1. List of participants

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## **Appendix 2. Summary of main findings through individual consultation between Members and technical experts**

### **BAHRAIN**

The Kingdom of Bahrain submitted the 2009 data of catch of 68 species classifications and efforts of 13 separate fisheries as an Excel table of fisheries vs catch by species and various efforts. Effort data were provided in number of sets (for nets) or number of traps (either small or gear) according to the fisheries, in addition to number of days at sea. The Kingdom of Bahrain notified the implementation of several new regulations including restriction on gear size, configuration, and operational procedures of longline, implementation of a marine protected area as well as shrimp fishery designated operating zone, limiting amateur fishers only to use hooks and lines and ban of utilization of multifilament, multilayer gillnet. Catch and average effort data are collected at landing sites by random survey and processed on a monthly basis. These data will be multiplied with the vessel number to give the estimate of the national total. Number of vessels was collected through the census conducted every five years, and the latest census occurred in 2004. The Kingdom of Bahrain has continued the length measurement of Spanish mackerel after the completion of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) project and has no problem to accommodate the data requirement relating to the Spanish mackerel. Data are handled with Excel spreadsheets and no database system and language are used. Similar information could be made available back to 2004.

### **IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF)**

The Islamic Republic of Iran submitted 2010 effort, amount of shrimp and aggregated bycatch for three vessel categories as well as total discards obtained from three landing sites, and 2009 total catch and total efforts for four vessel categories without data on catch composition. In addition, there was fisheries operation without using boats, mainly barrier nets, which catch mainly demersal species and beach seines. The Islamic Republic of Iran collected catch by species, gear used and efforts from 10 percent of each vessel category at 42 landing sites by enumerators. The catch and effort monitoring also included those operations without boats. The fishing licence was issued based on vessel categories with indication of main gear used. In some cases, hooks and lines were used in combination with other gear such as gillnets. Port entry and departure were continuously monitored by the coastguard. The Islamic Republic of Iran indicated a difficulty to raise sampled data to total, separately by vessel category and gear, while the consultation indicated that the system in use in the Islamic Republic of Iran already collected all necessary information for fulfilling the minimum data reporting requirement. It was agreed that first, the Islamic Republic of Iran would provide further explanation on specific problems in raising sample data collected at landing centres into national total. At the same time, the Islamic Republic of Iran would provide sample-based catch effort data obtained from one landing site in one month together with all information required for raising, which the technical experts would examine and then advise on possible options to resolve the problems. If necessary, technical experts could arrive in Teheran before the WGFM-V for direct consultation with national experts.

### **KUWAIT**

The State of Kuwait provided its national fishery statistics of 2008. Although this provided extremely useful information for economic analysis of the fishery and aquaculture sector, there was no catch and effort data separated by fisheries available. These are the only formal statistics available from Kuwait and no other information could be submitted without approval from the Ministry of Planning. Shrimp trawls, traps and gillnets are main types of gear used in Kuwait. The data collection by the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources was conducted at market and the catch amount could not be separate according to the types of gear used. However, the Kuwait Institute of Scientific Research (KISR) was able to provide catch and effort information following the sample-based procedures, covering 95 percent of catch. Kuwait assured it would make the best effort to enable it provide information obtained from the KISR.



## **OMAN**

The Sultanate of Oman submitted the 2009 and 2010 data for 13 fisheries, defined with 8 gear types and 4 vessel categories in the format directly derived from the database that facilitates processing. Catch was divided into 42 species classifications. Data are collected at 42 landing sites following the random sampling methods targeting 95 percent accuracy but ensuring that accuracy will not fall below 90 percent. The number of vessels was used to raise the sampled data. The number of vessels was obtained through the census conducted every ten years and adjusted according to entries and removals in between the time periods. Starting from September 2011, all boats will be counted annually with information on gear types to be used; in addition, monitoring of number of days at sea for more than 20 percent of vessels regularly at landing sites will be implemented. Currently, groupers and emperors are not divided into species level, and the Sultanate of Oman is in a process of training enumerators to gain improved species identification skill for those species groups. Size data collection is under the responsibility of a research laboratory, and data are available on emperors for two years and groupers for four years. In addition, the fishery department has maintained the data on the number of fish caught and average individual fish weight that can provide a good indicator on gear selectivity and general stock condition, useful for fishery management. Many length data of Spanish mackerel were collected during the GCC project of 2002–07, but this activity was suspended at the completion of the project. Similar data can be provided back to 1985 with approval from the Government.

## **QATAR**

The State of Qatar is conducting the full enumeration at the central market, which causes difficulty in separating catch into different fisheries. In order to address the requirement defined in the Recommendation, Qatar submitted catch and effort data for two fisheries, traps and gillnets, obtained from two landing sites with allocation of catch into species based on their expert knowledge on kind of species occurred by individual gear types. Starting from 2011, enumerators are positioned at three ports collecting catch and effort by gear type, together with full monitoring of entry to and departure from the port by the Fisheries Department in collaboration with the coastguard. Starting from 2009, Qatar has collected size and maturity data for 15 commercial species as a national project. In addition, there has been the regional bottom trawl survey to obtain fishery-independent stock indicators under the GCC. Size measurement of Spanish mackerel was completed when the GCC project finished. Also, starting from 2011, small boats with outboard engines were transferred under the responsibility of the Fishery Department, some of which involved hand and line fishing catching substantial amount of Spanish mackerels. Historical catch would not be able to be directly linked to individual fisheries but the number of active licences for the past would be available for main ports by gear type.

## **SAUDI ARABIA**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia submitted detailed catch and effort data for 2010, separated by 7 gear types, 2 boat categories and 80 biological classifications, as well as separation by landing sites. Data collection is made by enumerators visiting 8–10 landing sites working 10 days per month, collecting data on duration at sea, type of boats and gear, number of types of gear used, number of sets per day and catch by species. The sampled data is raised with total number of days directly collected by the coastguard based on entry to and departure from ports stratified by fisheries indicated in licences on a monthly basis. Although Saudi Arabia conducts a boat census twice a year, it finds it difficult to monitor deregistration in an accurate and timely manner and, therefore, it does not use number of vessels to raise sampled data to total estimate. Starting from 2011, small boats are requested to carry an automatic identification system (AIS), i.e. simple GPS. Average price per kilogram by species/species groups is collected monthly at market, but size data are not collected systematically except for three categorizations (small, medium and large) for shrimp. Size measurement on Spanish mackerel has been stopped after the completion of the GCC project. Moreover, industrial fishery data are present, with eight industrial boats operating on shrimp trawl in the northern Gulf area. Data include discarded catch as number of trash boxes. Number of boats and their classification are included in its national statistical bulletins.

### **Appendix 3. Indicative time schedule for the implementation of the RECOFI Recommendation on Minimum Data Reporting**

#### Workshop in July 2011 (completed)

- First round of consolidation exercise focusing on mandatory catch and effort data separated by fisheries.
- Brainstorming of format, location, functionalities of RECOFI Fishery Management Database and information network.

#### Between July Workshop and WGFM-V (October 2011)

- Second round of consolidation exercise and Members to submit historical mandatory catch and effort data separated by fisheries up to 2000 in the same format as the first round exercise, as much as possible. Indicative due date is the end of August.  
**Action: Members**
- Prepare and distribute a consolidated database to Members before the middle of September.  
**Action: Secretariat**
- Prepare specific proposal on database maintenance services and supporting information network with indication of corresponding cost if FAO will take a maintenance responsibility.  
**Action: FAO**

#### WGFM-V in October 2011

- Review of the second round of consolidation exercise; historical catch and effort data separated by fisheries; optional data and information if available.
- Agree on logistics (e.g. location, responsibility, and data sharing procedure) of RECOFI Fishery Management database and information network.
- Discussion on set stock indicators to be calculated from the consolidated RECOFI catch and effort data together with preliminary examination of indicators.
- Further clarification on data-sharing protocols for data requirement for Spanish mackerel and various optional data and information.

#### Prior to January 2012

- Third round of consolidation exercise; mandatory data requirement for Spanish mackerel, especially length frequency data and monthly catch and optional data and information,
- Setting up of the RECOFI Fishery Management database and testing,

#### January – August 2012

- Setting up of information network and testing.
- Submission of data and information relevant with the Recommendation up to 2010. Data and information already submitted during the preparatory consolidation exercise would be revised and updated if necessary.
- Training on utilization of database and network if necessary
- (Workshop on Spanish mackerel assessment, depending on the decision at WGFM-V).

#### 31 August 2012

- Database and information network become fully operational.
- Submission of 2011 data and information required by the Recommendation.

WGFM-VI in October 2012

- Development of a set of stock and fishery indicators based on the RECOFI Fishery Management database and development of a fishery management recommendation to be submitted to the Commission (RECOFI-VII, May 2013).

**Appendix 4. Possible contents of the RECOFI Information Network when developed based on FIGIS**

	Supporting tools	Examples of possible model or currently available information
<b>BASIC INFORMATION ON THE COMMISSION</b>		
Commission's institutional description	FIGIS	Current: <a href="http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/recofi/en">www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/recofi/en</a> GFCM: <a href="http://www.gfcm.org/gfcm/en">www.gfcm.org/gfcm/en</a>
Bibliographic references with links to on-line sources:		
– RECOFI meeting documents and reports	FIGIS-NEMS (current) or FIGIS-EIMS	Current: <a href="http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/recofi/en#Org-Outputs">www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/recofi/en#Org-Outputs</a>
– RECOFI publications	FIGIS-EIMS	GFCM: <a href="http://www.gfcm.org/gfcm/topic/16090/en">www.gfcm.org/gfcm/topic/16090/en</a>
Recommendations and resolutions	FIGIS and/or EIMS	GFCM: <a href="http://www.gfcm.org/gfcm/topic/16100/en">www.gfcm.org/gfcm/topic/16100/en</a>
<b>STATISTICS AND INFORMATION</b>		
Statistics and information (top page)	FIGIS topic	GFCM: <a href="http://www.gfcm.org/gfcm/topic/16103/en">www.gfcm.org/gfcm/topic/16103/en</a>
RECOFI regional capture production	FIGIS data collection, online query panel, FishStatJ	Current: <a href="http://www.fao.org/fishery/collection/recofi-capture-production/en">www.fao.org/fishery/collection/recofi-capture-production/en</a>
Information sharing under the Recommendation		
– Catch and effort data by gear type	FIGIS, FishStatJ	FishStatJ data set to be configured
– Length composition of catch	Not yet determined	
– Surveys and research work on narrow-barred Spanish mackerel	FIGIS-EIMS	
– Survey plans, protocols	FIGIS-EIMS	
– Selected documents from the region	FIGIS-EIMS or FIGIS-KORs	
Biological references		
– Priority species list	FIGIS, with links to FAO FishFinder species fact sheets or FishBase	GFCM: <a href="http://www.gfcm.org/gfcm/topic/166221/en">www.gfcm.org/gfcm/topic/166221/en</a> (contains links to FAO FishFinder species fact sheets or FishBase)
List of RECOFI shared stocks and fishery resources (RECOFI-FIRMS marine resources inventory under development)	FIGIS browser, or FIGIS Topic	FIRMS browser: <a href="http://firms.fao.org/firms/resource/browse-inventory/en">http://firms.fao.org/firms/resource/browse-inventory/en</a> GFCM page: <a href="http://www.gfcm.org/gfcm/topic/17104/en">www.gfcm.org/gfcm/topic/17104/en</a> (contains links to FIRMS fact sheets)
Stocks status reports (FIRMS fact sheets)	RECOFI-FIRMS marine resources inventory Under development	FIRMS: <a href="http://firms.fao.org/firms/en">http://firms.fao.org/firms/en</a> GFCM example of FIRMS fact sheet nested in the GFCM Web site: <a href="http://www.gfcm.org/gfcm/topic/17104/en">www.gfcm.org/gfcm/topic/17104/en</a>
<b>OTHER SUPPORTING INFORMATION</b>		
Species fact sheets	FIGIS – FAO FishFinder	<a href="http://www.fao.org/fishery/species/search/en">www.fao.org/fishery/species/search/en</a> e.g.: <i>Scomberomorus commerson</i> : <a href="http://www.fao.org/fishery/species/3280/en">www.fao.org/fishery/species/3280/en</a>
Fisheries (FIRMS fact sheets)	FIGIS Fisheries fact sheets	FIRMS example of fishery fact sheet
Legislation references	FIGIS-FAOLEX	e.g.: country profiles <a href="http://www.fao.org/fishery/countrysector/FI-CP_BH/5/en">www.fao.org/fishery/countrysector/FI-CP_BH/5/en</a>

## **Preliminary review of stock and fisheries status indicators to be produced from the RECOFI Fishery Management Database**

### **PURPOSE**

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide information to the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) about a possible range of indicators on stock and fisheries status in the region that could be prepared from the information submitted based on the Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1, entitled “Recommendation on minimum data reporting in the RECOFI area” as adopted by the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) at its Sixth Session (Rome, Italy, 10–12 May 2011), for the purpose of ecosystem-based fishery management of the region.

### **BACKGROUND**

2. The second meeting of the RECOFI WGFM (Cairo, Egypt, 27–30 October 2008) reviewed the major fisheries in the RECOFI region and identified a set of species of primary concern. The meeting further recommended a pragmatic management scheme based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries management with adaptive management procedures. The fifth session of the RECOFI (Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 12–14 May 2009) adopted this recommendation and decided to hold a workshop specifically focusing on a review of data and statistics available in the region and stock status reporting.

3. Facing the lack of information commonly accessible through the Region, the FAO/RECOFI Regional Workshop on Stock Indicators and Stock Status Reporting (Tehran, Iran [Islamic Republic of], 26–29 July 2009) focused its attention on identifying key issues in the region and determining the minimum data requirement to address those key issues from the perspective of monitoring stocks and fisheries status. The concept of minimum data requirement was further developed through the third meeting of the WGFM (Doha, Qatar, 20–22 October 2009) and the fourth meeting of WGFM (Muscat, Oman, 3–5 October 2010) and the sixth session of RECOFI (Rome, Italy, 10–12 May 2011) endorsed the Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1, entitled “Recommendation on minimum data reporting in the RECOFI area” together with its commitment to implement in January 2012.

4. The sixth session of RECOFI also agreed to hold a workshop to develop regional management plans with agreed operational objectives and conservation measures for fisheries management as one of the priority activities for 2011–12. Indicators to monitor stock and fisheries status would be the fundamental component in developing the RECOFI management plans and operational objectives. The Workshop on Minimum Data Collection and Reporting (Cairo, Egypt, 10–11 July 2011) considered it useful to identify a range of indicators that could be derived from the data submitted based on the Recommendation on Minimum Data Reporting as an initial step in preparing towards the RECOFI management plans, its operational objectives and possible conservation measures.

### **A RANGE OF POTENTIAL INDICATORS**

5. The general objective of ecosystem approach of fishery management is to secure long-term sustainability of whole ecosystems, including human communities. From a fishery viewpoint, this can be translated into a long-term sustainability of: (i) healthy ecosystem, especially of healthy status of fishery resources; (ii) food security; and (iii) social and economic contribution of the ecosystem, specifically through fishery activities. In this regard, some potential indicators include those listed below.

Healthy ecosystem and fishery resources:

- amount of catch (when no constraints in efforts) \*\*

- trend in catch per unit effort \*\*
- species composition, occurrence of vulnerable species<sup>1</sup> \*\*
- size composition, or mean size of total catch +
- abundance of priority species of interest or vulnerable species \*\*

#### Food security:

- amount of production \*\*
- amount of consumption
- proportion of discards \*\*
- proportion of non-food use

#### Social and economic contribution:

- number of primary employments \*
- number of secondary and tertiary employments
- values added by fishery sector \*
- values added by fishery products through value chain
- employment and value produced through non-fishery use of ecosystem

6. Here, the symbols show the current capacity to produce such indicators based on the RECOFI capture database and the information to be submitted under minimum data reporting, with \*\* indicating fully capable, \* partially capable, and + potential to estimate with minor additions and/or modifications, respectively. The same symbols are applied throughout this paper.

7. At the same time, the RECOFI specifically identified three main monitoring priorities in order to detect effectively possible deteriorations in ecosystem and fisheries resources of primary concerns, i.e. ecosystem-wide impacts of shrimp trawls, status of coastal finfish resources using groupers and emperors (identified as most vulnerable) as reference indicators of fishing pressure, and stock status of priority species, narrow-barred Spanish mackerel, as the first target. Minimum data reporting was developed to monitor these three components, and targeted indicators as well as potentially useful indicators in addition under each category include:

#### **Impacts of shrimp trawls**

##### *Targeted indicators:*

- amount of efforts (in total tow duration and number of fishing days) \*\*
- species composition of bycatch (in a sense of non-targeted catch, i.e. catch other than shrimps) \*\*
- amount of discards and their composition, if possible \*
- comparison of cost and benefits among fleet segments \*
- evaluation of effectiveness of mitigation devices \*

##### *Other potentially useful indicators:*

- extent of area of operations +
- status indicators of major bycatch species \*\*
- evaluation of relative economic benefits in comparison with potential loss (through bycatch, deterioration of habitat, etc.) +

#### **Status of coastal finfish stocks with groupers and emperors as reference species groups**

##### *Targeted indicators:*

- amount of efforts of three main gear types (in number of fishing days) \*\*
- status indication of groupers and emperors through CPUEs of three main gear types \*\*
- proportion of grouper and emperor catches by each gear \*\*

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<sup>1</sup> Here, “vulnerable species” indicates those species that are more sensitive to exploitation pressure generally owing to low productivity, slow growth and/or other ecological characteristics.

- species composition within species groups of groupers and emperors \*

*Other potentially useful indicators:*

- mean size of catch of groupers and emperors +

### **Stock status of narrow-barred Spanish mackerel**

*Targeted indicators:*

- amount of efforts \*\*
- status indication through CPUEs \*\*
- abundance estimates \*

*Other potentially useful indicators:*

- evaluation of abundance estimates and their projections +

8. Adaptive fishery management requires monitoring of at least two components; one is on target objective, e.g. status of fishery resources and ecosystems, and the other on targets to control, e.g. fishing efforts, in other words, responses and actions. At the same time, the ecosystem approach of fishery management is targeting towards the sustainability of ecosystems and communities as a whole. Sustainability of fishery resources and the ecosystem is an essential condition to achieve this objective, but not the only goal, and it is necessary to determine a proper balance among conflicting goals. It should be noted that some indicators could serve multiple roles, such as action indicator for one aspect and response indicator for other aspect. This paper only provides an extremely brief overview on the current situation, and the final set of standard monitoring indicators should be determined according to the management goals and operation plans.

### **SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORKING GROUP**

9. The Working Group is invited to review a range of indicators and to plan toward development of the RECOFI management plans, its operational objectives and possible conservation measures and corresponding monitoring indicators. Specifically, the Working Group is invited to comment on:

- what the primary objectives are of fishery management in the region;
- whether the current data collection and sharing is adequate to establish fishery management operational plans to monitor and achieve those objectives, especially in the areas other than monitoring sustainability of ecosystem and fishery resources; and
- workplans towards developing and establishing the RECOFI fishery management scheme with management procedures, operational plans and corresponding indicators.

**Consideration of a RECOFI Scientific Working Group to provide scientific advice to the Commission on aquaculture and fishery management: role, structure and relationship with Working Group on Fisheries Management**

**PURPOSE**

1. The purpose of this paper is provide information to the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) about the possibility to establish a Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) scientific expert group that would advise the Commission on fisheries and aquaculture issues, including management and development recommendations.

**BACKGROUND**

2. At the fifth session of RECOFI held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 12 to 14 May 2009, the Commission agreed to hold an ad-hoc intersessional meeting to consider ways and means to enhance RECOFI's role, including the Commission's consolidation and development. Members recognized the need to make the Commission more efficient and to accelerate its growth. In preparation of the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development that was held in Rome, Italy, from 12 to 14 May 2010, a Technical Performance Review (TPR) covered the period during the four last RECOFI sessions (second session, Muscat, 2003; third session, Doha 2005; fourth session, Jeddah, 2007; and fifth session, Dubai 2009).

3. The purposes of the technical performance review were, first, to provide an overview of the organization, structure and objectives of RECOFI and, second, to consider the technical performance with regard to the organization's objectives. An international consultant was recruited by the FAO/RECOFI Secretariat to carry out the review. The outcome and findings of the review were presented during the sixth session of RECOFI that was held from 10 to 12 May 2011 in Rome, Italy. One of the conclusions of the technical performance was that the Commission should consider the convenience to establish a Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee (STEC) that would have a consultative role and would participate in strategy development.

**ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS**

4. At its sixth session in May 2011 "The Commission considered the potential benefits of a scientific expert group that would review and analyze the fisheries situation in the region to provide advice to the Commission so that it would have a solid base for its decisions in fulfillment of RECOFI's mandate" (paragraph 30 of the adopted session report refers).

5. Moreover, "The Commission agreed that many fisheries management and developmental challenges faced RECOFI. Members were calling upon the Commission more frequently to undertake additional work and for this reason, it was necessary to reconsider the annual contributions paid. In addition, a RECOFI scientific working group was mentioned. It was also agreed that the Secretariat would communicate with the WGA [Working Group on Aquaculture] and WGFM Chairpersons to prepare a paper for consideration by the Commission at their next sessions" (paragraph 40 of the RECOFI report).

6. The existence of scientific, technical, and economic committees or similar subsidiary bodies is contemplated in many regional fisheries management organization (RFMOs), either established under the provisions of the FAO Constitution or independent. The TPR of RECOFI emphasized that there is a need to strengthen the Commission through the creation of a STEC that would have a consultative role and would participate in strategy development. In order to progress in the process of exchanging scientific capacity, a regional initiative coordinated by RECOFI could be organized, such as a



scientific, technical and economic conference that would clarify national capacity, create synergy among researchers, economists and technicians and launch actions towards coprogramming within RECOFI. Such an initiative could also contribute to the visibility of RECOFI, both for its achievements and its mandate, and be used as a platform for potential donors wishing to submit common projects or actions.

7. Technical and scientific advisory committees of other RFMOs may constitute suitable examples to consider. However, due consideration should be given to the current status of RECOFI, whose structure, financial viability and modus operandi could make it difficult to justify and sustain the creation of another advisory body to the Commission in addition to the permanent WGFM and WGA.

#### **SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORKING GROUP**

8. The Working Group is invited to consider and advise the Commission on the convenience and feasibility to establish a multidisciplinary scientific expert group as a subsidiary body of the Commission. The Working Group is also invited to formulate its recommendation on the basis of the current organization and financial viability of RECOFI.

## RECOFI cooperation with FIRMS

### PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this document is to provide information to the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) regarding how much the Fishery Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS) information partnership can be instrumental in achieving the objectives of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI), and the merits of RECOFI's FIRMS membership. An overview roadmap is suggested in the document.

### BACKGROUND

2. FIRMS is an information partnership launched in 2004. It now brings together 13 international organizations as members. FAO is one of these organizations and RECOFI, as an FAO statutory body, is, de facto, part of this partnership.

3. At the sixth session of the RECOFI (May 2011, Rome, Italy), the Commission was introduced to the FIRMS partnership in a side event. The focus of the presentation was on FIRMS' objectives, information products, benefits for a regional fisheries management organization, and its mode of operation (see document at [www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/022/am423e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/022/am423e.pdf)). A proposal for an initial RECOFI-FIRMS workshop on a regional marine resources and fisheries inventory was agreed by the Commission.

4. The workshop took place from 12 to 14 July 2011. It was hosted by the FAO Regional Office for the Near East, Cairo, Egypt. It was held back-to-back with a workshop on RECOFI minimum data requirements.

5. The FIRMS workshop was successful in developing a skeleton for a regional marine resources and fisheries inventory. While appraising the potential benefits of the inventory approach in support of fisheries management in the RECOFI area, the participants agreed that the results of the workshop and follow-up activities should be conveyed to the fifth WGFM meeting, with the understanding that the meeting may wish to discuss the possibility of RECOFI's participation in FIRMS.

6. The draft report of RECOFI-FIRMS workshop on a regional marine resources and fisheries inventory was dispatched on 30 August 2011 for review and comments by workshop participants. The final version of the report will be distributed to RECOFI Members as soon as comments have been incorporated into the draft. However, the activities and results of the workshop are summarized below.

### ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

7. Ten representatives from six RECOFI Members (the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the State of Kuwait, the Sultanate of Oman, the State of Qatar, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and a resource person from the Republic of Iraq participated in the RECOFI-FIRMS workshop. The goal of this workshop was to formalize an inventory of marine resources/stocks and fisheries for the RECOFI area (at both the national and regional levels) for its eventual publication through FIRMS (<http://firms.fao.org/>). This inventory will be used as the backbone for regular reporting of status and trends of stocks and fisheries under the RECOFI mandate, using the Web-based framework and approaches established by FIRMS.

8. Prior to the workshop, a preliminary inventory, building on previous RECOFI and FIRMS work, was dispatched to national focal points, together with guidelines in English and Arabic,

requesting them to review and amend the inventory. In addition, Members were invited to attend the workshop so that regional validation of the inventory could be undertaken.

9. Although advance notice was relatively short, the workshop provided a first exposure for RECOFI Members to the inventory approach. Nonetheless, two countries (Iran [Islamic Republic of] and Oman) attended the meeting with appropriately revised data, including the inventory. They also requested clarification regarding the guidelines. Other Members opted to deliver information, including data availability for their respective fishery sectors, and to use the workshop to gain a better understanding of the inventory guidelines.

### **Workshop inventory outputs**

10. **Fisheries inventory:** During the workshop, the consolidation exercise followed a methodological path based on the “three-dimensional diagram”, which enables participants to visually represent and position the multifacets of fisheries and their relationships. This approach was much appreciated as it supported the building of a consistent regional picture of the fishery situation. Based on this approach, the workshop successfully managed to set the skeleton of the regional fisheries inventory, with the requirement that fishery units be defined consistently with the minimum data requirements.

11. **Marine resources inventory:** Using the 17 RECOFI priority species/groups, a regional list of marine resources will develop. However, interest was expressed by some participants to expand the inventory with reference to species of national importance. For this purpose, the involvement of national scientific institutes was deemed necessary to ascertain stock units and status.

12. **Capacity building in fulfilling inventory data requirements:** The workshop dedicated a substantial amount of time to training on the inventory guidelines. Participants gained the capacity to extend the agreed inventory skeleton with the necessary data input.

### **Salient points addressed during the workshop**

13. **Georeferencing:** For proper georeferencing of marine resources and fisheries, a RECOFI georeferencing system will be required. It will require adequate divisions and a coding system giving an overlay of RECOFI’s area, the main seas or environmental areas (e.g. Gulf, Oman Sea and Arabian Sea), and exclusive economic zones.

14. A further aspect of the regional consolidation is the translation of the terminology used in Arabic and Farsi. In this respect, some delegates agreed to provide existing translated resources. In addition, some taxonomic corrections were made to the priority list of species previously published by RECOFI.

15. It was pointed out in the workshop that FIRMS is an information partnership framework that implements principles of best scientific evidence and of transparency promoted by the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the FAO Strategy for Improving Information on the Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries (Strategy-STF). However, a fundamental FIRMS rule is that the information contribution and publishing process is under the control of partners. As a FIRMS partner, RECOFI would decide what information would be published.

16. **Inventories in support of fisheries management:** The fisheries inventory could assist regional reviews of management measures at the national level. In the marine resource template, the management information supports reporting on scientific advice for management. The involvement of RECOFI in FIRMS could enhance Members’ visibility regarding their efforts to promote sound and more responsible fisheries management.

**Roadmap towards a formal participation of RECOFI in FIRMS.**

17. The workshop recognized that RECOFI's status as an FAO Article XIV body makes it eligible to become a fully fledged FIRMS partner. The workshop's proposed roadmap for the development of the inventory is related to RECOFI's primary objectives. The roadmap is as follows:

- The fifth WGFM meeting will have a FIRMS agenda item. Members are encouraged to present a complete fisheries inventory at the meeting. The FIRMS Secretariat will participate in the meeting and it is hoped that the WGFM might be in a position to validate the regional inventory of fisheries for publishing in FIRMS.
- The WGFM may wish to recommend sending a RECOFI representative to the Seventh FIRMS Steering Committee Meeting (12–16 December 2011, Rome, Italy). This participation would enable RECOFI's achievements to be presented to FIRMS partners and provide RECOFI with an understanding of how FIRMS functions in view of a possible application by RECOFI to become a FIRMS partner.
- The proposed development of a marine resources inventory for the RECOFI area will follow a slower path and is, therefore, set as a second-level priority. Based on the skeleton of regional marine resource units agreed at the workshop, Members could encourage their scientists to collaborate to seek and agree on stock definitions, stock assessment results and stock status information. The progress of this consultative phase could be presented to the WGFM and determine appropriate next steps. The WGFM might consider publishing the RECOFI marine resource inventory as a platform for further work and deciding if a recommendation should be made to the Commission in relation to becoming a FIRMS partner.

**SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORKING GROUP**

18. The meeting is invited to:

- comment on the above-reported workshop results;
- review the post-workshop progress on the inventory work; and
- make recommendations concerning the issues raised in the roadmap.

This document contains the report of the fifth meeting of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM), which was held in Tehran, Iran (Islamic Republic of), from 9 to 12 October 2011. The WGFM addressed and made decisions on matters concerning relevant follow-up to the sixth session of RECOFI and the fourth session of the RECOFI WGFM. An update on the programme of work and budget for the biennium for 2011–12 in relation to the WGFM was considered and arrangements for a number of activities finalized in terms of dates, locations and funding. A proposal by the Sultanate of Oman on illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the RECOFI region was addressed again and Members undertook to follow up on assessing IUU fishing in their respective countries through the completion of a questionnaire that would be circulated prior to the sixth meeting of the WGFM in Qatar in October 2012. The WGFM considered in detail progress towards the implementation of the RECOFI Recommendation on Minimum Data Reporting (Recommendation RECOFI/6/2011/1). A preliminary review of stock and fisheries status indicators to be produced from the RECOFI fishery management database, building on past work, was reviewed and progressed. The meeting considered a RECOFI scientific working group to provide scientific advice to the Commission on aquaculture and fishery management. This matter will be addressed further at the seventh session of RECOFI in May 2013. The final substantive item addressed on the agenda was RECOFI cooperation with the Fishery Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS). The next meeting of the WGFM will be held in Qatar from 21 to 23 October 2012.

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