



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 (2007)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This document is a summary on the work of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and its subsidiary bodies, on progress achieved by the entities related to the Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ) and on other activities conducted upon guidance from the GFCM. The inputs from the FAO Regional projects in support to the SAC are summarized in document GFCM:XXXII/2008/Inf.9. Fisheries management related advice emanating from SAC is dealt with in document GFCM:XXXII/2008/5. The outcomes of the Workshop on the Port State Measures to combat IUU fishing in the Mediterranean (Rome, 10-12 December), organised in framework of the Compliance Committee, are also reported here below.

II. ACTIVITIES OF THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

2. The Tenth session of the SAC (Nicosia, Cyprus, 22-26 October 2007) was attended by delegates from 14 Members of the Commission as well as by observers from Montenegro, the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (UNEP RAC/SPA).

3. The intersessional activities were performed according to the Programme of Work agreed by the Thirty-first session of GFCM (January 2007). All the approved 14 meetings of SAC subsidiaries bodies were convened as below:

Meetings

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- Transversal Workshop on disaggregated data methodology analysis, 12-16 March 2007, Sète, France;
- Workshop on the Use of Trawl Survey Data, including the outcomes of MEDITS, 26-28 March 2007, Rome, Italy;
- SCSA/SCMEE/SCESS transversal Workshop on Gear Selectivity, 2–4 April 2007, Barcelona, Spain;
- SCMEE/SCSA/SCESS transversal Workshop on Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) 22-23 May/Tunis, Tunisia;
- SCMEE/SCSA/SCESS transversal Workshop on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), 24-25 May 2007, Tunis, Tunisia;
- SCSA/SCSA/SCESS transversal Workshop on the compilation of GFCM Task 1, 19–22 June 2007, Casablanca, Morocco;
- SCESS Workshop on the use of socio-economic indicators in fisheries management, including with reference to recreational and sport fisheries, 3–5 July 2007, Tripoli, Libya;
- SCSA Working Group on Demersal Species, 10-12 September 2007, Athens, Greece;
- SCSA Working Group on Small Pelagic Species, 13-14 September 2007, Athens, Greece;
- Session of the Sub-Committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE) 17–20 September 2007, Kavala, Greece;
- Session of the Sub-Committee on Statistics and Information (SCSI), 17–20 September 2007, Kavala, Greece;
- Session of the Sub-Committee on Economic and Social Sciences (SCESS), 17–20 September 2007, Kavala, Greece;
- Session of the Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment (SCSA), 17–20 September 2007, Kavala, Greece;
- Coordination Meeting of the Sub-Committees (CMSC), 21 September 2007, Kavala, Greece.

Major conclusions of SAC subsidiary bodies

4. SAC acknowledged the stronger interface built between the Sub-Committees through its **transversal activities**. It expressed the wish that this translates into the preparation of proper multidisciplinary and integrated management advice.

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 **transversal Workshop on Disaggregated Fishery Data** focused on methodologies to analyse commercial data in order to produce parameters on the fishing effort and to identify operational units by GSA. The participants suggested the elaboration of methodological guidelines to work with disaggregated data.
- The **Workshop on trawl survey based monitoring fishery system in the Mediterranean** pointed out the need to establish a SAC Working group with the general objective to promote the use of the surveys data for stock assessment and management purposes including for EAF needs. This Working group should, *inter alia*, perform analysis and interpretation of the data obtained from surveys at regional and GSA levels, identify the data requirements from the surveys at sea, and set a common framework for the harmonization of protocols and approaches, planning and quality control of surveys in the Mediterranean.

- The second **Workshop on selectivity of Mediterranean bottom trawls** discussed technical aspects and potential implications related to implementing gradually the 40 mm square mesh cod-end in all Mediterranean fisheries. It suggested to pay attention on the assessment of the fish survival escaped from the trawl cod-end. The role and attribute of the network of technologists (TECHNOMED) was discussed. The Workshop recommended that the network constitutes the core stakeholder entity to contribute to the work of a Working group on fishing technology to be established under the aegis of SCMEE.
- The **transversal Workshop on Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF)** noted that there are still challenges in terms of sharing a common understanding of the principles and the actual application of the ecosystem approach in the Mediterranean. It noted that the application of the EAF is primarily perceived as being a scientific concern, while the meeting stressed the importance of ensuring commitments at policy, administrative and sector level, including through adopting participatory mechanisms at all steps in the application of EAF, as a precondition for the successful implementation of the approach.
- The **transversal Workshop on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)** discussed the role of MPAs in fisheries management. It stressed in particular the need for harmonizing the understanding of the terminology and typologies of MPAs. It noted the weakness of the representativity of the Mediterranean MPA in terms of the habitats covered. The Workshop pointed out that MPAs alone were not sufficient to protect certain species (e.g. the dusky grouper *Epinephelus marginatus*) and that complementary management measures are required in most cases.
- The **transversal Workshop on the compilation of the GFCM Task 1** tested the coherence of several national datasets with the GFCM Task 1 format through the use of an electronic data entry tool developed by the GFCM Secretariat. The Workshop took note of suggestions made by the participants on the improvement of the Task 1 electronic tool, actions to be taken to review concepts and definitions, regional / sub-regional cooperation initiatives related to the development of statistical systems, together with general recommendations for the immediate and effective implementation of the Resolution GFCM/31/2007/1.
- The **Workshop on the Use of Socio-Economic Indicators in Fisheries Management** discussed the use of integrated indicators and reviewed a minimal list of social indicators to be integrated as component of the GFCM task 1 statistical matrix. It suggested the elaboration of a handbook as a guideline on the use of socio-economic indicators supported by a specific software. The meeting further addressed issues related to the recreational fisheries in the Mediterranean especially its legal management framework and suggested common definitions regarding these activities.
- The **Sub-Committee on Statistics and Information (SCSI)** addressed issues concerning the data reporting in the framework of the GFCM Task 1 statistical matrix. It also considered reconciling the FAO STATLANT 37A Sub-Divisions form with the GFCM Geographical Sub-Areas (GSAs) through a testing period. The Sub-Committee suggested specific actions for developing a Mediterranean fleet register for 2008. It favoured further development through the Secretariat of the regional Fishery Ecosystem Information System (FEIS) based on MedSudMed achievements. It agreed to give priority to the standardization of the measurement and the calibration of fishing effort of different gears.

- The **Sub-Committee on Economic and Social Sciences (SCESS)** concentrated its work on identifying the relevant socio-economic variables which should be considered as component of the GFCM Task 1 statistical matrix, and on developing trends analyses and reference/trigger points intended to advice on the socio-economic health of priority fisheries. It also addressed issues related to the use of market information and other incentive mechanisms to help explaining changes in fishing effort. The SCESS launched a follow-up analysis to the socio-economic review of recreational fisheries and assessed issues for implementing the EAF.
- The **Sub-Committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE)** pursued the cooperation with partner Mediterranean conservation institutions (e.g: UNEP (RAC/SPA); IUCN; WWF; and ACCOBAMS) by performing joint activities, especially on issues related to marine ecosystems and sensitive habitat in the Mediterranean. The Sub-Committee put emphasis on the importance to implement the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries through national and regional case studies, possibly with the support of the FAO-regional projects and using the GEF project frame. The SCMEE furthermore adopted a standard format to submit new proposal of Fisheries Restricted Areas (FRA). It reviewed a proposal on the FRA “Cap Creus canyon” without reaching consensus on its formal adoption.
- The **Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment (SCSA)** reviewed 27 assessments, including five (5) shared stocks, covering ten (10) species, in thirteen (13) GSAs. It emphasized the use of trawl surveys data including from the MEDITS programme to perform stock assessment and to provide management advice. In addition, the SCSA reviewed the new assessment form and acknowledged the joint assessment exercise performed by its Working Group on demersal species. The Sub-Committee pointed out the need to undertake for 2008, a joint assessment of hake in the whole Mediterranean, using both commercial catches and trawl survey data.
- The **Coordination Meeting of the Sub-Committees (CMSC)** followed the Sub-Committee sessions (September 2007). The CMSC reviewed the main conclusions and recommendations emanating from the Sub-Committees and the transversal actions requiring joint work among the Sub-Committees. It further assessed the efficiency of the transversal meeting held during the Sub-Committees session and noted the need to better define its purpose in order to ensure an added value for the Sub-Committees achievements. The CMSC took note of the progress made by the Secretariat to promote scientific work in the Black Sea, especially through the formulation of a specific project for this sub-region. The issue related to the implications of delays in the launching of COPEMED II, EASTMED and in the resuming of MEDFISIS were also raised.
- The Eighth session of the **Joint GFCM/ICCAT *ad hoc* Working group on Large pelagic species** in the Mediterranean is scheduled for 2008 with the aim at improving the knowledge on the biology and the exploitation of small tunas. In this respect, SAC acknowledged the draft Terms of Reference and methodology prepared by the Secretariat for a background study to be used for the forthcoming meeting.

III. ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE (CAQ)

Information system for the promotion of Aquaculture in the Mediterranean (SIPAM)

6. The development of the new SIPAM Information System was completed in July 2007 and all the historical SIPAM data was successfully transferred to the new associated databases, after validating and adjusting data formats, including restructuring of the software and improved data entry features. In addition, the statistical queries and reports in connection with the Production Statistics database were revised to maximize the utility of the database.

7. Following a testing period, the SIPAM Regional Centre (Tunis) invited the SIPAM National Coordinators to complete the new registration process and to validate and / or update their datasets. Unfortunately, the response has been very limited, with only six National Coordinators having registered and of which only two have significantly updated data (mostly production data). Despite reminders from the Secretariat and the Regional Centre no success was recorded on this front. The delays in recruiting the GFCM Programmer also contributed to stalling the progress. As a result, the launching of the new SIPAM Information System on public domain has been held back. Nevertheless, the “faosipam” domain has been installed on the GFCM server and is ready to be activated when the appropriate moment is determined. Under the present circumstances, any further progress would not be guaranteed unless a clear framework for the maintenance and proper functioning of SIPAM is drawn up.

Working groups of CAQ

8. Based upon the project profiles prepared by the Coordinating Meeting of the Working Groups (CMWG) and endorsed by the Commission, the activities of the Working groups mainly focused on further specifying the content of the projects, as follows.

- **Working Group on Aquaculture Marketing:** a full project document on the “Development of a strategy for marketing and promotion of Mediterranean aquaculture products” was developed, incorporating elements to better define the second project profiles on “Image building in Mediterranean aquaculture”. The project document was submitted to the Government of Spain (the donor) which approved it and further release related funds, thereby allowing the start of activities early 2008.
- **Working Group on sustainable aquaculture:** at the time of writing this document, the last adjustments on the administrative and financial framework concerning the project entitled “Use of Indicators for sustainable Development of Aquaculture”(INDAM) were being made with the European Community (the donor). In the meantime, preparation to held the first Workshop of the project in Montpellier (France), early 2008, were well advanced.
- **Working Group on Siting and Carrying Capacity:** A Joint IUCN-FEAP and CAQ Working group Workshop on “Guidelines for the Sustainable Development of Mediterranean Aquaculture- Site selection” was organized in Istanbul (Turkey) 22-23 October 2007. It was attended by 40 participants, including from 15 GFCM Members, covering a wide range of expertise such as aquaculture production, Geographical information systems (GIS), mapping, ecology, sociology, law and economics. The Workshop allowed to set up the workplan of the CAQ Working Group for 2008, thereby providing the elements to develop the project profile entitled “Developing and implementing siting and carrying capacity guidelines for Mediterranean Aquaculture (SHOCMED)”. As for INDAM, SHOCMED is under finalisation in conjunction with the European Community (the donor).

IV. OTHER

9. The **Joint FAO/GFCM Workshop on port States measures to combat IUU fishing in the Mediterranean** took place 10-12 December and was attended by 20 participants from 13 GFCM

Members. Its main objective was to promote strengthening port State measures at national level and coordination through the GFCM. The Workshop reviewed recent trends concerning ports States measures at global and regional level and the outcomes of the analysis of the questionnaire based on the FAO Model Scheme and distributed to Members in May 2007 to assess strengths, weaknesses, gaps and constraints for cooperation in the Mediterranean. As a follow-up to implementating the General guidelines for a GFCM Control and Enforcement Scheme, the Workshop prepared a draft GFCM Recommendation concerning a regional scheme on port State measures for consideration by the second session of the GFCM Compliance Committee (document GFCM/COC/2/2008/Inf.9).

V. SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMISSION

10. The Commission is invited to review the activities carried out by its Committees during the intersessional period and to provide guidance on issues of particular relevance expressed by concerned subsidiary bodies, including on any follow-up that might be deemed necessary.