

FIRMS Steering Committee Meeting
Twelfth Session
Online, 18-21 October 2021
FIRMS RELEVANT ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY GFCM DURING THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD (May 2019 – September 2021)
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I. Summary of Activities

1. Developments on inventories of Marine resources, and of fisheries; revision of Annex 2 of the Partnership Arrangement;
2. Reporting on status/trends of Marine resources, and of fisheries;

The status of GFCM priority species, and other species, is assessed yearly by the Working Group on the Assessment of Demersal Species (WGSAD) and Working Group on the Assessment of Small Pelagic Species (WGSASP) for the Mediterranean Sea and by the Sub-regional Group on Stock Assessment for the Black Sea (SGSABS) for the Black Sea. Advice for Mediterranean species is reviewed by the Scientific Advisory Committee for fisheries (SAC) and for Black Sea species by the Working Group for the Black Sea (WGBS). Based on this, advice is produced annually by the GFCM. Each validated assessment is summarized a Stock Assessment Form (SAF) containing all relevant information and detailed reports of the working groups are published online. In addition, input data and scripts of validated stock assessments are available from the GFCM Secretariat upon request. Results of the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) frameworks developed for selected fisheries covered multiannual management plans (e.g. Black Sea turbot, Adriatic anchovy and sardine and demersal fisheries for European hake and deep water rose shrimp in the Strait of Sicily) are published on the GFCM website. A meeting appraising the stock assessment methodologies used within the GFCM was held as the first step towards the revision of the GFCM framework for the provision of advice.

The 2020 edition of The State of Mediterranean and Black Sea Fisheries (SoMFi 2020)¹ was recently published, providing a comprehensive overview of regional and subregional trends in Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries.

3. Development/review of standards;

Among the several ongoing data-related activities, GFCM progresses with the development of a new framework to organize Stock Assessment Results (STAR), which streamlines and automates the information flow from stock assessments to scientific advice, strengthens quality assurance and data dissemination.

A review of the GFCM framework for the provision of advice is underway.

¹ <https://www.fao.org/3/cb2429en/online/cb2429en.html>

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4. Development of Applications (e.g. new module at Secretariat level, or enhancements in streamlining workflow at Partner level);

An advanced online data consultation system has been released on the GFCM website² to ensure the consultation of those Stock Assessment Form (SAFs) as validated by the the SAC - for Mediterranean species – and the WGBS - for Black Sea species -.

5. Development of case studies/prototypes;
6. Training or skills development;

Since May 2019, GFCM has organized or funded participation to the following training courses:

- *Training on basics of population dynamics and stock assessment under the hat of the SAC in the eastern Mediterranean in Arabic and English (Online, ongoing)*
 - *BlackSea4Fish presentation series: 5 training seminars in 2020 on i)data-limited stock assessments (22 December 2020), ii)Biological reference points (8 December 2020), iii)Ecopath w Ecosim (12 November 2020), Black Sea rapa whelk survey protocol (21 July 2020), iv) state-space models (SAM; 6 July 2020)*
 - *Training of the trainers activities in stock assessment methodologies: week-long individual training opportunities, including on SAM and SS3*
7. Promotional / fund raising activities;
 8. Planned activities during the coming intersession period.

GFCM is moving towards an improvement of reporting the stock assessments by its countries which will include Excel files with the metadata and time series of the outcomes of stock assessment, with also the integration the UUIDs in their reporting structure. This new reporting scheme will be addressed in the upcoming annual session (November 2021) and, if endorsed, should take effect from December. In this way there is a one-year time lag between assessments and decisions. Future reporting on GFCM will be shorter than previously, potentially enhancing the timeliness of GRSF records for GFCM stocks.

II. Contribution to strategic directions for the FIRMS Partnership

GFCM may benefit from FIRMS GRSF in terms of improved visibility, in a worldwide context, of Mediterranean and Black Seas species related information as managed by the GFCM directly.

The GFCM advises the preparation of guidelines documenting good practices for the implementation of data flows from RFMOs to the FIRMS/GRSF and ultimately to SOFIA (e.g., required metadata, stocks descriptors and indicators). These should include both technical and general provisions (i.e., to ensure proper elaboration of inbound data and ensure timely inclusion in SOFIA).

III. Revised annex 2 (if applicable)

² <https://www.fao.org/gfcm/data/safs>