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WESTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC FISHERY COMMISSION (WECAFC)

SEVENTEENTH SESSION

Miami, United States of America, 15-18 July 2019

Report by the Secretary on the financial and administrative affairs of the Commission

This document aims to report on administrative and financial issues related to the actions taken during the 2016-2018 intersessional period. For context, the document should be read in conjunction with working document WECAFC/XVII/2019/5 (intersessional activities). It includes issues such as staffing, meetings, publications, the membership of the Commission, contributions by FAO, members and others to the Programme of Work (2016 -2018) of the Commission and expenditures made.

Suggested actions for the commission

The Commission is invited to review this administrative and financial report and provide general guidance, particularly on issues relating to the strengthening of the Secretariat and implementation of the Programme of Work (2019 -2020).

The Commission is further invited to take into account the current financial situation when discussing the Programme of Work 2019 -2020, and to provide guidance to the Secretariat and Executive Committee, as appropriate, on how and where to mobilize resources for implementation of the Programme of Work.

Administrative issues

Regular activities

1. During the intersession, the Secretariat coordinated and actively contributed to the preparation and delivery of the activities and meetings agreed by the Commission, namely i) the eighth, ninth and tenth sessions of the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) and 10 meetings of (joint) Working Groups.

Executive Committee of the Commission

2. During the intersessional period, liaison was maintained at a good level of coordination and consultation with the Executive Committee of WECAFC and the conveners of the Working Groups. The chairperson of WECAFC, Mr. Lionel Reynal and vice-chairpersons actively contributed with advice and suggestions to the Secretariat.

Secretariat to the Commission

3. During the intersessional period the Secretariat consisted of a part-time Secretary, Dr Raymon Van Anrooy until October 2017 then Dr Yvette Diei Ouadi, and a part-time Programme Assistant, Ms Sonya Thompson. A brief liaison service was obtained (part-time) from an Administrative and Operational Assistant. Travel/logistics staff of FAO's Subregional Office for the Caribbean in Barbados also assisted with meetings and procurement matters. Likewise in the previous intersessional periods, the Secretariat did not have any full-time staff.

Framework programme activities

4. As specified in document WECAFC/XVII/2019/5 most activities under the programme of work were carried out (fully or partly) in the intersessional period. Various technical workshops were supported (e.g. data preparatory, billfish, IUU, Trade, FIRMS, Bycatch reduction, Climate Change and Disaster risk management in fisheries, and 1st Preparatory meeting of the transformation of WECAFC in an RFMO, etc.) to address specific issues and requests from members. In addition, joint working group meetings were held by CRFM and CFMC, including meetings on spiny lobster, FADs, queen conch, and flying fish, shrimps and grounfish, spawning aggregations, which contributed to WECAFC's programme of work.
5. WECAFC intersessional activities (meetings, cooperation, publications and other issues) are presented in Working Document WECAFC/XVII/2019/5. The SAG technically reviewed the activities implemented and the draft Programme of Work (2019 -2020), which is presented in working document WECAFC/XVII/2019/17.

WECAFC Reorientation

6. The Government of Barbados, with support from the European Union Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG Mare), the Global Environment Facility-funded Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems (CLME+) Project and FAO hosted on 25-26 March 2019 the first Preparatory meeting of the transformation of WECAFC in an RFMO. The contributions by these partners to the workshop organization and background information preparation added up to over 62 000 USD.

Membership

7. No changes to the membership have taken place since WECAFC 16. WECAFC has 34 members, including 33 countries and the European Union (Member Organization).

Project hosting at Secretariat

8. In the 2016-2018 period various wide geographic scale projects that were formulated and approved by resource partners required full-time staff for 6 months or longer. Six of such projects are hosted by the WECAFC Secretariat at the FAO Subregional Office in Barbados. These include:
 - Sustainable management of bycatch in Latin America and Caribbean trawl fisheries (REBYC-II LAC) (GCP/RLA/201/GFF) 5.8 million USD - Carlos Fuentesvilla
 - Caribbean Billfish Project (GCP/SLC/001/WBK) 1.9 million USD – Roy Bealey. Operationally closed since November 2018
 - Climate Change Adaptation in the Eastern Caribbean Fisheries Sector (CC4FISH) (GCP/SLC/202/SCF) 5.4 million USD- Iris Monnereau
 - CITES-FAO collaboration on immediate action in support of the implementation of the CITES listings of sharks and rays (EP/INT/227/UEP) 100 000 USD - Nikola Simpson. Operationally closed.
 - UNJP/RLA/217/OPS - Support to the implementation of an EAF for the Shrimp and Groundfish Fishery and regional fisheries governance Co-implementation within the CLME+ project. 1,352,400 USD-Jeremy Mendoza
 - GCP/SLC/211/GFF - Developing Organizational Capacity for Ecosystem Stewardship and Livelihoods in Caribbean Small-Scale Fisheries, Stewardfish project. 1,776,484 USD- Terrence Phillips

Financial issues

FAO regular Programme

9. WECAFC activities are funded from the FAO Regular Programme, FAO Technical Cooperation Program (TCP) and in-kind by other organizations, as described below. The total estimated budget required under the approved WECAFC Work Programme for the period 2016–2018 was some USD 6.5 million, apart from the six large Trust Fund projects mentioned above.
10. An estimated 85% of the activities listed under the work programme were actually implemented to a greater or lesser extent. Much of the funding provided under TCP (see working document WECAFC/XVII/2019/5) went to activities that have only limited linkage with WECAFC and substantial in-kind support was needed.
11. The FAO subregional office has an annual budget from the FAO Regular Programme, which is distributed to the various technical disciplines. Until 2007 - 2008 the allocation for WECAFC came directly from the FAO Fisheries (and Aquaculture) Department and the Commission received around USD 300 000 per biennium in support of its work. However, the funds received are now confounded with the overall SLC budget.

12. A budget prepared for the biennium (2014 – 2015) requested nearly USD 180 000 but the allocation was made at the level of USD 110 000. For 2016-2017 and 2018-2019, the allocations as ring-fenced funds of WECAFC was USD 80 000 for each biennium. Approximately one-third of the allocated budget has been used for WECAFC 17, including preparation and translation of meeting documents, travel of the Secretariat and secured funds for translation of the draft report to be endorsed by the Commission. It is worthwhile mentioning that the costs of the session are to a great extent borne by the host country United States of America which contribute to 50 000\$ for delegates participation, and generously contributed to local logistics, including interpretation services (English, Spanish, French).
13. Approximately USD 12 000 was used for the 8th SAG session (travel, organization), which was lower than usual due to organizing the SAG back-to-back with the seventieth annual conference of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI); and USD 21 000 for the 9th Session of SAG while the 10th Session has no cost implication, as it was electronically held. Some USD 13 000 was spent on supporting the organization of Working Group meetings and covering travel for some SIDS experts and attendance of partners meetings. Moreover, some USD 5 000 was spent on supporting travel for Nicaragua experts to enable them to join in specific Working Group activities.
14. Travel and participation costs of Headquarters staff in WECAFC activities added to more than 25 000 USD, which is an increment over the past biennium, despite various Trust Fund projects covering the travel related costs. This is a proven sign of the growing support being lent to WECAFC Secretariat by the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, FAO Headquarters.
15. Moreover, the FAO Regular Programme provides for (in-kind) contribution to the Secretariat in terms of 50% of the SLC Fishery and Aquaculture Officer (P4 level) staff time, which should be valued at USD 75 000 per year and the office, furniture and administrative support infrastructure, which can be valued at USD 60 000 per year. FAO Headquarters technical assistance to the Commission can be valued at an average of USD 70 000 per year. Some fluctuation could be noticed in the support provided in recent years.
16. In total, the FAO contribution to the WECAF Commission can be valued between 240 000 and 300 000 USD per year.

WECAFC Trust Fund

17. Although (at the request of the 14th session) a dedicated WECAFC Trust Fund was established, in support of the WECAFC Work Programme, with a Project servicing fee of only 5.9%, not a single contribution was received so far into this fund .

Other FAO - WECAFC Trust Fund projects

18. Working document WECAFC/XVII/2019/5 (intersessional activities) contains a list of trust fund and TCP projects. The total budget of all active fisheries Trust fund projects benefiting WECAFC members is approximately USD 20 million. In terms of regional Trust Fund projects that were prepared by the WECAFC Secretariat and Executive Committee, the total resources allocated in the 2016-2018 period added up to USD 9 million. The delivery on these regional trust funds in this biennium was approximately USD 4 million. It should be noted that the projects started at different moments and some large project started only around mid-2018, which has effect on the delivery.

In-kind support by partner agencies

19. In-kind contributions, with an estimated combined total of around USD 220 000, were received from:

□ CFMC – ..Meeting of the Spawning Aggregations Working Group, 3rd meeting of the Queen Conch Working Group, the 1st Face-to-face meeting of the queen conch Scientific , statistics and technical advisory group of the QCWG and a follow up study, 3rd meeting of the Fisheries using Fish Aggregating Devices (FAD)

□ CRFM – Flying Fish Working Group met twice to discuss the status of implementation of the sub-regional management plan and the cooperation agreement between CRFM and Martinique (France)

IFREMER/JICA/CRFM – Shrimps and Groundfish Working Group

FAO TCP projects

20. Support for WECAFC member countries in fisheries and aquaculture under the FAO TCP programme in the 2016-2017 and -2018-2019 biennium added up to some USD 3.5 million. However, it should be noted that many of the TCP and Trust Fund activities were not carried out under the WECAFC umbrella