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GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE

Third Session

Zaragoza, Spain, 25-27 September 2002

**UPDATE ON THE STATUS OF THE AUTONOMOUS BUDGET OF GFCM AND
ITS IMPLICATIONS ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE**

1. In order to reinforce its work, the Commission, at the Twenty-second Session (Rome, Italy, 13-16 October 1997) decided to amend the GFCM Agreement and relevant provisions of its internal rules and regulations. Among the amendments adopted was the creation of an autonomous budget.

Scale of Contribution

2. The modalities for the determination of the budget ceiling, particularly the scale of contribution between Members were further adopted at the Twenty-fifth Session of the Commission (Sliema, Malta, 12-15 September 2000).

3. The scale of contribution was calculated, as an example, on the basis of a hypothetical autonomous budget of US\$ 750 000, and was split as follows:

Membership : 10 percent

Wealth Component : 35 percent

Catch Component : 55 percent

4. The contribution in percentage for each Member was determined after discussion on the formulas to be adopted for both the wealth and catch components. However, it was agreed that before the final implementation of the scale of contribution, each Member should validate the catch figures, including aquaculture production, all of which are taken into account in the calculation of their respective contribution. No further data in this regard were received in 2002.

Status of Acceptance of the Autonomous Budget

5. At the time of the preparation of this document (July 2002), seven GFCM Members (Cyprus, European Community, Italy, Malta, Monaco, Spain and Turkey) out of twenty-three had deposited their instrument of acceptance of the amendments to the Agreement of GFCM relative to the autonomous budget. As requested by the Commission, during the CAQ intersession the Secretariat, through direct contacts, circular letters and note verbales, invited the GFCM Members to expedite the procedure for the acceptance of the amendments to the Agreement. It is indeed most likely that the number of Members having formally deposited their instruments of acceptance will have increased at the time of the Twenty-seventh session of GFCM, scheduled to take place in Rome, Italy, from 19 to 22 November 2002. However, this might not be enough to reach a quorum of two-thirds (15) acceptance by the Members, required for the amended Agreement to enter into force.

6. The matter of the autonomous budget was not discussed at the Twenty-sixth session of the Commission¹ as the amended Agreement had still not entered into force. By analogy, if, at the next session of GFCM the required quorum is not reached, CAQ will have to continue operating in a transitional way and the programme of the two Committees will have to be funded with direct contributions from countries, partner organizations and FAO.

Implications for CAQ

7. At the Second Session of the Committee on Aquaculture, the proposals presented by the Secretariat and discussed by participants included a clearly identifiable budget for the operation of the Committee and its associated networks. Contrary to the budget request of the Scientific Advisory Committee, dealing with capture fisheries, the budget proposed for CAQ did not involve recruitment of permanent personnel. It was intended that the technical secretariat for the CAQ would be provided by the FAO Fisheries Department as part-time contribution of several professionals at no cost to the Commission. In addition, it was acknowledged that the organization of the existing operational networks, i.e. the Information Systems for Promotion of Aquaculture in the Mediterranean (SIPAM), the Technology and Aquaculture in the Mediterranean (TECAM) and the Socio-Economic and Legal Aspects of Aquaculture in the Mediterranean (SELAM) was in place with personnel supporting the programmed activities.

8. The basic activities of the Committee on Aquaculture, which have to be funded regularly, include the following elements:

- (a) Statutory meeting of CAQ (one meeting every two years) in four languages.
- (b) SIPAM Network:
 - (i) One session of the Steering Committee per year. This involves a two-day meeting with experts from the region, staff from the Regional Centre and FAO Headquarters staff in representation of CAQ;
 - (ii) One meeting of National Coordinators per year. This involves travel of all the National Coordinators to a meeting place for a three-day meeting, accompanied by the staff of the Regional Centre and from FAO Headquarters;
 - (iii) Functioning of the Regional Centre (which is granted by the Government of Tunisia through an agreement with FAO); and
 - (iv) Temporary assistance by consultants and other personnel to accompany the evolution of the system.

¹ Paragraph 48, Report of the Twenty-sixth Session of GFCM.

(c) TECAM and SELAM networks (coordinated by the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies through the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Zaragoza, Spain - CIHEAM-IAMZ - in collaboration with the FAO Fisheries Department). Organization and delivery of four to five seminars or advanced courses or workshops every year.

9. Taking into consideration the average level of annual activities carried out over the past few years, the estimated minimum budget for CAQ should be US\$ 140 000. For the biennial statutory meeting of the CAQ, US\$ 35-40 000 would be spent once every two years and the remainder utilized to finance the activities of the three networks. The programme of activities endorsed by the Committee would have to be approved by the GFCM during its annual session. However, to implement the full Plan of Action of the Consultation of Article 9 of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) additional funds would be required, in particular for aspects related to institutional strengthening and planning and support to the creation and upgrading of private sector associations.

10. In order to enable and promote the sustainable development of the fast-growing aquaculture sector in the Mediterranean, it is important and necessary to monitor the appropriate level of operations of the CAQ. Furthermore, for the efficient operation the activities of the CAQ the level of the autonomous budget required may need to be reconfirmed or reassessed and submitted to the Twenty-seventh Session of the GFCM.