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DISSEMINATION OF RECOFI FISHERIES AND STOCKS THROUGH FIRMS, IN THE SDG14 CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

1. This documents This document provides an overview of FIRMS and its present and future benefits and opportunities for RECOFI area; summary of the current status of available RECOFI fisheries reports and the number of records in the marine resources and fisheries inventories in FIRMS; initiation of FIRMS Marine Resources inventory, Regional Focal Point (RFP) nomination and RFP Terms of Reference; and an update for the FIRMS involvement on the Global Record of Stocks and Fisheries (GRSF).

2. FAO is leading the FIRMS (Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System) partnership which aims to facilitate access to a wide range of high-quality information on the status and trends of global marine fishery resources, fisheries and their management. The overall goal of the FIRMS partnership is to provide decision-makers with necessary information to develop effective fisheries policies in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. The partnership nowadays brings together 14 Institutions representing 19 Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs)¹. Partners contribute with their information on status and trends through agreed FIRMS format reports which are then structured on an inventory of over 1000 marine resources/stocks and about 200 fisheries that these organizations provide advice on / or manage.

FIRMS benefits and opportunities for RECOFI region and member countries

3. Potential benefits and opportunities the FIRMS partnership can offer to its partners:
- At national level: FIRMS disseminated inventories of marine resource and fisheries support the need for easy access to high quality information for the development/enhancement of fisheries policies and management plans at national and

¹ Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT), Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT), International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO), North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO), North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC), South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO).

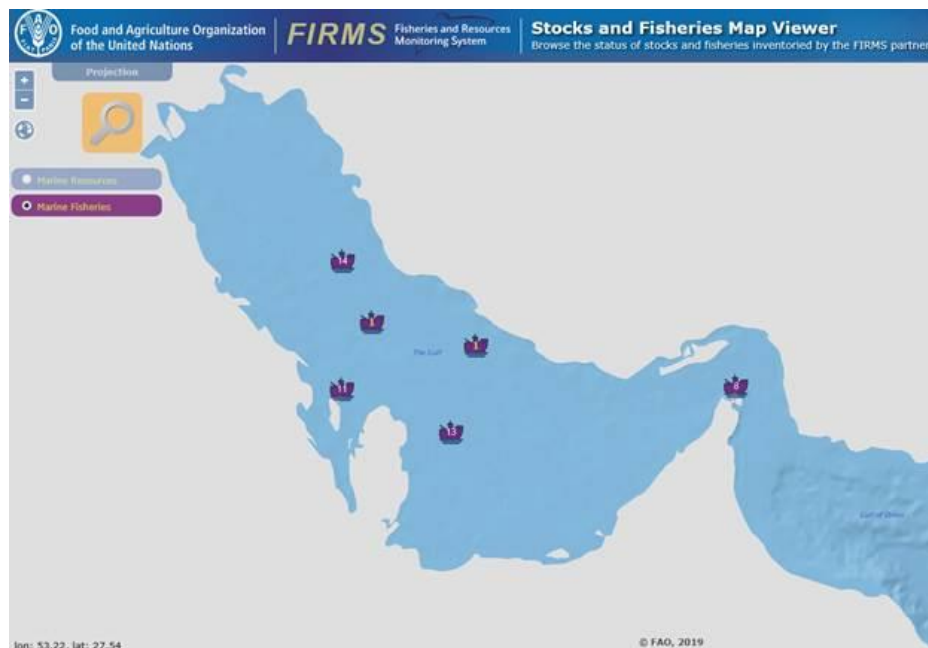
regional levels. Such high quality is achieved by formalizing, collating, standardizing, and sharing marine resource and fisheries information, and disseminating it through a variety of FIRMS data services (e.g. map viewer, analytical tools, fact sheets, status summaries);

- At regional level: RECOFI-FIRMS is providing the first experience/opportunity of a web-based information sharing system on fisheries among RECOFI countries. FIRMS inventories provide a foundational information layer which when properly articulated with the regional statistical database can provide a powerful analytical and reporting structure in support to resource assessments and fishery management;
- At global level: FIRMS ensure national and regional visibility at global level and thus enabling uptake in the global policy agenda, such as global stock status monitoring, fishery subsidies, traceability of fishery products, SDGs; as well as access to national, regional and global programs and project opportunities.

RECOFI in FIRMS - Fisheries inventories

4. The marine resources and fisheries inventories are expected to be used as the backbone for regular reporting of status and trends of stocks and fisheries under the RECOFI mandate. The RECOFI marine resources and fisheries inventory stored in FIRMS reflects the work done during the FIRMS-RECOFI workshop held in Cairo on July 2009 (Report: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/015/i2353e/i2353e00.htm>) and the follow up with fishery experts of Bahrain, Iran, Oman and Qatar. Limited results were achieved with Saudi Arabia, United Arabian Emirates, Iraq and Kuwait.

5. As at 11 February 2019, RECOFI fisheries inventory had 68 RECOFI Fishery fact sheets, with reporting year 2012, from Bahrain (11), Iran (15), Oman (28) and Qatar (14). All RECOFI fact sheets can be accessed through the FAO/FIRMS web site <http://firms.fao.org/firms/search/institution/recofi/en> and Fisheries Map Viewer <http://firms.fao.org/firms/stocks-fisheries-map-viewer?agency=RECOFI&layer=fishery>.



6. According to the work done during the FIRMS-RECOFI workshop 2009, the estimated number of fisheries records which could be added in the inventory once validated by the countries are 37 (these concern the fisheries from Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and UAE). Over time, the update of

fisheries inventories will generate time series of fisheries status and allow to follow their trends. Fisheries records can constitute structural reporting dimensions of the regional statistical data base, also providing complementary semi quantitative and qualitative information.

7. Updating RECOFI-FIRMS inventories: FIRMS Secretariat launches a data call once per year which is followed by a country-by-country follow-up. Continuous support is offered through the FIRMS and RECOFI Secretariats to National Focal Points for the updating of their national inventories. A list of National Focal Points (NFPs) was settled in 2009, which has been updated various times since then, and needs to be updated. See Annex 1 for the latest list of national focal points and Annex 3 for the proposed NFPs ToRs. National Focal Points are nominated by each member country and are expected to be fisheries data managers, fisheries statisticians and/or fisheries researchers.

8. National Focal Points are expected to update their latest available excel based national fisheries records, add in the inventory any new relevant national fisheries they wish to include, and remove extinct fisheries if any. Once the information is received the FIRMS Secretariat processes it storing in the database and producing factsheets, geospatial products and web services.

RECOFI in FIRMS - Regional marine resources/stocks inventory and Regional Focal Point

9. An inventory for marine resources was also drafted in 2009, rather limited to national resources of Iran (92 resources) and Qatar (104 resources). The last WGFM10 (Doha, Qatar - December 2016) acknowledged the benefits of developing FIRMS Marine Resources of regional relevance for the RECOFI region and recommended the initiation of the process focusing on the Spanish mackerel and shrimps as priority species. Terms of Reference for a Regional Focal Point was also requested by WGFM10 and have been drafted by RECOFI secretariat and are presented in Annex 2 for WGFM11 consideration and adoption.

FIRMS & the Sustainable Development Goals

10. FAO is the custodian agency of the SDG 14.4 “*By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics*”.

11. FIRMS, as a global monitoring tool on marine resources/stock inventories can be instrumental to facilitate countries’ contribution and reporting to global political agenda. In particular FIRMS and its standard approach to marine resources inventories can provide the RFBs’ backbone to support a live monitoring of Indicator 14.4.1 “**Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels**”.

Ownership and authorship

12. As per FIRMS partnership arrangements, the partners remain the owners of the information disseminated through the FIRMS website. A clear ownership statement is provided within each fact sheet, also contributing to the visibility of the body. RECOFI has full control on the information disseminated, and publication of fact sheets is made upon RECOFI clearance. Transparency and paternity of information contained within the fact sheets is ensured with references to the sources of information used.

13. Upon FIRMS agreed standards the <institution name> and/or <personal author name> can be included in the “Citation” and “Source of Information” sections of all the new or updated Fisheries reports/factsheets. This suggestion is open for discussion.

Prospects: FIRMS on-going developments - Global Record of Stocks and Fisheries

14. Among others, a major outcome of the tenth session of the Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System (FSC10)² is the decision that FIRMS should take ownership of the Global Record of Stocks and Fisheries (GRSF). This expansion of the business model will be refined during the forthcoming months for final presentation and discussion at the forthcoming 11th FIRMS Steering Committee meeting in May 2019.

15. GRSF was created as a Virtual Research Environment (VRE) during the BlueBRIDGE project, which ended in February 2018. Since then GRSF is running a pilot phase to validate records and to assign “global unique identifiers”. GRSF is expected to offer: 1) increased dissemination and monitoring of stocks and fisheries information, including in support to the Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 14.4.1 “Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels” of 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/71/313); 2) support to traceability and certification needs including catch documentation schemes, ecolabelling schemes, food safety, and sustainable fisheries; 3) support (through links to relevant stocks and fisheries records) the information transparency requested in the context of WTO negotiations on prohibiting fisheries subsidies that affect fishery resources sustainability. Three database sources are currently contributing to the GRSF: the Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System - FIRMS (FAO of the UN), the RAM Legacy Stock Assessment Data Base (University of Washington), and the FishSource (program of the Program of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership). As a result of this process and partnership work, the FIRMS-GRSF database is expected to dramatically increase in coverage.

Resources

16. More information on FIRMS can be obtained from the below resources:

- RECOFI Fishery fact sheets:
<http://firms.fao.org/firms/search/institution/recofi/en>
- RECOFI-FIRMS marine resources and fisheries inventory:
<http://firms.fao.org/firms/search/institution/recofi/en>
- RECOFI-FIRMS related Publications:
http://www.fao.org/fi/website/MultiQueryAction.do?loadMenu=/fishery/rfb/search&xsl=webapps/figis/shared/xsl/multiquery.xml&query=http://www.fao.org/fi/oldsite/eims_search/advanced_s_result.asp?xml=Y%26xml_no_subject=y%26statutory=31%26infotype=2%26FORM_C=AND%26SortOrder=3%26language=EN
- RECOFI Map viewer:
<http://firms.fao.org/firms/stocks-fisheries-map-viewer?agency=RECOFI&layer=fishery>

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WGFM

The meeting is invited to discuss and provide recommendations for (i) usage and value of FIRMS at country and regional level; (ii), update, completeness and improvement of current fisheries and marine fisheries inventories in the context of SDG14: and (iii) update the list of RECOFI-FIRMS National Focal Points: (iv) review ToRs for RECOFI-FIRMS Regional Focal Point and nominate RFP.

² The tenth session of the Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS) Steering Committee (FSC10) was attended by eleven partners - seven members and four associate members: Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources [CCAMLR], Food and Agricultural organization of the United Nations [FAO], General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean [GFCM]; Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission [IATTC]; International Council for the Exploration of the Sea [ICES]; Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization [NAFO], South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation [SEAFO]; Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic [CECAF], Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission [SWIOFC], Regional Commission for Fisheries [RECOFI], and Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission [WECAFC].

List of RECOFI National Focal Points

Country	RECOFI-FIRMS National Focal Points
BAHRAIN (KINGDOM OF)	Bassam ALSHOWAIKH Directorate of Fisheries Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning PO Box 20071, Manama Tel.: +973-1785881 Mob: +973-3608 8288 Fax: +973 17 728459 E-mail: bassam_sh11@yahoo.com
IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF)	Shapour KAKOULAKI Prof., Associate Iran Fisheries Organization Deputy Of Fisheries and Fishing Ports Email: bsh443@gmail.com Tell: +98-21-66943984 Fax:+98-21- 66941367 [updated 2019]
IRAQ	Sadad TALAT Chief of Fisheries Department Ministry of Agriculture, Directorate of Animal Resource Baghdad E-mail: fisheries_iraq2005@yahoo.com
KUWAIT	Modi Sabah AL-FADHIL Senior Marine Researcher Head of Marine Research Department Public Authority of Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources PO. Box 21422 – Safat – 13075 Kuwait Mobile: +965 99873949 Fax: +965 22254103 E-mail: hesadary@hotmail.com
OMAN (SULTANATE OF)	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 [confirmed 2019]
QATAR	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

SAUDI ARABIA (KINGDOM OF)	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
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: saalrayssi@moew.gov.ae

Proposed Terms of Reference: RECOFI-FIRMS Regional Focal Point

Within the coverage area of the Commission, the RECOFI-FIRMS Regional Focal Point (RFP) will:

- Promote and support the activities of RECOFI-FIRMS, especially in the intersessional periods;
- Encourage RECOFI-FIRMS National Focal Points (NFPs) to initiate, update and enrich their national fisheries records, and facilitate this work.
- Facilitate the identification, collection, validation of national and regional marine resources/stocks records and their updating in the RECOFI-FIRMS Marine Resources inventory;
- Facilitate the exchange of information related to stocks and fisheries among member countries, and more generally promote and enhance regional cooperation among Members; and
- RECOFI-FIRMS RFP will be the main interface on marine fisheries and resource/stocks matters between the RECOFI-FIRMS NFPs and the FIRMS Secretariat. As such will ensure an updated list of functional NFPs.

Expected outputs:

- RECOFI-FIRMS Marine Resource inventory developed;
- RECOFI-FIRMS Marine Resource inventory yearly updated, enriched and validated; and
- A functional list of NFPs.

Furthermore, the RECOFI-FIRMS RFP will ensure that the RECOFI-FIRMS NFPs are briefed fully on the activities of FIRMS and, as appropriate, provide advice on the Commission's FIRMS related programme of work and budget.

To ensure that the RECOFI-FIRMS RFP is in a position to undertake these responsibilities, they should be experienced fisheries data managers, fisheries statisticians or fisheries researchers with regular contact with the RECOFI-FIRMS NFPs.

The RECOFI WGFM may review these terms of reference from time-to-time and make recommendations for their amendment.

Proposed Terms of Reference: RECOFI-FIRMS National Focal Points

Within the coverage area of the Commission, the RECOFI-FIRMS National Focal Points (NFPs) will:

- Promote the activities on RECOFI-FIRMS fisheries related matters;
- Keep the country Fishery Inventory up-to-date. Ensure the yearly update of existent records and introduction of new relevant fisheries records to the Country-RECOFI-FIRMS Fisheries inventory;
- Validate the new/updated records once processed by FIRMS Secretariat;
- Support the development and ensure the national validation of the regional RECOFI-FIRMS Marine Resource inventory. RECOFI-FIRMS Regional Focal Point will be the main interface on marine resource/stocks matters between the RECOFI-FIRMS NFPs and the FIRMS Secretariat.

Expected outputs:

- *Country-RECOFI-FIRMS Fisheries inventory developed;*
- *Country-RECOFI-FIRMS Fisheries inventory yearly updated, enriched and validated.*

To ensure that the RECOFI-FIRMS NFP is in a position to undertake these responsibilities, they should be experienced fisheries data managers, fisheries statisticians or fisheries researchers.

The RECOFI WGFM may review these terms of reference from time-to-time and make recommendations for their amendment.