



GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION
FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN
COMMISSION GÉNÉRALE DES PÊCHES
POUR LA MÉDITERRANÉE



GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

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INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES (2006)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This document provides a summary of the major conclusions of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) based on the intersessional work of its subsidiary bodies, as referred to in the Report of the ninth session of SAC (document GFCM/XXXI/2007/Inf.5). Fisheries management related advice and recommendations from SAC are dealt with in document GFCM/XXXI/2007/7. The inputs from the FAO Regional project in support to the SAC are summarized in document GFCMXXXI/2007/Inf.12. The document provides also an overview of the activities, conclusions and the recommendations of the Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ) as referred to in the Report of the fifth session of the Committee (document GFCM/XXXI/2007/Inf.6). CAQ established a Coordinating Meeting of the Working Groups (CMWG), thereby finalizing its restructuring process. The outcomes of the first meeting of the CMWG are also reported here below.

II. ACTIVITIES OF SAC

2. The Ninth session of SAC (Rome, Italy, 24–27 October 2006) was attended by delegates from 18 Members as well as by observers from Montenegro and regional partner organizations. The Session reached its highest attendance since the inception of SAC in 1999.

3. The intersessional activities closely followed-up the Programme of Work as agreed by the Thirtieth session of GFCM (January 2006). All the meetings approved were convened as below:

Meetings

- First SCSA Permanent Working Group on Stock Assessment Methodologies, 8–10 March 2006, Istanbul, Turkey.

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- SCSI/SCSA/SCCESS transversal Workshop on Fishing Effort Parameters Identification and Measurement Standardization, 30–31 May 2006, Malaga, Spain.
- SCSI/SCSA/SCCESS transversal Workshop on Stock Assessment and Operational Units, 26–28 June 2006, Rome, Italy.
- Session of SCSA, including: Working Group on Demersal Species; Working Group on Small Pelagic Species, 11–14 September 2006, Rome, Italy.
- Session of the SCCESS, 11–14 September 2006, Rome, Italy.
- Session of the SCSI, 11–14 September 2006, Rome, Italy.
- Session of the SCMEE including the Workshop on Interaction between Cetacean and Fishing Activities, 11–14 September 2006, Rome, Italy.
- Coordination Meeting of the Sub-Committees (CMSC), 24 October 2006, Rome, Italy.
- Ninth session of the Scientific Advisory Committee, 24-27 October 2006, Rome, Italy.

4. The participation of experts in the meetings of the subsidiary bodies of SAC exceeded overall the good performance already noted in 2005. The number of scientific contributions presented in each Sub-Committee also tended to increase. With the launching of the CopeMed II and of the EastMed subregional projects, the situation might even improve in 2007. SAC further noted with satisfaction that cooperation with partner organizations, especially in relation to the work of the Sub-Committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE) was greatly enhanced.

Major conclusions of SAC subsidiary bodies

5. The main outcome of the work of the SAC Sub-Committees, their Working groups and Workshops as well as the conclusions of the Coordination Meeting of the Sub-Committee (CMSC), as endorsed by SAC, could be summarized as follows:

- The first meeting of the **Permanent Working Group on Stock Assessment Methodologies** (PWGAM) was jointly organised with a Workshop on Black Sea Assessment of Pelagic and Demersal Stocks. The PWGAM stressed the need to set up an expert group under SCMEE/SCSA to define specific ecosystems within the GFCM area with a view to better assess the impact of fisheries and other human activities on these ecosystems. It favoured the use of different methods for demersal resources assessment such as composite production models and direct survival analysis and suggested to promote training courses on new methodologies, possibly through partner institutions such as CIHEAM/IAMZ.
- The **Workshop on measurement and standardisation of fishing effort** focused on: developing strategies for monitoring fishing effort and standardizing data collection methods. It suggested to undertake pilot studies to test proposed methods. Emphasis was put on the measurement of effort for demersal sources as fishing intensity (fishing effort/unit area of grounds), possibly using tools such as Geographical Information Systems (GIS). The Workshop identified further work to be made on measurement, calibration and allocation of fishing effort.
- The **Workshop on stock assessment and operational units** elaborated a new statistical scheme (the GFCM Task 1 matrix) for the collection of data on Operational Units (OUs). It is expected that the processing of the GFCM Task 1 will allow the implementation of

Recommendation GFCM/2006/1 and beyond, to address issues related to multispecies fisheries management. Once the data available, practical testing will need to be carried out on selected Operational Units and Geographical Sub-Areas (GSAs).

- The **Sub-Committee on Statistics and Information (SCSI)** fine tuned the outcome of the above-mentioned transversal Workshops on fishing effort measurement and on Operational Units. This included updating the SAC stock assessment forms to integrate fleet segments and nominal fishing effort units as well as finalizing the Operational Unit (OU) matrix and related data collection form (GFCM Task 1). SCSI also reviewed selected national and sub-regional fisheries statistical and information systems with the view to ascertain compatibility with the GFCM regional databases and information system being established. This included the FAO FishStat Mediterranean database, the Fishery Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS) as well as relevant FAO Regional project databases. The Sub-Committee suggested to ensure more consistency in the nomenclature and titles of the GSAs. It reviewed progress made on Recommendation GFCM/2005/2 on the establishment of a record of fishing vessels over 15 metres in length authorized to operate in the GFCM Area.
- The **Sub-Committee on Economic and Social Sciences (SCESS)** concentrated its work on identifying the socio-economic variables related to the Operational Unit concept for the GFCM Task 1 table, and on economic parameters for promoting the standardization of fishing effort measurement in all Member countries. SCESS also reviewed fish trade flux issues with the view to assessing impact on fisheries management. It launched an analysis on the legislative and socio-economic status of recreational and sport fisheries and reviewed the possible role of sociological indicators in fisheries monitoring.
- The **Sub-Committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE)** put emphasis on the impact of fishing on protected and/or threatened species, including cetaceans, turtles and sharks. Focus also entailed harmonizing with international partner organizations, research programmes related to marine ecosystems, particularly in conjunction with the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF), the identification of sensitive habitats and of possible restricted fishing zones as a follow-up to Recommendation GFCM/2005/1 on the management of certain fisheries exploiting demersal and deepwater species.
- The **Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment (SCSA)** reviewed 22 assessments corresponding to nine demersal stocks (one shared) and 14 small pelagic stocks (six shared), covering seven GSAs, most of them being in the Western Mediterranean. In addition, a major use was made of the results of the MEDITS trawl survey Programme. SAC acknowledged resource management advice formulated by the SCSA (Appendix F of Report of SAC) and endorsed a recommendation on the use of 40 mm square mesh size in the trawl codend.
- The **Coordination Meeting of the Sub-Committee (CMSC)** held a short informal meeting following the Sub-Committee sessions and a formal meeting prior to SAC (GFCMXXXI/2007/Inf.10). The CMSC identified specific gaps in some SCSA resource management advice that could be overcome if available scientific and technical information was timely provided by Members so as to allow deeper analysis by the relevant Sub-Committees. It also stressed that the strategy to implement Recommendation GFCM 2006/1 on the management of certain fisheries exploiting demersal and small pelagic and the fulfilment by Members of the GFCM Task 1 data collection form on Operational Units should be considered a priority issue.

- There was no meeting of the **Joint GFCM/ICCAT Ad Hoc Working Group on Large pelagic species in the Mediterranean** scheduled for 2006. However, SAC acknowledged the draft outline of the paper on the achievements of the Working group since its inception (document GFCMXXXI/2007/Inf.13). SAC further stressed the need to resume activity of this subsidiary body and recommended that the next session of the Joint Working Group be held late 2007 or early 2008, focusing on small tuna species.

6. In addition, the International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM)/Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Zaragoza (IAMZ) organized in 2006 the second edition of the post-graduate Specialization Course on “Fisheries economics and management”, at which 27 Mediterranean scientists from 9 GFCM Member countries participated. Issues of direct relevance to GFCM were identified to be addressed in the framework of the Master thesis.

III. ACTIVITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF CAQ

7. The Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ) held its fifth session in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, from 5 to 7 June 2006. The activities carried out during the first part (mid 2004–end 2005) of the CAQ intersession were reviewed respectively by the Commission at its Twenty-ninth session (February 2005) and at its Thirtieth session (January 2006). Subsequent to the aforementioned, CAQ put emphasis in 2006 on finalizing its review and restructuring process. This entailed the abolition of its technical Networks (EAM, TECAM, SELAM), the incorporation of SIPAM within the GFCM Secretariat and, the establishment of three outputs oriented and Working Groups, coordinated through a transversal steering entity, the Coordinating meeting of the Working Groups. Meetings and related activities carried out under the framework of CAQ, from January to December 2006, are outlined below:

Meetings

- Workshop on European seabass and gilthead seabream markets, Rome, Italy, 12 May 2006;
- Expert meeting to identify the need for a subsidiary body on the technical and socio-economic aspects of Aquaculture in the Mediterranean, Santiago de Compostela, Spain, 2–3 June 2006;
- Fifth session of the Committee on Aquaculture, Santiago de Compostela, Spain, 5–7 June 2006;
- First Coordinating Meeting of the ad hoc Working Groups, Rome, Italy, 6–7 November 2006;
- Ninth annual meeting of the network on Information System for the Promotion of Aquaculture in the Mediterranean (SIPAM), Larnaca, Cyprus, 15–18 November 2006.

Major conclusions and recommendations

8. The main outcome of the work of CAQ, its Expert Meetings and Workshops as well as the conclusions of the Coordination Meeting of the Working Groups (CMWG) and of the annual meeting of SIPAM, are summarized below for consideration by the Commission.

- The **Workshop on European seabass and gilthead seabream markets** was convened as a joint SIPAM and SELAM (Socio-Economic and Legal Aspects of Aquaculture in the Mediterranean) activity. Participants included experts, producer representatives, researchers and policy makers. Discussions were based on a report jointly commissioned with FAO,

which analysed the market situation and trend (see GFCM/31/2007/Dma.6). The meeting concluded that the market for these finfish species has become very competitive with concrete threats of saturation in specific segments. Nevertheless opportunities for growth exist in both northern and southern Mediterranean countries, especially for niche products. CAQ favoured the Workshop recommendations and requested its newly established *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Marketing to ensure follow-up.

- The **Expert meeting to identify the need for a subsidiary body on the technical and socio-economic aspects of Aquaculture in the Mediterranean** was organized as a result of a process, comprising the external evaluation of CAQ and its Networks (2004) and the request made by the Commission in 2006 to identify the best structure to deal with these aspects. The meeting suggested the establishment of a body (TESAM) to deal with technical, economic and social aspects of aquaculture in the Mediterranean in replacement of the SELAM and TECAM networks. It recommended however that CAQ explore the possibility of merging of revived network on Environment and Aquaculture (EAM) and TESAM in view of the many overlaps in the proposed activities by this subsidiaries and, that the terms of reference of the Committee itself be reviewed to adequately reflect the various dimensions of aquaculture development. This was subsequently endorsed by CAQ.
- The Fifth session of the **Committee on Aquaculture** was attended by delegates from 11 Members of the Commission and observers from public and private partner organizations. The Session reviewed the status of aquaculture in the region and the activities of the networks linked to the Committee. The work performed by the SIPAM Revitalization Project and the outcome of the two expert meetings, respectively on the re-establishment EAM (December 2006) and on TESAM (June 2006) were reviewed in depth.
 - i) In view of ensuring a cost-effective and efficient structure of CAQ subsidiary bodies the Committee agreed that a single subsidiary body, named Coordinating Meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Working Groups (CMWG), be established to replace these networks and that it be supported initially by three ***Ad Hoc* Working Groups** on: i) marketing; ii) sustainability, and iii) siting and carrying capacity. These Working Groups would address specific problems, be output oriented, flexible in their working arrangements and time-bound. The Committee agreed on the membership, *modus operandi* and mandate for the CMWG and adopted terms of reference for the Coordinator of each Working Group (see Appendix D, in GFCM/31/2007/Inf.6). It also reviewed and endorsed the short- and medium-term reference framework for the work of the *Ad Hoc* Working Groups.
 - ii) The CAQ requested that the CMWG convene its inaugural meeting to detail and prioritize the ad hoc Working Groups activities and to draft the 2007–2008 work programme and budget forecast, for the Commission approval at its next plenary session. CAQ recalled that the realization of the proposed programme will depend on the availability of funds through the GFCM autonomous budget and from extra-budgetary support from GFCM Members. The Committee also noted that the recruitment of a full-time aquaculture expert within the GFCM Secretariat was essential to ensure the implementation of the CAQ subsidiary bodies' work plan. It considered appropriate that the issue be discussed again at the Thirty-first session of the GFCM. The delegate from Italy indicated that, subject to confirmation by the competent authorities, financial support for the establishment of one or two of the proposed *Ad Hoc* Working Groups

would be provided. At the time of drafting the present working document, the GFCM Secretariat received written communication from the Spanish Directorate-General of Fishery Structures and Markets, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, expressing the good disposition of the Government to promote the work of the CAQ ad hoc Working Group on Marketing with a financial contribution of €100 000.

- iii) CAQ also reviewed progress achieved by the MedFisis project and the SIPAM Regional Centre (Tunisia) teams in the **SIPAM revitalization project**, launched in March 2006. The main activities included the: i) design and development of the new SIPAM2006 infrastructure; ii) checking and updating the data in the various databases; and (iii) design and implementation of an information strategy for SIPAM. The technological aspects of the SIPAM2006 portal were highlighted including the management mechanisms aimed at empowering the National Coordinator role and the new functionalities targeted at improving the accessibility, usability and operability of aquaculture information available through SIPAM.
 - iv) The Committee recognized the value of SIPAM2006 as a mechanism for regional cooperation and acknowledged the ongoing weakness of SIPAM due to the absence of a full commitment by the GFCM Member countries involved in terms of financial and human resources. The Committee suggested that the mandate of the national coordinators be taken over by a national institution so as to ensure that the entire range of necessary expertise and resources. The Committee finally requested that the SIPAM revitalization team gives priority to immediate operational results based; to focus on a more restricted range of databases; to include market information and; to ensure that the overlapping of information from other sources be avoided. The need to strengthen coordination and information flow between SIPAM and the newly established CAQ *Ad Hoc* Working Groups was emphasized. It was finally noted that the current Commission Members participating in SIPAM did not permit the full coverage of Mediterranean aquaculture and that the lack of data inputs from some of the major producing countries further weakened the system.
 - v) The Committee appointed the following new office bearers: Mr Spyros Klaoudatos (Greece) as Chairperson and Messrs François René (France) and Hayri Deniz (Turkey), respectively as First and Second Vice-Chairpersons.
- The **First Coordinating Meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Groups** (CMWG) convened in November 2006, to reschedule the activity proposals identified through the EAM and TESAM expert meetings. Eleven experts participated in addition to the CAQ bureau. The CMWG drafted project proposals for each of the three *Ad Hoc* Working Groups established by CAQ. However, in view of the medium-term proposed duration and extra-budgetary funding requirements of the projects, it was decided to prepare a yearly breakdown of the work plan and related expenditures for the Secretariat to include it in the draft CAQ programme of work for consideration by the Commission. The Coordinating Meeting also revisited the terms of reference of the Committee. The Report of the CMWG is quoted GFCM/31/2007/Inf.10.
 - The proposed projects titles and main aims/outputs presented were as follows:

Ad hoc Working Group / Project proposal title	Project aim summary
<p><i>Ad Hoc WG on Marketing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a strategy for marketing and promotion of Mediterranean aquaculture products <p style="text-align: center;">*****</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image building in Mediterranean aquaculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Quantitative and qualitative information on market and marketing trends → Formulation of market recommendations to support development of the sector <p style="text-align: center;">*****</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Promote image of the aquaculture sector. → Development of training and communication tools
<p><i>Ad Hoc WG on Sustainability</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employing the Ecosystem Approach in selection and application (guidelines) of indicators for sustainable development of aquaculture in the Mediterranean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Survey and adaptation of aquaculture indicators → Practical use of aquaculture indicators → Development of appropriate guidelines
<p><i>Ad Hoc WG on Siting and Carrying Capacity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing siting and holding capacity guidelines for Mediterranean aquaculture within aquaculture appropriate areas (SHOC MED) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Develop common procedures → Explore the potential of Allocated Zones for Aquaculture (AZA) → Identify production bottlenecks related to siting

- The Ninth annual meeting of the network on Information System for the Promotion of Aquaculture in the Mediterranean (**SIPAM**) was held in November 2006 and was attended by the National Coordinators of ten countries.
 - i) The main features of the new SIPAM2006 prototype, which allow easy data entry and retrieval, were reviewed. The National Coordinators received training on data entry and certification. The official launching of the final product is expected for the January 2007 session of the Commission. It was noted that the functional operation of the new system would however still require a strong commitment from the SIPAM countries. The participation of additional Mediterranean countries to SIPAM was strongly recommended.
 - ii) The overall regional SIPAM Information and Communication strategy framework was endorsed along with the tools for improving SIPAM visibility. The importance of producing promotional material in the national languages was noted. The National Coordinators stressed the need to explore the possibility and operational modalities for allowing aquaculture producers to advertise on SIPAM. The meeting also stressed the need that SIPAM2006 system be supported at the Secretariat level by an aquaculture officer and an information/communication officer along with the foreseen GFCM system analyst/programmer, especially in view of the termination in January 2007 of the MedFisis/SIPAM Revitalization project. The Report of the meeting is quoted GFCM/31/2007/Inf.11.

Courses and Seminars

9. In 2006, the following three international advanced courses and seminars were organized and implemented by CIHEAM/IAMZ. CAQ noted that these events were of direct relevance to the proposed activities of its newly established *Ad Hoc* Working Groups.

- Mediterranean aquaculture and environmental management, Murcia, Spain, 24–29 April 2006;
- Marine algal culture: Techniques, uses and development prospective, Zaragoza, Spain, 22–26 May 2006;
- Strategies, development options and technology choice in Mediterranean aquaculture Zaragoza, Spain, 18–23 September 2006.

IV. SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE

10. The Commission is invited to review the intersessional activities of its Scientific Advisory Committee. GFCM may wish to consider the new structure and *modus operandi* recommended by CAQ and in particular review the proposed adjustments to the mandate of CAQ and the terms of references for the CMWG and the Coordinators of the Working Groups as provided in Appendixes A and B to this document.

11. The Commission is invited to provide guidance on issues of particular relevance expressed by its subsidiary bodies, including on any follow-up that might be deemed necessary.

APPENDIX A

Revised mandate of CAQ

1. There shall be established a Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ) which shall monitor trends and promote the sustainable development and responsible management of marine and brackishwater aquaculture in the region.
2. The Committee shall provide independent advice on the technical, socio-economic, legal and environmental bases for common standards, norms and guidelines and management measures for consideration by the Commission;
3. The Committee shall be open to all Members of the Commission. Each Member of the Commission may designate a Member of the Committee, and a member may be accompanied by experts;
4. The Committee may establish working groups to analyze scientific and technical data and information and to advise the Committee on issues related to sustainable development of aquaculture (such as markets, environmental interactions, health, social, and other relevant issues) and the integration of mariculture into coastal zone management, and ensure their coordination through a Coordinating Meeting of the Working Groups (CMWG). The Committee shall in particular:
 - assess information provided by Members and relevant aquaculture related stakeholders or programmes on production statistics, market data, culture systems, technologies used, farmed species, and maintain related databases, including relevant socio-economic, environmental, biotic and abiotic indicators;
 - promote the formulation of common standards and guidelines for the Commission, on sustainable development of aquaculture;
 - identify cooperative research and training programmes and coordinate their implementation;
 - carry out other duties, functions or responsibilities related to aquaculture promotion that may be conferred to it by the Commission.
5. Members have an obligation to provide information on production and other data relevant to the functions of the Committee in such a way as to enable the Committee to fulfil its responsibilities under this paragraph.

APPENDIX B

Terms of Reference of the CMWG and of the Coordinators of the CAQ Working Groups

Membership and *Modus operandi* of the CMWG

The CMWG will comprise the Chair and the two Vice-Chairpersons of CAQ, the GFCM Executive Secretary and the CAQ Technical Secretary, Coordinators of the ad hoc Working Groups and selected experts, invited as necessary.

In addition to the assistance of the GFCM Secretariat, the CMWG will be supported in its work by the relevant FAO technical officers, including the Coordinators of the FAO regional projects when relevant. Pursuant to Rule X (6) of the Rules of Procedure, the procedures of the CMWG shall be governed *mutatis mutandis* by the Rule of Procedures of the Commission.

The operation of the ad hoc Working Groups will follow a project-based approach, be problem solving and output oriented, thereby functioning within a predefined timeframe and, possibly budgetary forecasts.

CMWG Mandate

- Propose and/or update elements of the work plan for the CAQ activities in the intersessional period and organize the distribution of activities among ad hoc Working Groups;
- Promote the organization of and the participation of suitable expertise in the activities of ad hoc Working Groups answering directly to CAQ;
- Identify data and information needs that can be handled by SIPAM;
- Examine the reports of the ad hoc Working Groups, collate draft recommendations of subsidiary bodies and formulate, as appropriate, integrate recommendation advice on suitable aquaculture for examination by CAQ;
- Function as editing committee for the selection of scientific and technical documents to be published in the GFCM *Studies and Reviews* series;
- Conduct any other task specifically requested by the Commission or CAQ or approved by consensus by the members of CMSC.

Mandate of the Coordinators of the *Ad Hoc* working groups

- Maintain, in coordination with the National Focal Points, an updated list of experts participating in the *Ad Hoc* Working Groups, providing full contact details, and ensure the distribution of related information;
- Encourage the participation of experts in *Ad Hoc* Working Groups activities and their scientific and technical contributions;
- Organize, in close liaison with the CMSC, the activities of the *Ad Hoc* Working Groups in such a way that issues raised by GFCM and/or CAQ are addressed;
- Coordinate intersessional activities, notably the organization of the *Ad Hoc* Working Groups meetings, in close liaison with the GFCM Secretariat, including preparation of the draft annotated provisional agenda and/or terms of reference;
- Supervise the drafting of meeting reports, including the presentation of attached annexes/reference documents;
- Liaise with scientific and technical bodies or other international/regional partner organizations dealing with topics of common interest