



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
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l'agriculture

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

COORDINATING WORKING PARTY ON FISHERY STATISTICS

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22nd Session of the CWP, Rome (27th February – 2nd March 2007)***General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean*****Introduction**

The Agreement for the Establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) was approved by the FAO Conference in 1949 on the basis of Article XIV of the Constitution of the Organization. The purpose of the GFCM is to promote the development, conservation and rational management and best utilization of living marine resources, as well as the sustainable development of aquaculture in the area of competence of the Commission. For this purpose the GFCM keeps under review the state of fisheries and formulate and recommend (binding) management measures, as appropriate.

Since its inception in 1952, the GFCM has followed FAO standards in the collection and compilation of fisheries statistics and participates in various initiatives and programmes of the Organisation, such as the FIGIS framework and the FI Statistical Working System. The GFCM has now also established a formal partnership agreement with FIRMS and looks forward to contribute more significantly to this information network.

The establishment of the GFCM autonomous budget in 2004 has opened the door to the re-organisation and strengthening of its structure, together with the development of its own databases and information systems, whilst maintaining close collaboration with FAO and its international partners, including through the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics. It is foreseen that existing databases and other sources of information generated independently over the years by various entities will be consolidated to create a regional database and information system.

Production statistics

To date, FAO-FIDI collects and disseminates annual capture data by GFCM statistical sub-areas and divisions on behalf of the GFCM. The data are collected through the STATLANT 37A questionnaire and disseminated as a dataset that can be consulted with the FISHSTAT+ software. The database presently covers the 1970-2004 period and is used for trend studies on catches in the Mediterranean and, together with the Mediterranean data included in the FAO aquaculture database, its figures are used to calculate the catch component of the countries' scale of contribution to GFCM.

MedStat

The establishment of national fisheries statistics and information systems in the GFCM area is given high priority by the Commission. These would ensure the effective monitoring of fishing activities and the provision of accurate, reliable and timely data needed for stock assessment and socioeconomic studies which, in turn, would render sound management advice. Over the last ten years, the MedStat Programme has addressed this issue and has been implemented through FAO Regional Projects (COPEMED, ADRIAMED, MEDSUDMED and MEDFISIS) and the GFCM. Whilst assisting countries to develop their national fisheries statistical system, MedStat aims to create an internationally compatible system, ensuring compliance with data requirements and formats of the GFCM and other international bodies to monitor the state of fisheries resources.

National statistical systems developed by MedStat consist of a set of databases and associated statistical data collection and implementation methodologies and procedures, which primarily cover the fishing vessel register, catch and effort surveys, together with other *ad hoc* surveys relevant to management issues.

Statistical framework and records

Recognizing the need to compile data, monitor fisheries and assess fisheries resources in a geo-referenced manner, the GFCM recently established 30 Geographical Sub-Areas (GSAs) through Resolution GFCM/31/2007/2. Furthermore, the Commission established a multidisciplinary statistical matrix (GFCM Task 1) through Resolution GFCM/31/2007/1, whereby countries would compile and submit data to the GFCM by GSA in a standard format according to a defined fleet segmentation and predetermined parameters and measurement units. This Resolution essentially lays the foundation for the development of the new GFCM database which would assist the Commission in implementing its strategy to manage the fisheries through effort control by Operational Units¹.

The GFCM also started work on the establishment of a record of vessels over 15 metres authorised to operate in the GFCM area (Recommendation GFCM/2005/2) within the framework of the FAO Compliance Agreement and the International Plan of Action on Illegal Unreported and Unregulated fishing.

Statistical Networks

The Information System for the Promotion of Aquaculture in the Mediterranean (SIPAM) consists of a regional network of databases which has been active for over 10 years and has recently been reorganised under the aegis of the GFCM and with the coordination of the FAO MedFisis project and the SIPAM Regional Centre in Tunis. The objective of this revitalisation is to improve the visibility and the effectiveness of the SIPAM system with the aim of enhancing and facilitating the circulation of specialized information on Mediterranean aquaculture.

GFCM Membership

The geographical area of competence of the GFCM covers the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, including the Azov Sea and connecting waters. The following States or Economic integration organizations are presently Members of the Commission: Albania, Algeria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, European Community, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Monaco, Morocco, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey.

¹ For the sake of managing fishing effort within a Management Unit, an Operational Unit is the group of fishing vessels practising the same type of fishing operation, targeting the same species or group of species and having a similar economic structure. The grouping of fishing vessels may be subject to change over time and depends on the management objective to be reached (GFCM 2001).