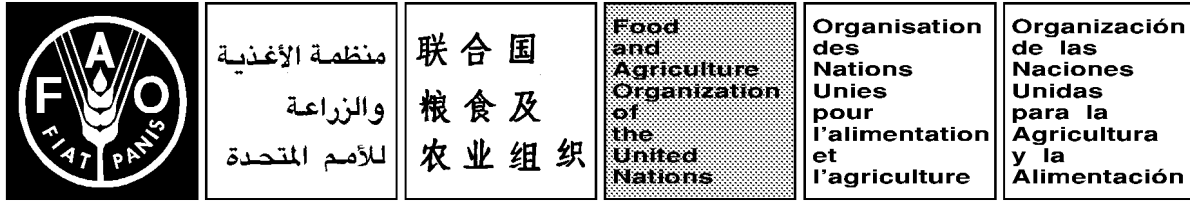


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FISHERY COMMITTEE FOR THE EASTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC

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Directions for improved functioning of CECAF, and collaboration with other regional and sub-regional organizations

SUMMARY

The Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF) has a long history and since its establishment under Article VI (paragraph 2) of the FAO Constitution in June 1967, the Committee has gone through modifications with regards to its scope and its terms of reference. Within its advisory role, CECAF has, throughout its history, carried out assessments of the fisheries and the fished stocks in its area of competence, leading to recommendations for management measures to be implemented by its members, with the purpose of promoting the sustainable utilization of the living marine resources in conformity with its Terms of Reference. Past reviews of CECAF's work (addressing all or certain elements of the Committee's work), provide insight into strengths and constraints with regards to its functioning and its impact. Key issues that need to be addressed to support improved functioning of CECAF include: focused scope of work (including in the EEZ and the ABNJ, facilitated by a well-adapted basic text), timely scientific and technical advice, uptake of research and management recommendations by member countries (regularity of meetings, feedback mechanisms, integration into management plans), financial issues, and cooperation with other regional bodies. There are four other regional fisheries bodies with an area of competence which overlaps that of CECAF: COMHAFAT, SRFC, FCWC, COREP, ICCAT, and SEAFO. The Committee is requested to: 1) consider the elements of the above report, and their pertinence to ensuring an improved functioning of CECAF; 2) consider the proposed alternative mechanisms to ensure human and financial resources to allow proper functioning of CECAF, including regularity of meetings and related work, and advice on a preferred approach; and 3) advice on the comparative advantage of CECAF and on the approach to be followed to ensure improved collaboration between other regional organisations and projects operating in the CECAF area, including the pertinence of organising a joint meeting under the auspices of FAO.

BACKGROUND

The Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF) has a long history and since its establishment under Article VI (paragraph 2) of the FAO Constitution in June 1967, the Committee has gone through modifications with regards to its scope and its terms of reference as well as structural re-organizations to address changes in the international regime relating to fisheries (e.g. the passing for the UN Law of the Sea in 1982), changes in regional needs (for example when other regional structures have developed), and the need to rationalize due to changes in financial support.

According to its statutes, last revised in 2003, the purpose of the Committee is “*to promote the sustainable utilization of the living marine resources of its area of competence, by the proper management and development of the fisheries and fishing operations*” (See Appendix 1). Under its Terms of Reference, CECAF covers all living marine resources within its area of competence, as well as the fisheries catching them. The zone of competence covers both areas within the jurisdiction of coastal States within its geographic scope of intervention (the exclusive economic zones or EEZs) as well as areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ).

Within its advisory role, CECAF has, throughout its history, carried out assessments of the fisheries and the fished stocks in its area of competence, leading to recommendations for management measures to be implemented by its members, with the purpose of promoting the sustainable utilization of the living marine resources in conformity with its Terms of Reference. CECAF has also served as an important forum for the exchange of experience and knowledge between its member countries on a range of issues and has been promoting scientific collaboration through the working groups of its scientific committee.

Based on the past seven meetings of the Scientific Sub-Committee, there are currently about 90 species/stocks being assessed and/or monitored to some degree by CECAF, including around 26 small pelagic species/stocks and 78 demersal species/stocks. About two thirds of these stocks are shared by two or more countries. Research and management recommendations have been provided for all of these stocks/units, for the consideration and use by the member states of CECAF. In this context, scientists from the region have exchanged knowledge and information on the main resources and the fisheries exploiting them, and provided advice on how to improve the knowledge base in relation to data needs and knowledge gaps. They have also collaborated in the formulation of advice for management. Similarly, important discussions and lessons-learned have been exchanged for fisheries management, on the ecosystem approach to fisheries and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, among others.

Past reviews of CECAF’s work (addressing all or certain elements of the Committee’s work), provide insight into strengths and constraints with regards to its functioning and its impact. For example the technical performance review of CECAF presented to the Twentieth session of the Committee in 2012 noted that: “*Since its inception, in 1967, CECAF has had twenty sessions and played a significant role in the management and development of fisheries in the eastern central Atlantic, becoming the main regional reference in scientific research and capacity building, in areas such as the collection of fisheries data, biological and population studies of the most important species, and stock assessments. Overall the Committee has provided a unique forum for dialogue, coordination and exchange of experiences and information between Member Countries*”. At the same time, several constraints were noted in relation to issues such as: status, focus and scope, uptake and understanding of advice provided

by national and regional organisations, timeliness of advice, cooperation with other regional organisations, and financial situations. Proposals were made on how to address some of these issues for an improved future functioning of CECAF (See for example CECAF/XXI/2016/2 and CECAF/XXI/2016/Inf.1). Furthermore, the 2015 Technical review of the work of the scientific working groups, as reported to the seventh session of the Scientific Sub-committee in 2015, also provided some guidance with regards to ongoing and future work of these working groups and the functioning of the SSC (see e.g. CECAF/XXI/2016/3 and CECAF/XXI/2016/Inf.2).

Key issues that need to be addressed to support improved functioning of CECAF include: focused scope of work (including in the EEZ and the ABNJ, facilitated by a well-adapted basic text), timely scientific and technical advice, uptake of research and management recommendations by member countries (regularity of meetings, feedback mechanisms, integration into management plans), financial issues, and cooperation with other regional bodies.

As some elements have already been highlighted in earlier reports and discussed under earlier agenda items to this session of the Twenty-First Committee (e.g. specific technical issues in relation to the work of the Scientific Sub-Committee and the work of the working groups, CECAF's role in fisheries management and as a discussion forum for overarching themes of importance to sustainable fisheries such as fisheries management and IUU Fishing), this report focuses on issues related to capacity constraints (human and financial), the linkages and interactions with other regional bodies, and providing recommendations how some of these issues can be addressed.

CURRENT STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING: CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

As mentioned in CECAF/XXI/2016/4, the current simplified structure of CECAF, consisting of a Committee and Scientific Sub-committee (SSC), was agreed in 1998 during CECAF's Fourteenth session and followed the directives of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) which stemmed from its Twenty-second session (March 1997), and from the Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Conference (November 1997). The Committee has since then, in line with its mandate, reviewed activities of relevance to the sustainable use of resources, including in relation to artisanal fisheries, and has formulated and recommended specific management actions or research recommendations to be implemented by its members. The Committee should normally meet every 2 years.

The main function of the SSC is to study the stocks, to assess their status and, on the basis of the results achieved, to provide fisheries management advice to the Committee. The SSC met for the first time in the year 2000 and proposed to establish three Working Groups: (a) Working Group for Small Pelagics; (b) Working Group for Demersal Species; and (c) Working Group for Artisanal Fisheries. For practical implementation, the working groups for small pelagics and for demersal species were later subdivided into 2 sub-groups each; The northern sub-group covering the area from Morocco to the southern border of Senegal, and the southern sub-group covering the area from Guinea-Bissau to Angola, and including the islands states. The SSC should also meet every 2 years, in alternate years to the Committee.

As reported in meeting document CECAF/XXI/2016/4, this meeting schedule for the Committee and SSC has not been maintained in recent years, and periods between meetings have been around four years for the two last sessions of both the SSC and the Committee. The reason for this delay has been largely financial, but also related to the lack of human capacity within the Secretariat for the last period as the Secretariat has been operating without a designated Secretary since 2012.

It should be noted that Members are expected to finance their own participation in statutory meetings, however in most cases, participation is low if the participation is not facilitated through the Secretariat. At the same time the Secretariat only has limited funding available to support these bodies, and is mainly meant to support general meeting arrangements, interpretation and reporting as well as travel costs for the Secretariat. In addition FAO has traditionally been supporting the participation of the technical secretary and other technical staff as required. The funding allocation available to the Secretariat has been decreasing in recent years.

With respect to the working groups, the CECAF Small Pelagic North working group or the FAO Working Group on the Assessment of small pelagic fish off Northwest Africa is the working group that meets most regularly. This working group has a long tradition and has met annually since 2001. In recent years, members have supported the participation of their respective scientists to the working group and the host country has been contributing with local arrangements, FAO costs have thus being limited to providing support to the chair and other technical expertise. The other working groups are to meet every two-three years, but their schedule depends on support from external donors or availability of additional funding within the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department. It should be noted, however, that funding has been facilitated through FAO (supported by others with the EAF-Nansen, the CCLME and the Nepad FAO Fish (NFFP) projects) to ensure that all working groups have met at least once in the intersessional period between the SSC's meetings. The artisanal working group, on the other hand, has not met since 2007.

To become less dependent on the availability of external support, the seventh session of the SSC in 2015 recommended that CECAF explores with its members the possibility of adopting similar arrangements to that of the FAO Working Group on the Assessment of Small Pelagic Fish off Northwest Africa, for the other working groups.

As a FAO statutory body established under Article VI (paragraph 2) of the FAO Constitution, CECAF is part of FAO and therefore dependent on it for its work. The CECAF Secretary is appointed by FAO's Director General and responds administratively to him. The Secretariat is supported by the FAO Regional Office for Africa, and consists of a part-time Fisheries Officer and administrative support. The FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department also provides services to CECAF, such as the Technical Secretariat for the Scientific Sub-Committee, the technical and organisational support to the working groups, and for the compilation of fisheries statistics through the CECAF statistical database and from the work provided through FIRMS¹. The Technical Secretary also facilitates funding to the working groups or other priorities set by CECAF, through field projects and/or through specialised contributions from donors through FAO. These functions are also part time.

¹ Fisheries Information Monitoring System

The member countries, principally through their scientists, also provide a significant contribution to CECAF work through their inputs and contributions to the various working groups and the Scientific Sub-Committee. The chairs of the different working groups having the responsibility of co-organising and calling the meetings and to assist with the finalisation of the reports. The Chair of the Scientific Sub-Committee also actively represents CECAF in various fora, such as in discussions on regional management plans, and at FIRMS meetings, etc.

The chair of the Small Pelagic Working group, sub-group north, has seen increasing responsibility with respect to the organisation of the working group as well as, Vis à Vis, the responsibility for the final report. At the last meeting of the working group in 2015, a revised Terms of Reference for the Chair was proposed, as reported at the last session of the SSC (see CECAF/XXI/Inf.2). Increasing the responsibility and the role of the persons nominated to act in such functions as the chair of the working group and the chair of the SSC, increases the country's ownership of the scientific advice produced, and also contributes to improve functioning of the secretariat. It is therefore proposed that this function is further strengthened, as well as for the other working groups and for the SSC chair, while working in close collaboration with the Technical Secretary and the Secretary.

FINANCING OF CECAF'S WORK

CECAF, as an Article VI body under the FAO constitution does not have an autonomous budget, and no regular allocation is expected from its members. The possibility of CECAF transforming from an Article VI body to an Article XIV body under the FAO constitution, which would allow for increased decision power and an autonomous budget, has been discussed at earlier sessions of CECAF but, so far, members have, for various reasons, preferred to remain as an Article VI body, and thus remains largely dependent on FAO for its budget. In fact, since its foundation, the activities carried out by CECAF have been largely financed either directly by FAO, such as the work done by the Secretariat, or by extra-budgetary funds provided by international agencies, and programmes and projects as requested/raised by FAO with some financial support from members.

CECAF has fundamentally three potential sources of financing: 1) FAO budget (either allocated to the Secretariat function or through technical support services); 2) extra-budgetary resources provided by donors or by field projects (that may be targeted or ad-hoc to support specific activities); and 3) regular contributions by member countries.

Until now, the main sources of funding have been the first two, with some countries ensuring their participation in selected meetings or taking the responsibility for meeting costs². With the current financial constraints, both within FAO and externally, and the competition for external funding, running of CECAF has become increasingly challenging.

It would be very positive for CECAF to have a more autonomous budget based on the contribution of its member countries, however this is highly unlikely, since many members most likely would not be able to honour their contribution. Furthermore, the budget available to FAO, through its Regular Programme is minimal, and would not be sufficient to fully support

² This is despite the fact that member States are envisaged to support their own participation to statutory meetings such as the Committee or the SSC.

the organisation of statutory meetings. At the same time, it is difficult to rely on full funding for all activities through external donors or on partnerships with projects active in the region. In particular, it is difficult to ensure regular external funding support to the statutory meetings for the Committee and the SSC, which many donors see as the responsibility of FAO and the CECAF Member States.

The existence of several other organizations in the region, both at regional (ATLAFCO, ICCAT, SEAFO, etc.) and sub-regional (SRFC, FCWC, COREP) levels, which already require financial participation by members, was noted as an additional hindrance to CECAF members to contribute further to an autonomous budget of the Committee and as a possible competition for extra budgetary funding (FAO, 2012).

A possible alternative could be explore opportunities on how members States can commit to ensure participation to a certain number of meetings for a given period. As mentioned above, the mechanism used for the small pelagic north working group has been cited as a good example, and a possible model that can be used to ensure timely implementation of the scientific work of the Committee. In this case, the countries are responsible for facilitating the funding to ensure their participation in the working group, either through institutional or project funding. FAO and the CECAF Secretariat would still need to seek to maintain their support through their own budgetary resources, and extra budgetary sources to leverage the members' efforts, but the funds required would be less. This could also involve the development of a targeted support projects that would include a travel fund for those countries unable to support their own participation.

Finally, another alternative could be that CECAF and its members seek to engage in a strategic alliance with the other regional bodies or projects operating in the CECAF region to facilitate a harmonised approach to the implementation of key activities and to attract donor funding. In this case, exact roles and responsibilities of the different actors would need to be clarified as well as the recipient of the different budget allocations. As many of the members of CECAF are also members of these other organisations, this could also help optimise the linkages between these different organisations.

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER REGIONAL AND SUB-ORGANIZATIONS

There are four other regional fisheries bodies with an area of competence which overlaps that of CECAF: COMHAFAT (The Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation among African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean), SRFC (Sub-regional Fisheries Commission), FCWC (Fishery Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea), and COREP (Regional Fisheries Commission for the Gulf of Guinea). In addition there is International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT), which works on tuna and tuna like species (which are not covered by CECAF), and the South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO) that covers fisheries in the ABNJ of the south east Atlantic.

The fact that there are presently several other sub-regional fisheries bodies overlapping with CECAF, in terms of geographical area and mandates, has been recognized on several occasions and the issue has already been discussed by the Committee. During its eighteenth meeting (2006), the matter was addressed on the basis of a document entitled: *The role of CECAF in a region with three fisheries management bodies* (CECAF/XVIII/2006/9). On that instance, the Committee emphasized the need for closer collaboration between CECAF and the various

fisheries bodies in order to facilitate the efficient utilization of the human and financial resources to conserve and manage the fisheries resources in the region.

One of the functions and responsibilities of CECAF is to: *“promote liaison among and with competent institutions within the sea area served by the Committee and to propose and keep under review, working arrangements with other international organizations which have related objectives within that area”*. The need of an organization with a broader geographical coverage, such as CECAF, has been recognized and confirmed by member states. The necessity of such a broader organization was justified by the trans-boundary distribution of several of the fish stocks exploited in the region, spanning not only throughout different countries, but also throughout the geographical area of competence of different sub-regional bodies, and the opportunities for the exchange of experiences within the region. In addition, part of CECAF’s technical work, in relation to data collection, stock assessment and management advice, has been largely unique to CECAF, although some of those sub-regional bodies are increasingly becoming more involved with this kind of work, particularly through specific projects. CECAF also has a unique mandate with respect to the ABNJ, although most activities have been restricted to EEZ issues.

The Committee also reaffirmed the importance of the role of CECAF, and the other sub-regional fisheries organizations, as necessary management institutions to the member states in their respective zones.

The FAO Performance Review report presented to the twentieth session of the Committee (2012), analyses the relationship between CECAF and these other RFBs in West Africa and notes that objectives are also, in general, very similar: *“consisting basically in policy harmonization (in fact, their main original motivation), as well as the promotion and strengthening of the regional or sub-regional cooperation in fisheries management and development”*.

The Performance Review also recommended that: *“A more structured coordination among the RFB and Field Projects active in the area is urgent in order to clarify individual roles, to avoid duplication of efforts and undesirable competition, to prevent the waste of resources and to maximize synergies and cooperation”*.

In this respect it is proposed that CECAF could keep its current position as the main reference for science and technology (collection, analysis and sharing of statistical, biological and socioeconomic data), and for making recommendations to member countries on the management of living marine resources. CSRP, the FCWC and COREP could have a coordinating role for the harmonization and implementation of conservation and management measures in their jurisdiction, while COMHAFAT would play a wider political role in the coordination of all coastal countries of the sub-region. It has also been suggested that the sub-regional fisheries bodies could complement the work of CECAF, which has an exclusive advisory nature, by having more “enforcement” powers.

A better coordination among these four organizations, however, was pointed out as essential to ensure the complementariness and synergy required for an efficient management of the fisheries resources in the region. It has also been mentioned that CECAF, due to its broader geographic coverage, is much better positioned to promote the systematic collection and gathering of data, in a standardized manner, as well as to conduct the stock assessments needed to guide management, since several of them are present in the areas of competence of different

sub-regional organizations, as already noted. It could therefore have a key role as a consultative forum with regards to stock assessment and keeping under review the state of the fishery resources and the fisheries in the region. CECAF could also facilitate the coordination of research and discuss regional fisheries issues of interest such as IUU and the ecosystem approach to fisheries, and monitor the establishment of management plans. CECAF would also be well positioned to provide linkages between global and regional discussions, including through the monitoring of the implementation of the code of conduct, for example, and on issues relating to small scale fisheries. CECAF also has a unique mandate in relation to the ABNJ, and thus would be an appropriate forum to provide scientific advice and monitor issues in relation to fisheries (other than tuna) in these areas.

It should be noted that the members of CECAF are, to a large extent, the same members of these other bodies, and the members are therefore asked to reflect upon how they best see foresee this, such as how the structured cooperation between CECAF and the other RFBs could be functioning, as well as what the key role of CECAF would be.

The 2011 Performance Review recommended to organize, under the auspices of CECAF, a joint meeting with the four other RFBs that are active in the area (COMHAFAT, SRFC, FCWC, and COREP), as well as the major ongoing projects, such as the EAF- Nansen Project, Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem Project (GCLME) and the Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem Project (CCLME), to develop strategies for a more structured and formal cooperation, including through the drafting of specific Memoranda of Understandings (MOUs). The members are asked to consider the pertinence of organizing such a meeting, and the eventual format such a meeting could have, as well as eventual funding opportunities.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

As mentioned by the 2011 Performance Review, the statutes of CECAF are outdated. That review made several recommendations with regards to elements that would need to be addressed in order to provide a more modern framework. This included inserting references to, *inter alia*, the ecosystem approach and the precautionary approach, strengthen the Committee by inserting text relating to some basic obligations by members, such as the participation in meetings and provision of data, transparency and openness, strengthen elements with regards to participation of observers, and address dispute settlements and the needs of developing States.

The member States are therefore asked to consider a procedure to explore if the Status and rules of procedure could be incorporated with modern fisheries instruments.

CONCLUSIONS

CECAF has provided valuable services to its member States in recent years, in line with its mandate and Terms of Reference. However, there are certain constraints, which, if tackled, could improve CECAF functioning and ensure an improved impact of its work. In this report, specific aspects with regards to human and financial capacity issues, as well as issues relating to improved collaboration with other regional organisations, are addressed. Specific suggestions are made to guide members States discussions on how some of the key issues can

be addressed with the aim to improve the functioning of CECAF in the future, to the benefit of its members.

Some of these suggestions are based on the 2011 Performance Review and member States are encouraged to look at the recommendations emanating from that review (Appendix 1 of CECAF/XXI/2016/2). Finally, this report only addresses some of the issues that could result in an improved functioning of CECAF. Some of these other issues, such as a more focused scope of work (including the EEZs and the ABNJ, facilitated by a well-adapted basic text), and the timely scientific and technical advice and uptake of research and management recommendations by member countries (regularity of meetings, feedback mechanisms, integration into management plans), as discussed in earlier sessions of this Committee, and thus the current paper should be discussed also in the light of these earlier discussions.

ACTIONS REQUESTED BY THE COMMITTEE

The Committee is requested to:

1. Consider the elements of the above report, and their pertinence to ensuring an improved functioning of CECAF;
2. Consider the proposed alternative mechanisms to ensure human and financial resources to allow proper functioning of CECAF, including regularity of meetings and related work, and advice on a preferred approach; and
3. Advice on the comparative advantage of CECAF and on the approach to be followed to ensure improved collaboration between other regional organisations and projects operating in the CECAF area, including the pertinence of organising a joint meeting under the auspices of FAO.

APPENDIX I : TORS

The Terms of Reference of CEECAF as defined in article 3 of the 1967 statutes, were modified in 2002. According to the new texts, the functions and responsibilities of CEECAF are as follows:

- a) to keep under review the state of the resources within its area of competence and of the industries based on them;
- b) to promote, encourage and coordinate research in the area related to the living resources thereof and to draw up programmes required for this purpose and to organize such research as may appear necessary;
- c) to promote the collection, interchange, dissemination and analysis or study of statistical, biological, environmental and socio-economic data and other marine fishery information;
- d) to establish the scientific basis for regulatory measures leading to the conservation and management of marine fishery resources, to formulate such measures through subsidiary bodies, as required, to make appropriate recommendations for the adoption and implementation of these measures and to provide advice for the adoption of regulatory measures by Member Governments, subregional or regional organizations, as appropriate;
- e) to provide advice on monitoring control and surveillance, especially as regards issues of a subregional and regional nature;
- f) to encourage, recommend and coordinate training in the priority areas of the Committee;
- g) to promote and encourage the utilization of the most appropriate fishing craft, gear and techniques;
- h) to promote liaison among and with competent institutions within the sea area served by the Committee and to propose and keep under review working arrangements with other international organizations which have related objectives within that area.

Appendix II: Regional fisheries organisations

Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC)

The Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC) is an intergovernmental organization based in Dakar, Senegal, and was established in 1985³. Its members are Cape-Verde, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal and Sierra Leone. The scope of operation of the SRFC comprises the waters under the jurisdiction of member countries. Commission bodies include: 1) Ministerial Conference; 2) Coordinating Committee⁴; 3) The Permanent Secretariat.

The long term objectives of the Commission are first to harmonize the long-term policies of its member States in the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fishery resources and, second, to strengthen cooperation among these countries for the benefit of the populations (Art. 2 SRFC Convention, amended in 1993). In the medium term, the SRFC also aims to strengthen and coordinate the joint monitoring of fisheries activities in the sub-region, through its Department of Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (SCS).

The SRFC has a consultative mandate of cooperation and harmonization of policies. Any binding decision must be adopted through a multilateral agreement ratified by its Member States. Three main agreements have been adopted under the auspices of the SRFC, namely:

- the Convention on sub-regional cooperation in the exercise of the right of pursuit (1993) ;
- the Protocol relating to practical modalities for coordination of surveillance operations in the Member States of the SRFC (1993); and
- the Convention relating to the determination of minimum conditions for access and exploitation of fishery resources within the marine area under the jurisdiction of Member States of the SRFC (CMA Convention, revised in 2012).

A fourth agreement, the Draft Convention on Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) of Fisheries (2013), is under preparation within the EU project framework on MCS within the SRFC, implemented by *GOPA Worldwide Consultants*.

In particular, the 2012 CMA Convention contains important provisions relating to the implementation of national policies and fishery management plans, as well as the adoption of concerted management plans for the exploitation of shared stocks. It has been in force since September 2012 but has not yet been ratified by all the Member States. For a better conservation of the resource, the new Article 9 requests member States to take into account the following measures:

- The regulation of fishing areas and periods, and where necessary the establishment of biological rest periods and/or protected marine areas;
- The protection of endangered species and juveniles;
- The limitation of bycatch and control of discards at sea;
- The respect of provisions relative to fishing gear, size and minimum weight used in the SRFC area;

³ Article 4 Convention of 29 March 1985 for the establishment of the Sub Regional Fisheries Commission, as amended on 14 July 1993

⁴ Article 9 Convention: The Coordinating Committee is the technical advisory body composed of directors of fisheries.

- The regulation of fishing effort; and
- All other management measures or relevant information⁵.

Joint surveillance activities are carried out through the MCS Department (Banjul Centre, formerly CUSO - Coordination Units for Surveillance Operations). Each operation lasts between 3 and 5 days on average and is the subject of a memorandum of understanding between the countries concerned and the SRFC. Since 2011, six operations have been undertaken, with 18 at-sea boardings during 56 inspections.

Finally, several studies have been carried out, among others, on the management of shared stocks, endangered species and protected areas, within the framework of different cooperation projects that the SRFC has engaged in with funding from different donors.

Also worth recalling are two programmes carried out by the SRFC which provide a framework for collaboration on fisheries and the environment. These are the PRAO, financed by the World Bank, and the Regional Programme for Conservation of Coastal and Marine Areas in West Africa (PRCM), financed by the Dutch Cooperation Agency and implemented under a partnership between the countries involved and the founding NGOs⁶.

The Strategic Plan 2011-2015 defines the short and medium term future of the SRFC. The eight strategic objectives indicated in **Error! Reference source not found.** below determine the direction that the SRFC must take to fulfil its mandate.

Main areas	Objective
Institutional	1. The SRFC becomes a reference and innovation institution in the fisheries sector
Stakeholders	2. Strengthen the mechanisms for harmonization of policies and fisheries legislations
	3. Support the actors in the sustainable management of fishery resources
	4. Promote the image and actions of the SRFC with the stakeholders
Internal processes	5. Improve the internal governance of the SRFC
Learning and innovation	6. Promote innovative approaches in fisheries management
	7. Put in place a system for building up knowledge about the fisheries sector in the sub-region
	8. Strengthen cooperation and exchanges with the organizations active in the fisheries sector

Table 1: Main areas and objectives of the SRFC Strategy 2011-2015 (source: SRFC brochure)

⁵ These new responsibilities of the SRFC should not create duplications with the mandate of CECAF because the SRFC requires that the Member States adopt national measures in the areas indicated without mentioning specific norms or recommendations.

⁶ The PRCM is an initiative of four NGOs active in West Africa (IUCN, WWF, Wetlands International and Fondation internationale du Banc d'Arguin – FIBA), in partnership with the SRFC. Its scope of operation extends to areas under the jurisdiction of the 7 member countries of the SRFC, with which IUCN has engaged in specific contracts on behalf of the programme. Relations between the four NGOs and between the PRCM SRFC are governed by memorandums of understanding signed in 2001 and 2003 respectively. The objective of the PRCM is to coordinate the efforts of public and private institutions involved in preserving the coastline of coastal countries in the sub-region. Its internal structure is composed of the following four bodies: Regional Forum, Steering Committee, Coordinating Unit and Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee.

Fishery Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC)

The Fishery Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) is an intergovernmental organization based in Tema, Ghana, that was created in 2007. It has six member States, namely Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Togo. The scope of the 2007 Convention for the establishment of the FCWC comprises all marine waters under national jurisdiction of the member states (article 2). The governing bodies of the Committee are the Conference of Ministers, the Advisory and Coordinating Committee and the Secretariat (Articles 4 and 6). At meetings of the Conference of Ministers, each Member State is represented by the minister responsible for fisheries or his or her authorized representative; meetings are held at least once a year (Article 7). Each country shall appoint one member to the Advisory Coordinating Committee, who shall be the head of the department responsible for marine fisheries or his or her authorized representative (article 9). The FCWC Secretariat is headed by a Secretary-General, appointed by the Conference of Ministers for a period of 5 years renewable (article 11).

The objective of the FCWC is to promote cooperation among member countries “*with a view to ensuring, through appropriate management, the conservation and optimum utilization of the living marine resources ... and encouraging sustainable development of fisheries ...*” (Article 5). It has a consultative mandate with the following functions and responsibilities:

- a) provide a forum for discussion on any fishery-related matter;
- b) improve the livelihoods of small-scale fishers and processors, including the devising of appropriate measures to deal with migrant fishers;
- c) harmonize fisheries legislation and regulations among members countries;
- d) enhance cooperation in respect of relations with distant water fishing countries;
- e) strengthen sub-regional cooperation in monitoring, control, surveillance and enforcement, including the progressive development of common procedures;
- f) promote the development of fisheries research capabilities;
- g) promote the development of standards for the collection, exchange and reporting of fisheries data;
- h) develop and promote common policies and strategies, as appropriate, in the sub-region to enhance sub-regional standing in international meetings; and
- i) promote sub-regional cooperation in the marketing and trading of fish and fish products.

The FCWC legal framework is composed of three binding agreements: the 2007 founding Convention, the 2013 Convention on Minimum Requirements for Access to the Fishery Resources of the Area of the FCWC, and the 2014 Convention on the Pooling and Sharing of Information and Data on Fisheries in the Zone of the FCWC. The 2013 Access Convention outlines areas for harmonization related to licensing, access, registers, technical measures, reporting and enforcement, whereas the 2014 Information Sharing Convention provides for the establishment of a joint database and information system including information and data on MCS, and the creation of a sub-regional register of vessels engaged in fishing in the FCWC area, including carrier and support service vessels. In addition, the FCWC Regional Plan of Action on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing (RPOA-IUU) was prepared in 2009, which provides for the development of harmonized national and regional MCS systems, as well as the responsibility of flag States, coastal States, port States and market States.

Regional Fisheries Commission of the Gulf of Guinea (COREP)

The Regional Fisheries Commission of the Gulf of Guinea (COREP) is an intergovernmental organization based in Libreville, Gabon, created in 1984 by the Convention relating to the

regional development of fisheries in the Gulf of Guinea (revised in 2009). The Convention establishing the COREP applies to the seven African States bordering the Gulf of Guinea, namely Angola, Cameroon, Congo, DRC, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Sao Tome and Principe. COREP is a sub-regional instrument for consultation and cooperation in the sustainable management of fisheries. In this respect, it is charged with carrying out the following objectives: coordinate, harmonize and develop the exploitation of fisheries in the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of member countries. The Commission is called upon to initiate recommendations as well as programmes and projects aimed at the enhancement, optimal utilization and sustainability of fishery resources.

The organs of COREP are the Council of Ministers, the Technical Committee, the Executive Secretariat and the Scientific Sub-Committee (article 6). The Council of Ministers is the guidance and decision-making body of COREP. It holds an ordinary session every two years and an extraordinary session at the request of the majority of Member States. The Technical Committee is the advisory and expert opinion-giving body of the Council of Ministers. It is composed of the Directors of Fisheries, Aquaculture, or of any other expert designated by the Member States. The Executive Secretariat is the permanent executive organ of COREP. It is composed of an Executive Secretary and a Deputy Executive Secretary. The Scientific Sub-Committee is composed of researchers and scientists designated by their respective States on the basis of two per Member State. It provides advice to the Technical Committee and the Executive Secretariat on scientific and technical matters.

In 2007, COREP became a specialized institution of the *Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)* – by Decision N°9/CEEAC/CCEG/XIII/07 of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of ECCAS, adopted during the 13th Ordinary Session held in Brazzaville, Congo, on 30 October 2007. In 2009, COREP adopted the Strategic Plan of Action 2009-2015 (SPA), a tool for guidance and planning of activities of the Commission. The SPA proposes to the partners of COREP an appropriate framework for the common elaboration of coherent support programmes or projects, to be promoted through the following 7 components:

- Evaluation and characterization of the fishery potential and characterization of stocks (straddling, shared or of general economic interest);
- Evaluation and characterization of the economic potential associated with fishery resources (income);
- Strengthening of institutions at the level of i) the entire COREP region, ii) the States parties et, iii) fisheries of principal or common economic interest;
- Evaluation of costs and study of ways and means of regional structuring and strengthening of research, monitoring, control and surveillance of fisheries;
- Harmonization of conditions of access to and exploitation of fishery resources taking into account international fisheries agreements and human migration;
- Technical and financial assistance within the COREP region and coastal regions dependent on fisheries;
- Information, communication, training.

Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation Africa-Atlantic (COMHAFAT)

The Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation among African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean (COMHAFAT) is an intergovernmental organization established in 1989, based in Rabat, Morocco, and ideally covers the waters under the jurisdiction of 22 pays (Angola, Benin, Cape-Verde, Cameroon, Congo, DRC, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Morocco, Mauritania, Namibia, Nigeria, São Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo). The coastal States located along the Atlantic coast of Africa between Morocco and Namibia, have declared a common willingness to strengthen cooperation in the area of fisheries for the preservation of fishery resources and the sustainable development of fisheries in the region. It is noted that presently only 14 of the 22 countries mentioned above are members of COMHAFAT, as Cameroon, Congo, the Gambia, Liberia, Mauritania, Namibia, São Tome and Principe and Togo have not yet ratified the 1989 Convention. Its area of competence presently comprises only the waters under the jurisdiction of the 14 member countries. Its institutional framework consists of a Ministerial Conference, Bureau and Secretariat (Art. 17 Regional Convention). The Bureau consists of a President, four Vice-Presidents, and a rapporteur. The Bureau holds office from the beginning of each session of the Ministerial Conference.

The institutional framework of COMHAFAT – a high level political body with a consultative and cooperation mandate comprises: the Conference of Ministers, a decision-making and guidance body holding a session every two years; the Bureau, a monitoring and coordination body holding its ordinary meetings once between sessions of the Ministerial Conference; and the Executive Secretariat, a body whose mission is to enhance the activities of the organisation by performing all the tasks of administrative, organisational and coordination nature which are assigned to it .

According to the Protocol relating to the institutional framework of the Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation among the African States bordering the Atlantic Ocean (adopted in Conakry in 1999 and amended in Rabat in 2009), COMHAFAT is the decision-making and guidance body in respect of fisheries cooperation between the Member States. As such, it makes recommendations on all issues relative to the objectives of the Convention and promotes the coordination of positions of the Parties on matters of concern to the African States bordering the Atlantic Ocean.

The objective of Convention establishing COMHAFAT in 1989 (Article 2) is to enable the member States to:

- a) promote active and structured cooperation in fisheries management and development in the Region;
- b) meet the challenges of food self-sufficiency by a rational utilization of fishery resources, as part of a global approach integrating all the components of the fisheries sector;
- c) enhance all national economic sectors based on the direct and induced effects which may result from the exploitation of fishery resources, in view of the importance of the fisheries sector in the economic, social and nutritional development of the populations in the region;
- d) develop, coordinate and harmonize their efforts and their capacities with a view to preserving, exploiting, enhancing and marketing the fishery resources, notably by taking into consideration the fish stocks in the waters under the sovereignty or jurisdiction of several Parties;

- e) strengthen solidarity towards landlocked African States and geographically disadvantaged States in the Region.

To implement these strategic objectives, the same Convention provides that Member States of COMHAFAT should cooperate in the following areas:

- a) the conservation and rational exploitation of fishery resources;
- b) the assessment and conservation of large migrants;
- c) the MCS of fishing vessels operating in the region ;
- d) the development of fishery production and production tools;
- e) the marketing of fishery products;
- f) the planning and funding of the fisheries sector;
- g) the improvement of social conditions of fishers and marine professional and technical training;
- h) the development of marine scientific research;
- i) the protection and preservation of the marine environment;
- j) the harmonization of policies and collaboration at international level in order to harmonize their positions relative to fisheries;
- k) the conclusion of fishing agreements between the Member States under preferential terms;
- l) the creation of a database of information on fisheries, in cooperation with competent sub-regional and international organizations.

International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)

The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) is an intergovernmental fisheries organization, based in Madrid, Spain, and established in 1966. It is responsible for the conservation of tunas and tuna-like species in the Atlantic Ocean and adjacent seas (about 30 species)⁷. It has 47 members, namely: South Africa, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Cape-Verde, China, Republic of Korea, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, France (St-Pierre & Miquelon), Gabon, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Equatorial Guinea, Honduras, Iceland, Japan, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Mexico, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Philippines, United Kingdom (Overseas Territories), Russia, São Tome and Principe, Senegal, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Sierra Leone, Syria, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, EU, Uruguay, USA, Vanuatu and Venezuela. The Convention area “comprises all waters of the Atlantic Ocean and adjacent seas” (Art. 1 of the 1966 Convention), including the waters under national jurisdiction.

The ICCAT is charged with carrying out the following activities:

- a) adopt recommendations designed to maintain the populations of tuna and tuna-like species that may be taken in the Convention area at levels which will permit the maximum sustainable catch;
- b) compile the fishery statistics of the Contracting Parties and of the Parties, Entities or Non-Contracting Fishing Entities (PCP) that fish for these species in the Atlantic Ocean;

⁷ Article 4: “In order to carry out the objectives of the present Convention, the Commission is charged with studying, in the Convention area, tunas and tuna-like species (Scombriformes, with the exception of the families Trichiuridae and Gempylidae and the genus *Scomber*) as well as the other fish species exploited in the tuna fisheries of the Convention area which are not investigated by another international fisheries organization. (...)”

- c) collect and analyze statistical information relative to current conditions and trends of the fishery resources in the Convention area;
- d) compile the data for other fish species that are caught during tuna fishing (“bycatch”, principally sharks) in the Convention area, and which are not investigated by another international fishery organization;
- e) coordinate research, including the assessment of stocks, on behalf of its members ;
- f) make management recommendations on the basis of scientific evidence;
- g) provide a mechanism to enable the Contracting Parties (CP) to adopt management measures;
- h) put out relevant publications.

Through the Convention, it is established that ICCAT is the only fisheries organization that can undertake the range of work required for the study and management of tunas and tuna-like fishes in the Atlantic. Such studies include research on biometry, ecology and oceanography, with a principal focus on the effects of fishing on stock abundance. ICCAT recommendations become binding on member States following a procedure for objection, governed by Article 8 of the 1966 International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas. ICCAT is thus a regulatory body, whose mandate is the management of tunas in its area of competence.

The South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO)

The South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO) is an intergovernmental organisation based in Swakopmund, Namibia. The SEAFO Convention was signed in 2001, and entered into force in 2003. This was the first Convention to be drafted and to enter into force following the adoption of the 1995 United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement, and this and the generally broader requirement to consider an ecosystem approach that commenced in the 1990s influenced the style of the SEAFO Convention, which can be considered the first of the modern fisheries conventions. The contracting parties include Angola, the European Union, Japan, Namibia, Norway, Republic of Korea, and South Africa.

The scope of the SEAFO Convention (formally the “*Convention on the Conservation and Management of Fishery Resources in the South East Atlantic Ocean*”), addresses the management of fishery resources. These include fish, molluscs, crustaceans, and other sedentary species within the Convention Area, but excludes highly-migratory species (typically tuna and tuna-like fishes) and some sedentary species, as listed in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (LOS Convention). The geographical coverage of the Convention is restricted to the high seas (*i.e.* outside national Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs)). The institutional structure of SEAFO consists of a Commission with three main subsidiary bodies: the Compliance Committee, the Standing Committee on Administration and Finance, and the Scientific Committee. The Contracting Parties are represented on the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, all of which meet annually. A Secretariat, based in Swakopmund, Namibia, coordinates and supports the work of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies.

The objective of SEAFO are to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fishery resources in the Southeast Atlantic, in accordance with the ecosystem approach to fisheries management (Article 3 of the Convention). The Convention takes into account the impacts that fishing may have on non-target species and ecosystems, and identifies the need to minimize harmful impacts on living marine resources and protect biodiversity. It further stipulates the need to adopt measures based upon the best available scientific information, and the application of the precautionary approach. There are clear definitions of “fishery

resources” and “living marine resources”, with the latter defined as “all living components of marine ecosystems, including seabirds”.

All recommendations adopted by the Commission at its annual meeting are binding, although Contracting Parties have 60 days after notification by the Executive Secretary to submit reasons for not accepting an adopted measure. SEAFO publishes its Conservation Measures (CMs) on its website, along with the SEAFO “System of Observation, Inspection, Compliance and Enforcement” (SEAFO System, 2015), which lays out all the requirements and procedures established by SEAFO to regulate its fisheries. The Commission also adopts Recommendations, intended to guide the Contracting Parties. At present there are Recommendations on banning the use of gillnets and on deep-water shark catches.