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| <b>FIRMS Steering Committee Meeting</b>           |
| <b>Seventh Session</b>                            |
| <b>Rome, Italy, 12–13, and 16 December 2011</b>   |
| <b>PROVISIONAL ANNOTATED AGENDA AND TIMETABLE</b> |
| <b>Author: FIRMS Secretariat</b>                  |

### MEETING PLACE: NIGERIA ROOM

**Monday, 12 December 2011**

all day: 09:00 hours to 18:00 hours

1. **Opening of session and Welcome address** (standard item)
2. **Adoption of agenda** (standard item)
3. **FIRMS membership** (standard item)
  - Progress on the development of FIRMS Partnership  
*Modifications in partnership (DG-Mare), interest expressed by other organizations (RECOFI), letters were sent to 9 RFBs inviting them to become FIRMS members. Responses will be examined.*
  - Review of new perspective Partners  
*This item will also consider status for other foreseen partners, and ways to approach them.*
4. **Review of Annex 2 of new Partners** (standard item)  
*Any new Partner will present the content of its Annex 2 in order to raise common awareness on the contributions that it intends to make to FIRMS and on important aspects that could have been addressed with respect to contribution specifications.  
Current Partners willing to start contributions on the new Fisheries module might also wish to take this opportunity to revise / specify the content of their annex 2. Observers may indicate their intended contribution.*
5. **Review of FIRMS activities during the intersession** (cf Doc. FIRMS FSC7/2011/2x)  
(standard item)
  - Report on intersessional activities  
*With reference to the work plan agreed at FSC6, and on the basis of one-page summary activities sent by Partners to the Secretariat prior to the meeting (see template in annex), collated with Secretariat' ones into one FIRMS activity report, the Secretariat will present a consolidated report of the activities carried out during the intersession with highlights on key topics, including the contributions processed and major difficulties encountered, if any.*

- Key topics regarding status of the FIRMS website

*FSC7 will be presented new published features, consider outstanding issues, and will make decisions thereof*

- Marine Resource module
  - o progress on populating the site
- Fishery module: progress and outstanding issues
  - o management information in FIRMS
  - o fishing activity information in FIRMS – FAO RFBs contributions
- Home page and thematic pages
  - o home page – communicating better
  - o thematic pages on Tuna and on deep sea (high seas) demersal resources
  - o regional thematic pages on FIRMS activities in CECAF, RECOFI, SWIOFC areas
- Mapping component
  - o enhanced dynamic maps within fact sheets
  - o FIRMS data coverage maps

6. **The Resources-to-Fisheries continuum - or seeking the right compromise between information management constraints and an intuitive user interface**

*FIRMS offers two modules: the Marine resources module covers the biological dimension (state of stocks), and the Fisheries module covers the human dimension (Fishing activity, Management, Fleets). However inventories cannot be so easily categorized into discrete concepts and the reality is for a situation of continuum. From a strict information management view point, the existence of the two modules is necessary in order to maintain simplicity in the data structure and to obtain consistent results e.g. on State and trends summaries. However this duality of modules entails some constraints: the need to maintain more fact sheets for partners willing to report on both fisheries and resources, and a user interface which, because it reflects this artificial split instead of the continuum, is not intuitive enough. The meeting will review this issue and will be seeking guidelines.*

7. **Report of virtual technical working group<sup>1</sup>**

*The TWG didn't hold face to face meeting, but FSC6 agreed that upon request the TWG would discuss issues remotely as required. The issues discussed were:*

- a) Proposed standard for handling “Monitoring cycles of Marine resources”<sup>2</sup>  
*Final approval requested, for endorsement as part of FIRMS IMP*
- b) Quality assurance related to information on Resources/stocks Assessments<sup>3</sup>  
*Discussion on the issue and endorsement of one option, and/or further action required*
- c) Updated Marine resources and Fisheries inventory guidelines<sup>4</sup>  
*Comments on the upgraded guidelines for endorsement as part of FIRMS IMP or further action*
- d) Tuna<sup>5</sup>, and High Seas Deep Seas<sup>6</sup> fisheries, thematic pages  
Regional thematic pages (CECAF, SWIOFC, RECOFI)  
*Comments on the pages and decisions on responsible editor*

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For each, see Main page, and Discussion page, at:

<sup>1</sup> <http://km.fao.org/FIGISwiki/index.php/FIRMS>

<sup>2</sup> [http://km.fao.org/FIGISwiki/index.php/Talk:Marine\\_Resource#Monitoring\\_cycles\\_of\\_marine\\_resources](http://km.fao.org/FIGISwiki/index.php/Talk:Marine_Resource#Monitoring_cycles_of_marine_resources)

<sup>3</sup> [http://km.fao.org/FIGISwiki/index.php/Talk:Marine\\_Resource#Quality\\_assurance\\_related\\_to\\_information\\_on\\_Resources.2Fstocks\\_Assessments](http://km.fao.org/FIGISwiki/index.php/Talk:Marine_Resource#Quality_assurance_related_to_information_on_Resources.2Fstocks_Assessments)

<sup>4</sup> [http://km.fao.org/FIGISwiki/index.php/FIRMS\\_Inventory\\_Guidelines\\_and\\_Templates](http://km.fao.org/FIGISwiki/index.php/FIRMS_Inventory_Guidelines_and_Templates)

<sup>5</sup> [http://km.fao.org/FIGISwiki/index.php/FIRMS\\_on\\_Tuna\\_thematic\\_page](http://km.fao.org/FIGISwiki/index.php/FIRMS_on_Tuna_thematic_page)

<sup>6</sup> [http://km.fao.org/FIGISwiki/index.php/FIRMS\\_Deep\\_Seas\\_High\\_Seas\\_thematic\\_page](http://km.fao.org/FIGISwiki/index.php/FIRMS_Deep_Seas_High_Seas_thematic_page)

**Tuesday, 13 December 2011**

all day: 09:00 hours to 18:00 hours

**8. Review of strategic aspects: which role for FIRMS in broadening geographic/thematic coverage and enabling more timely information**

*FSC6 agreed that broadening FIRMS coverage is key to FIRMS success, and in this respect the Secretariat has worked on various directions. Such progress both brings new assets and raises new issues. Assets will be briefly reviewed for any comment by the Committee, while emerging issues should be matter for a more indepth debate.*

a) Enabling more timely information

*FIRMS as a tool for a streamlined workflow facilitating timely updates*

b) Reporting on national fisheries and resources

*The FAO RFBs in Africa and the Middle East (CECAF, SWIOFC, RECOFI) have made a substantial breakthrough in terms of provision and validation of information on marine resources and fisheries. Altogether, about 100 new marine resources and 300 new fisheries are currently in the process of validation/publication in FIRMS, many being defined at national level under these RFBs umbrellas. The participation of these bodies broadens the FIRMS coverage, contribute to improve the inventory guidelines, **raise new issue of quality assurance** (e.g. how to distinguish assessments through the application of models, and more empirical assessments<sup>7</sup>), and promote the emergence of new organizational perspectives regarding mechanisms for national participation within RFBs.*

c) Reporting on fisheries management

*A nice set of fact sheets have been published by NEAFC. **Issues:** should this be confirmed as a model for FIRMS? how should such Management information be exploited in FIRMS?*

d) Which role for FIRMS regarding reporting on socio-economic status of fisheries

*Following the temporary freezing of EC's participation through Eurostat in the FIRMS partnership arrangement, DG-Mare has indicated its willingness to resume the Partnership arrangement and contribute socio-economic data on the European fleet on the condition that there will be reciprocity from other countries (e.g USA, Japan, ...). DG-Mare's participation in FIRMS could constitute a starting point to enhance FIRMS capacity on the Ecosystem Approach; it would boost the development of Metadata standards in the socio-economic field. An **issue** for FSC debate is how can this condition of reciprocity be met in a context where countries cannot be direct members of FIRMS.*

e) Practical steps towards NatFIRMS

*NatFIRMS would constitute a vehicle towards more comprehensive coverage and some possible arrangements in this respect could be presented and discussed during FIRMS FSC7. As a starting point, FAO is proposing to articulate NatFIRMS (ie contributions received on stocks and fisheries status by countries outside of the FIRMS framework) with its Fisheries and Aquaculture Country Profile programme. Inputs there could include voluntary contributions from specific countries, or collaborations with groups such as FishBase. The Science & Sustainability Forum (Feb 2012) would be a concrete opportunity for presenting FIRMS and its framework to a first group of potential national partners. See FIRMS FSC7/2011/Inf.9 for concerning documentation.*

**9. Target audience and communication strategy**

*FIRMS offers a great potential but its usage (and eventual proof of usefulness) is what partners want to make of it. Here are a few of those mentioned use:*

- Primary access to live web information on status of stocks and fisheries (regional or national level);
- Presentation of summary statements on state of stocks for an audience other than direct RFB's scientific user base
- Live and up-to-date synopses for policy makers use
- A reporting and information sharing tool in support to implementation of the EAF
- Authoritative reference for use by NGOs including those working for fisheries certification
- etc...

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<sup>7</sup> [http://km.fao.org/FIGISwiki/index.php/Talk:Marine\\_Resource#Evolution\\_of\\_the\\_Assessment\\_section](http://km.fao.org/FIGISwiki/index.php/Talk:Marine_Resource#Evolution_of_the_Assessment_section)

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*FIRMS existing Products/Services (P/S) already support some of those needs, and more P/S can be developed according to FSC's views regarding priority usage. Also once such usage is clarified, FIRMS should be better promoted and its goal better communicated to concerned users. This session will therefore discuss who are the most important target users, will accordingly identify the priority P/S, and will aim at developing the elements of a communication/outreach strategy and plan.*

10. **FIRMS Information Management Policy (IMP) – FSC6 version** (standard item)  
*The FIRMS IMP is a living document, providing the framework for the continuing development of FIRMS standards, through the addition of chapters. The feedback from Partners on the above discussed issues (particularly agenda item 6 and 7) will be considered in terms of inclusion in the IMP.*
11. **Intersessional work plan** (standard item)  
*The various discussions held under the previous agenda item should pinpoint forthcoming activities and result in the development of an agreed workplan.*
12. **Planning for the seventh session of FSC (FSC8)** (standard item)
13. **Any other business** (standard item)
14. **Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson** (standard item)

**Friday, 16 December 2011**

morning: 10:00 hours to 12:00 hours

15. **Adoption of the Report and Close of Session** (standard item)  
*The draft report will be finalised during the CWP meeting, and formally revised and adopted during a specific 2 / 3 hours session after the CWP session.*

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**Annex : Reporting template for intersessional activities**

1. developments on inventories of Marine resources, and of fisheries;
2. reporting on status/trends of Marine resources, and of fisheries;
3. development/review of standards 4. development of Applications (eg new module at Secretariat level, or enhancements in streamlining workflow at Partner level);
4. development of case studies/prototypes;
5. training or skills development;
6. Promotional activities
7. Planned activities during the coming intersessional period.