



Food and Agriculture
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REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR FISHERIES

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REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS OF THE COMMISSION FOR THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD 2017-2019

Executive summary

This document serves to report on the administrative and financial actions taken since Commission's last session held in Kuwait in May 2017. Covered issues include, but are not limited to, the following: RECOFI activities undertaken during the inter-sessional period, publications, the status of payment of the membership contributions to the autonomous budget, and the review of inter-sessional period expenditures.

Suggested Action by the Commission

The Commission is invited to:

- Note this report and provide further general guidance,
- Consider the status of the budget when discussing the Work Programme activities for the upcoming years, and
- Urge the Member States in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to clear their arrears.

INTRODUCTION

1. The RECOFI Secretariat seeks to achieve its mandated tasks through technical, analytical, information management, communications, operational and administrative activities. To this end, the Secretariat encompasses, among others, the following key duties and responsibilities for (i) effective and efficient operations of the Commission; (ii) preparation and submission of preliminary programme of work of the Commission with estimated costs; (iii) reporting to the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network (RSN), a collaborative institutional set-up for which FAO provides secretariat services.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

Chairperson of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies

2. Chairpersons of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies during the intersessional period were as follows:

- RECOFI:
 - Chair: Yousef Khalifa Al-Najem (Kuwait)
 - First vice-chair: Sultanate of Oman
 - Second vice-chair: State of Qatar
- Working Group on Aquaculture: Chair: Dawood Suleiman Al-Yahyai (Oman)
- Working Group on Fisheries Management: Nabil Fita (Saudi Arabia).

Functioning of the RECOFI Secretariat

3. Based in FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa (RNE), Cairo, Egypt, the RECOFI Secretariat continued to provide the administrative and operational functions of the Commission during the reporting period. Mr. Haydar Fersoy holds the RECOFI Secretary post following its assignment at the RNE as the Senior Fishery and Aquaculture Officer in 2016. Ms. Hebatallah Fahmy, Technical Programme Assistant of RNE, continued to provide bilingual (Arabic/English) secretariat assistance during the intersessional period. The Secretariat has further relied on limited consultancies to address specific issues.

4. During the reporting period, the Commission has continued to benefit from technical support provided by the following branches of FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department: Aquaculture Branch (FIAA), Fisheries and Aquaculture Information and Statistics Branch (FIAS), Fishery Policy, Economics and Institutions Branch (FIAP), Fishing Operations and Technology Branch (FIAO) and Marine and Inland Fishery Branch (FIAF).

RECOFI inter-sessional events

5. The Secretariat coordinated and actively contributed to the preparation and the implementation of the following RECOFI events:

- Regional Workshop on Building National Capacity for Cultured Animal Disease Diagnostic in Relation to Bio-Security; Cairo, Egypt, 6-8 March 2018,
- Eighth meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Aquaculture (WGA); Kuwait City, State of Kuwait, 17-19 April 2018,
- Workshop on Regional Joint Assessment of Kingfish (*Scomberomorus commerson*), Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 17-18 February 2019, and
- Eleventh meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) (Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 19-21 February 2019).

6. It should be noted that the above-listed mentioned two workshops had poor participation from Member States while attendance of several experts at these workshops was supported by the budget of Commission with an aim to have a minimum level of attendance. More details are as follows:

- Regional Workshop on Building National Capacity for Cultured Animal Disease Diagnostic in Relation to Bio-Security: five participants from three Member States, namely Iraq, Sultanate of Oman, and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. [The participation from Oman (i.e. the Chairperson of the WGA) and Iraq were financially supported by the Commission].
- Workshop on Regional Joint Assessment of Kingfish (*Scomberomorus commerson*): A total of eight participants from four Member States, namely Iran (IR), Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (The expenses of Iranian expert was covered through the budget of the Commission).

Meetings at which the Commission was represented

7. During the intersessional period the Commission was represented at the following meetings:
- Thirty Third Session of the Committee on Fisheries (Rome, Italy, 11-15 July 2018);
 - Seventh Meeting of Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network (RSN-7) (Rome, Italy, 7 - 13 July 2018); and
 - Regional Workshop for the Indian Ocean (including the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal), the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden and the ROPME/RECOFI held in Bali, Indonesia (8-9 November 2018). Two participants from Iran (of IR) joined the workshop (Iran was the only Member State who made nomination in response to the short notice made on 27 September 2018 by the RECOFI Secretariat.
8. Additionally, the Secretariat participated in the Regional Consultation Meeting on the Establishment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Aquaculture and Fisheries Organization (RAAFO) held in Cairo, Egypt, on 29 November 2017.

Publications

9. During the inter-sessional period, the following three RECOFI reports were made available to the public, all of which were published in the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report series:
- i) Report of the Ninth Session of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI), Kuwait, State of Kuwait, 9-11 May 2017. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 1208. Rome, Italy. FAO 2017.
 - ii) Report of the Eighth Meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Aquaculture. Kuwait City, State of Kuwait, 17-19 April 2018. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 1242. Rome, Italy. FAO 2018.
Available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/ca1351en/CA1351EN.pdf>
 - iii) Report of the Eleventh Meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 19-21 February 2019. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 1257. Rome, Italy (under publication).
10. In addition, the Secretariat ensured the preparation and release of all the meeting and session working documents. Overall, approximately 20 working documents were produced by the Secretariat in the inter-sessional period to support the work of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, i.e. the WGA and WGFM.

Others

11. Several other tasks that are coordinated directly by the Secretariat are not detailed here. These included liaison and communication with the Focal Points of the Member States, strengthening the cooperation with the FAO technical departments and partner organizations, including observer organizations, and the coordination of editing, translation and distribution of documents. The following should however be noted:
- RECOFI networking communication and information flow: The Bureau of the Commission and particularly the network of National Focal Points (NFPs) are highly instrumental in assisting and advising the Secretariat for the implementation of the work plan and for dealing with critical issues that may arise during the inter-sessional period. The list of current Focal Points is in Appendix 1.
 - Visibility of RECOFI activities and focal points: The RECOFI webpage www.fao.org/rfb/recofi, although simple and basic, has been maintained and updated. It is

currently the primary vehicle through which the Secretariat makes information available to the Commission and the general public.

- The webpage of FAO Regional Office for Near East (FAORNE) has a link for RECOFI: <http://www.fao.org/neareast/recofi/en/> , which is was regularly updated.

RECOFI Review

12. At its ninth session (2017) the Commission, the Secretariat introduced the RECOFI Review document outlining the achievement of the Commission, the key challenges facing the effective functioning of the Commission, and the activities conducted during the period 2005-2015. The document also included an alternative structural model for a more functional RECOFI. Although the Session acknowledged the Review, following discussions, the Commission decided on the official submission of the Review to the respective Ministers of each Member State for further decision and guidance. However, in accordance with the respective high-level decision of FAO, the Review was not circulated to the concerned Ministers of the RECOFI member countries for their consideration of both the value and benefit of RECOFI, as well as the challenges faced.

Recommendations on Management Measures adopted under Article V of the RECOFI Agreement

13. Being a body established by a treaty under the Article XIV of FAO Constitution, RECOFI is empowered to impose legally-binding decision in the form of “Recommendations” in pursuant to the respective provisions of Article III (Functions) and Article V (Recommendations on Management Measures) of the RECOFI Agreement. The Commission currently has two recommendations of this kind: (i) RECOFI Recommendation on minimum data reporting in the RECOFI area (RECOFI/6/2011/1); and (ii) RECOFI Recommendation on Minimum Reporting on Aquaculture Data and Information (RECOFI/8/2015/1). The implementation status of these recommendations are detailed in the document “Implementation Status of RECOFI Decisions and Recommendations” (RECOFI/X/2019/6). In accordance with the recommendation of the eleventh meeting of the WGFM (2019), a new RECOFI recommendation has been drafted by the RECOFI Secretariat on the assessment and management of Kingfish (*Scomberomorus commerson*) for review and enforcement consideration by the Commission (RECOFI/X/2019/5).

14. FINANCIAL ISSUES

Monitoring of RECOFI budget

15. RECOFI member countries each contribute USD 5 000/year. The core budget of RECOFI takes the form of a multi-lateral trust-fund FAO project, which was launched in April 2003 and has been subject to several regular revisions since then. The RECOFI has not seen any annual budget increase since 2003 as the Commission left the annual member contribution unchanged at a fixed amount of USD 5,000.

16. The Secretariat, in collaboration with the respective divisions of FAO Headquarters, monitors RECOFI budget through an Oracle-based electronic budget system operated by FAO. RECOFI budget is revised regularly in order to monitor annual contributions by member countries and the cash flow of expenditures.

Status of Contributions: Payments and arrears

17. The total arrears amounted to 160,036.04 as at 21 March 2019. Status of Member’s Contributions as at 21 March 2019 is provided in the Appendix 2.

18. As at 27 March 2017, the status of financial contribution of RECOFI Members was as follows:

- i) Members with no arrears: None

- ii) Members with arrears for 2017 and 2019: Kuwait.
- iii) Members with arrears for 2018 and 2019: Saudi Arabia.
- iv) Members with long-term arrears: Bahrain, Iran (IR), Oman, Qatar, and United Arab Emirates.

19. Under Article IX (Finances) (7) of the RECOFI Agreement, a Member State in arrears in the payment of its dues in an amount that equals or exceeds the contributions due for two preceding years can lose its vote right in RECOFI Sessions. As of 21 March 2019, Bahrain, Iran (IR), Qatar and United Arab Emirates fell under the provisions of this Article. It should be noted, however, here that the Agreement may allow the Commission to permit such a Party to vote if the Member State could show that conditions beyond its control contributed to this inability to pay. However, the Commission in no case may extend the right to vote beyond a further two calendar years.

20. Timely payment of member's contributions is of high importance for the proper implementation of the scheduled activities of the Commission as the arrears bring technical and operational difficulties for the Commission. The RECOFI Secretariat sent payment due reminder to the RECOFI Focal Points in April 2019.

Extra-budgetary contributions

21. In accordance with the Article IX (Finances) (5) and Article X (Expenses) (5) of the RECOFI Agreement, the Commission can receive extra-budgetary donations and voluntary contributions. Not any such donation or contribution was received in the intersessional period. However, it should be noted that the Member States who hosted the events of the Commission, to varying degrees, covered expenses by their own budgets.

Expenditures

22. At its ninth Session (2017), the Commission endorsed activities for implementation in the 2017-2019 biennium approximately amounting to USD 90,000 for five activities (WGFA: two activities; WGFM: two activities; RECOFI: one activity). During the 2017-2018 inter-sessional period, total expenditures were 63, 250 USD. In 2017, the Commission had expenditures in the order of 18,582 USD. Main expenditures included 9,450 USD (50.8 %) for consultancy service cost and 8,470 USD for internal common services and support cost (45.5 %). It should be noted that during the intersessional period, almost all expenses of the Commission were burned by its on budget.

23. The Commission's expenses in 2018 were USD 27,304. Of which, a total of 25,736 USD (94.2%) was used for travel expenses. The other main expenditure item was consultancy service expenses, which added up to 788 USD (2.8 %).

24. As of 21 March 2019, The Commission's expenses in 2018 were USD 17,364. At this date, the total balance available in the RECOFI Trust Fund (MTF/REM/001/MUL) was 34,683 USD. Financial highlights (i.e. incomes, breakdown of the expenditures and balances) for the period 2017- 2019 are presented in Appendix 3.

Appendix 1

List of RECOFI National Focal Points

Country	National Focal Points	RECOFI WGFM	RECOFI WGA
1. BAHRAIN (KINGDOM OF)	Bassam ALSHOWAIKH Directorate of Fisheries Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning PO Box 20071 Manama Tel.: +973-17987444 Mob: +973-3608 8288 E-mail: bassam_sh11@yahoo.com balshuwaikh@mun.gov.bh	Ahmed Abdulwahab Al-Radhi Act. Chief of Fisheries Assessment Section Directorate of Fisheries Ministry of Works, Municipalities and Urban Planning P.O. Box 20071 Manama Tel: +973 17987419 Mobile: +973 39290002 E-mail: aiwahab@mun.gov.bh Shark_a40@hotmail.com	Bassam ALSHOWAIKH Directorate of Fisheries Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning PO Box 20071 Manama Tel.: +973-17987444 Mob: +973-3608 8288 E-mail: bassam_sh11@yahoo.com balshuwaikh@mun.gov.bh
2. IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF)	Shapour Kakoolaki Director General for Fisheries and Fisheries Affairs Iran Fisheries Organization Ministry of Jihad -e-Agriculture No 236, West Fatemi Avenue. PO Box 14155-6353 PC 1418636331 Tehran, Iran Tel: +9821-66941373 Mob:+989125003147 E-mail: bsh443@gmail.com	Shapour Kakoolaki Director General for Fisheries and Fisheries Affairs Iran Fisheries Organization Ministry of Jihad -e-Agriculture No 236, West Fatemi Avenue. PO Box 14155-6353 PC 1418636331 Tehran, Iran Tel: +9821-66941373 Mob: +989125003147 E-mail: bsh443@gmail.com	Hossein Ali ABDOLHAY Deputy for Aquaculture Iran Fisheries Organization Ministry of Jihad -e-Agriculture No.236, West Fatemi Avenue., PO Box 14155-6353 PC 1418636331, Tehran, Iran Tel.: +9821-66943860 Fax:+9821- 66943870 Mob:+989126386047 E-mail: hossein_abdolhay@yahoo.com
3. IRAQ	MusaddakD. ALI Director General Ministry of Agriculture/ Directorate of Animal Resource Baghdad Mob.: 0964 7901616053 E-mail: mmdmda@yahoo.com fisheries_iraq2005@yahoo.com	Sadad Talat Chief of Fisheries Department Ministry of Agriculture/ Directorate of Animal Resource Baghdad E-mail: fisheries_iraq2005@yahoo.com	MusaddkD.ALI Director General Ministry of Agriculture/ Directorate of Animal Resource Baghdad Mob.: 0964 7901616053 E-mail: mmdmda@yahoo.com fisheries_iraq2005@yahoo.com
4. KUWAIT	Yousef Khalifa AL-NAJEM Deputy Director-General for Fish Resources Public Authority of Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources PO Box 21422 – Safat – 13075 Kuwait Tel: +965 22254177 Mobile: +965 50288666 Fax: +965 22254103 – +965 22254113 E-mail: yousef-alnajem@hotmail.com	Seoud Abdelaziz Senior Marine Researcher Head of Marine Research Department Public Authority of Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources PO. Box 21422 – Safat – 13075 Kuwait Mobile: +965 Fax: +965 E-mail:	Head of Aquaculture Department Public Authority of Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources PO Box 21422 – Safat – 13075 Kuwait Tel: +965 Mobile: Fax: +965 E-mail:

5. OMAN (SULTANATE OF)	Abdulaziz Said Al-Marzooqi Acting DG of Fisheries Resources Development Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Wealth PO Box 427, Muscat 100 Tel: +968 24953255 (Off) Mob:+968-99333483 +968 99202255 E-mail: aa.almarzouqi@ymail.com	Hussain Mohamed ALMUSCATI Director of Development and Management of Fisheries Resources Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries PO Box 427, Muscat 100 Tel: +968-24953282 Fax:+968 24693246 Mob:+968-92626644 E-mail: hmuscati@yahoo.com	Dawood Suleiman AL-YAHYAI Director of Aquaculture Development Directorate General of Fisheries Resources Development Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries P.O. Box: 467 PC:100 Muscat Fax: +968-24693246 Mob:+968-99350730 E-mail: dawoodalyahyai@gmail.com
6. QATAR	Mohammad M. AL-ABDULLAH Director of Aquaculture Research Centre Ministry of Municipality & Environment PO Box 8703 Doha, Qatar Tel: +974 44263531 Fax: +974 44263650 Mobile: +974-55842324 E-mail: mflamarzi@mme.gov.qa aquaculturest2@hotmail.com	Jassem AL-MOHAMADY Assistant Director Department of Fisheries Ministry of Municipality & Environment PO Box 8703 Doha, Qatar Tel: +974 44263481 Fax: +974 44263650 Mobile: +974-55551196 E-mail: jalmohamady@mme.gov.qa	Mohammad M. AL-ABDULLAH Director of Aquaculture Research Centre Ministry of Municipality & Environment PO Box 8703 Doha, Qatar Tel: +974 44263531 Fax: +974 44263650 Mobile: +974-55842324 E-mail: mflamarzi@mme.gov.qa aquaculturest2@hotmail.com
7. SAUDI ARABIA (KINGDOM OF)	Hussain Hijje ALNAZRY General Manager Marin Ministry of Agriculture Riyadh Mobile: +966 50 6211910 Fax: +966 11 4172405 E-mail: alnazry@hotmail.com	Nabil I. A FITA General Manager Fisheries Ministry of Agriculture PO Box 134 Saihat 31972 Damam SAUDI ARABIA Tel.: +9663 8361307 Fax:+966 138361890 Mobile:+966 0505856208 E-mail: nabil_fita@hotmail.com	Abubakar Mohammed SAHLI Researcher Deputy Director of Fish Department Jeddah Fisheries Research Center Ministry of Agriculture PO Box 9612 North Obhur, Jeddah 21423 Tel.: +966-122342082 Mob: +966-564482168 / +966-554342731 Fax: +966-122342083 E-mail: jfrc2020@gmail.com
8. UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE)	Salah AL RAYSSI Director Fisheries Wealth Authority Ministry of Environment and Water Abu Dhabi Tel: +9715-04849009 Mob: +97155 4849009 Fax: +9714-2655822 E-mail: saalayssi@moccae.gov.ae	Salah AL RAYSSI Director Fisheries Wealth Authority Ministry of Environment and Water Abu Dhabi Tel: +9715-04849009 Mob: +97155 4849009 Fax: +9714-2655822 E-mail: saalayssi@moccae.gov.ae	Auhood Hassan Al Hammadi (Ms) Biologist Marine Environment Research Centre Ministry of Climate Change and Environment Abu Dhabi Tel: +971 4 214 8582 Direct: +971 4 2148 394 Mob: +971 5025099309 Fax: +971 4 265 5822 E-mail: ahalhammadi@moccae.gov.ae

Appendix 2

Status of Member's Contributions as at 21 March 2019 (Expressed in USD)

Member Governments	Outstanding 12/31/2018	Contribution due for 2019	Received up to 12/31/2019 *	Outstanding 12/31/2019
BAHRAIN	10,000.00	5,000.00		15,000.00
IRAN, Islamic Republic of	55,000.00	5,000.00		60,000.00
IRAQ	10,000.00	5,000.00		15,000.00
KUWAIT	5,000.00	5,000.00		10,000.00
OMAN, Sultanate of **	10,000.00	5,000.00		15,000.00
QATAR	10,000.00	5,000.00		15,000.00
SAUDI ARABIA, Kingdom of	5,000.00	5,000.00		10,000.00
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	15,036.04	5,000.00		20,036.04
Other Sources				
TOTAL	120,036.04	40,000.00		160,036.04
* Fiscal year begins in May				
** In 2016, a payment of USD 10,000 made by the Government of Oman to another FAO Commission was mistakenly credited to RECOFI for the years 2015 and 2016. In March 2019, an action was taken to rectify the error and the payment was unapplied from RECOFI and credited correctly.				

Appendix 3

Financial highlights for the period 1 2017-2019 (as of 21 March 2019)

	2017 *	2018	2019	Grand total
<i>Income</i>	10,000	26,158	0	
<i>Expenditures</i>				
Consultants	9,450	788	5,,625	15,863
Locally Contracted Labour	246	751	0	997
Travel	285	25,736	9,912	35,933
Training	0	0	1,611	1,611
General Operating Expenses	0	29	216	245
General Operating Expenses - external common services	131	0	0	131
Internal Common Services and Support	8,470	0	0	8,470
Total Expenditure	18,582	27,304	17,364	63,250
		BALANCE	34,683	

* RECOFI fiscal year starts on 1st May