



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



GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

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**PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE INTERSESSIONAL
PERIOD 2008**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The full programme of work of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) includes activities that must be performed by the Members, at national level, by the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), the Committee of Aquaculture (CAQ), the Compliance Committee (CoC) and their subsidiary bodies. This document summarizes salient forecasted activities for 2008, as identified by the Tenth session of SAC (October 2007) and, as adjusted following the medium term programme delineated by the CAQ Coordinating Meeting of the Working Group (CMWG) in November 2006¹. It is expected that the activities of the CoC will be defined during its second session (February 2008). When reviewing the proposed provisional Programme of work for 2008, care should be taken, however, to anticipate its budgetary impact in conjunction with the preliminary budget forecast presented in document GFCM: XXXII/2008/8.

II. PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME of THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

2. The following includes the summary of the proposed activities by topics for the intersessional period 2008 as identified by the four SAC Sub-Committees and reformatted by the Committee. Draft terms of reference for some proposed activities (Workshop and Working groups) are enclosed as Appendix A to this document for ease of reference

¹ Document GFCM/31/2007/Inf.9

Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment (SCSA)

- pursue and promote the assessment of the stocks of GFCM priority species and shared stock considering the need for a better coverage of the GSAs which have not been sufficiently monitored;
- carry out joint stock assessment of hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) and associated species in each GSA or group of GSA as appropriate, using both commercial catches and trawl survey data including sensitivity analysis, selected reference points and indicators and new findings on growth parameters for hake, following tagging studies and otoliths new interpretation;
- launch joint work to process and analyze the information, including data resulting from trawl surveys, such as MEDITS and surveys and ichthyoplankton surveys, realized in several countries in the region;
- organize the 2nd meeting of the working group on stock assessment methodologies (WGSAM) to be focused on the basic methods and protocols to undertake assessments with direct methods (Terms of Reference in Appendix A8);
- organize, possibly in collaboration with CIHEAM, Training courses on methodologies for stock assessment covering:
 - tuning VPA;
 - Production models
 - composite and non equilibrium models;
 - trawl surveys (use of trawl survey in assessment, direct survival analysis and ALADYM).

Priority species and shared stocks

- update the list of priorities species by GSAs and the list of shared stocks on the basis of the criteria agreed upon by the SAC and with the contribution of the regional projects.

Sub-Committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE)

- organize the transversal Working Group on bycatch/incidental catches, in collaboration with relevant partners (Terms of Reference in Appendix A1);
- pursue the collection of data, in collaboration with the partners, on interactions between fisheries and cetaceans, using questionnaire, and extend this initiative to marine birds, sea turtles and elasmobranchs and consolidate research on the use of pingers;
- ensure follow up of the small-scale projects being implemented or proposed in the framework of ByCBAMS (ACCOBAMS) activities in selected Mediterranean countries;
- pursue promoting the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) and undertake case studies where possible and appropriate in coordination with the “GEFMed” project;
- perform analysis of physical impact on the sea bed and sensitive habitats with a particular attention for continental slope bottom and sub-marine meadows;
- devise elements for the identification of sensitive habitats of interest for priority species by GSA;
- initiate studies on the efficiency of fishing restricted area and the conservation of biodiversity;
- elaborate a protocol for the standardization of selectivity studies, including for technological, biological, ecosystem and economic aspects and devise steps for implementing the 40 mm square mesh cod-end.
- develop studies on technical aspects to be considered in selectivity studies such.

Sub-Committee on Statistics and Information (SCSI)

GFCM Task 1

- proceed as a matter of urgency with the compilation and transmission of Task 1 data according to Resolution GFCM/2007/31/1, noting that in future and when sufficient data are received the fleet segmentation could be reviewed during a transversal Workshop (Terms of Reference in Appendix A4) held back to back with the SCSI;
- produce guidelines on reporting catch data for target species, associated species and by-catch for inclusion in the Task 1 data entry tool;
- standardize the measurement of fishing effort, by fishing operation and set up approach related to the calibration of fishing effort of different gears, taking into account the further compilation through GFCM Task 1;

Other statistical systems

- launch practical testing of the new “GSA compatible” STATLANT37 A” form;
- undertake actions to develop the MEDSTAT programme within relevant countries, giving priority to the fleet register.

Sub-Committee on Economic and Social Sciences (SCESS)*Recreational fisheries*

- convene a meeting of the *ad hoc* transversal Working Group on Recreational Fisheries (Terms of Reference in Appendix A5) to be held back to back with the SCESS;
- collect socio-economic data on recreational fisheries according to the framework agreed by SCESS and initiate the preparation of a technical guidelines on the management of recreational fisheries.

Studies on indicators and on market

- assess the socio-economic impacts of implementing the 40mm square mesh size in trawl fisheries; and implement selectivity impact analysis in selected countries;
- initiate a study on the role of incentive structures and mechanisms in national fisheries;
- pursue the work on a standard method of using market data to understand changes in fishing effort for use in fisheries management;
- proceed with the practical implementation of the Traffic Light method for integrated indicators (and associated reference values) and trends analyses, to assist in the monitoring and evaluation of fisheries management;
- elaborate a guidebook of the use of indicators in fisheries management.

Joint GFCM/ICCAT Working Group on Large Pelagic Species

- prepare a multidisciplinary study of small tuna fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;
- Organize the 8th session of the Working Group accordingly.

Meetings of the SAC and its subsidiary bodies

3. The Scientific Advisory Committee suggested convening the meetings hereafter in 2008.

Meetings	Place/Date
2nd Working Group on Stock Assessment Methodologies , on basic methods and protocols to undertake assessments with direct methods (back to back with the MEDITS meeting 7-9 April)	Malta/ 9-11 April 2008
8th session of the Joint GFCM/ICCAT Working Group on large pelagic species	Malaga, Spain/5-9 May 2008
SCMEE/SCSA transversal Working Group on by catch/incidental catches	TBD / May 2008
Training courses on methodologies for stock assessment	Cairo, Egypt/ 23-27 June 2008
SCMEE/SCSA/SCESS Transversal Working Group on selectivity	Sete, France/1-3 July 2008
SCSA Working Group on Demersal Species , including joint stocks assessments	Izmir, Turkey/ 15-19 Sept. 2008
SCSA Working Group on Small Pelagic Species , including joint stocks assessments	Izmir, Turkey/ 22-26 Sept. 2008
Session of the SCSA	Antalya, Turkey/ 13-16 Oct. 2008
Session of the SCESS	Antalya, Turkey/ 13-16 Oct. 2008
SCESS/SCSA Working Group on Recreational Fisheries (back to back to the SCESS session)	Antalya, Turkey/ during 13-16 Oct. 2008
Session of the SCSI	Antalya, Turkey/13-16 Oct. 2008
SCSI/SCESS/SCSA Workshop to refine the fleet segmentation (back to back with the SCSI)	Antalya, Turkey/ during 13-16 Oct. 2008
Session of the SCMEE	Antalya, Turkey/ 13-16 Oct. 2008
CMSC	Antalya, Turkey/ 17 Oct 2008
Eleventh session of the SAC	Morocco/1-5 Dec 2008

4. Pursuant to the decision (Thirty-first Session², Rome, Janvier 2007) to integrate the evaluation of the **ByCBAMS project** to the knowledge of the Cetacean population, the meeting of the Working Group of this project would be convened jointly with ACCOBAMS, in Rome, on 17 - 18 September 2008.

² See paragraph 77 of the report of the 31st Session.

III. ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE FOR 2008

5. The activities of the Working groups of CAQ are expected to be carried out with the support of their respective cooperative projects, including inputs from Partner Organizations (i.e.: IUCN, FEAP, EuroFish; IAMZ/CIHEAM) and therefore matches the 2008 work plan of this projects (namely: MedMark³; InDAM⁴, and ShocMed⁵ These activities would be serviced, as relevant, by the Information System for the promotion of Aquaculture in the Mediterranean (SIPAM) and completed through a number of Advance Training courses and Seminars organized under the aegis of the CIHEAM Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Zaragoza (IAMZ).

Working Group on Aquaculture Marketing

- Implementation of national reviews to improved knowledge on the status of marketing of aquaculture products, and the interactions with marketing of capture fisheries products, including assessment of demand elasticity;
- Initiating studies at regional level on selected commodities other than Seabass and Seabream;
- Establishment of a network of professionals in marketing of aquaculture products at country level to contribute to the Working group;
- Selection and generation of first data sets on aquaculture marketing;
- Mid-term meeting of the Working group to review the draft comparative analysis of national reports and to review medium-term strategy and planning;
- Design and testing of software to process selected data and indicators to initiate building the marketing database in the SIPAM information system.

Working Group on Sitting and Carrying Capacity

- Desk-study on relevant sources of information and scientific evidence for thresholds related to major environmental changes, including impact on sensitive habitats and uses of the coastal zone to serve as the foundation for the ShocMed data base;
- Identification of bottlenecks for aquaculture production (environmental, social, economic) with reference to sitting, including the following general issues: (a) aquaculture – environment interactions and exclusion criteria for site selection (including on biodiversity, escapes, effects on wildlife etc.), (b) safety and risk analysis, (c) infrastructural needs, (d) interactions with other uses of the coastal zone (with emphasis on sensitive habitats and fisheries);
- Identify environmental attributes affected by and affecting aquaculture with particular reference to Mediterranean marine ecosystems (e.g. as a function of depth, distance from shore, current regime);
- Initiate the comparative assessment on existing legal frameworks and administrative procedures for site selection, including the analysis of the affectivity of regulatory schemes and EIA procedures, and identify major gaps in regulation, reporting and communication of monitoring programs;
- Meeting of the Working group to validate outputs and refine Shoc Med strategy in terms of data gathering and analysis process as well on activities planning (i.e. areas of focus, selection

³ Development of a strategy for Marketing and Promotion of Mediterranean Aquaculture.

⁴ Use of Indicators for sustainable development of aquaculture in the Mediterranean

⁵ Developing sitting and carrying capacity guidelines for Mediterranean aquaculture

and methodology for second step surveys on calculation of carrying/holding capacity of aquaculture farms in Mediterranean coastal environments).

Working Group on Aquaculture Sustainability

- Preparation and analysis of an annotated bibliography summarizing all existing documents and projects related to the sustainable development of aquaculture in the Mediterranean;
- Formulation of a Mediterranean definition of “aquaculture sustainability” within the framework of an ecosystem approach;
- Survey and analysis of regional and national R&D programs related to the interaction of aquaculture and the environment interactions;
- Carry out a census of all published indicators on aquaculture sustainability, based on available work (including from EVAD, CONSENSUS and the IUCN) and devise criteria and weighting system for the selection and use of Mediterranean indicators encompassing the different aquaculture systems;
- Establish a preliminary list of priority indicators, with emphasis on species, environments, culture techniques, socio-economic factors, enterprises typologies, and convene a Workshop accordingly;
- Develop and initiate the implementation of the 1st case study on the use of the selected indicators;
- Convene a Meeting of the Working group to validate outputs and refine InDAM second step strategy.

SIPAM

6. Any further progress in the functioning and maintenance of SIPAM can only be guaranteed if a clear framework is adopted and implemented. This requires the commitment of all parties concerned whilst redefining the role of the SIPAM Regional Centre with the aim of launching SIPAM on public domain in 2008, the programme of work will focus, in particular, on the following:

- Completion of data validation followed by timely updates by all National Coordinators and integration of the six remaining GFCM countries which are not yet affiliated to SIPAM;
- Complete pending IT-related issues and undertake processes leading to the certification (ISO) of the system;
- Systematic SIPAM data monitoring and production of formatted reports (monthly and annual) as a support to the CAQ Working Groups;
- Integration of SIPAM with other aquaculture database initiatives (eg. Development of the aquaculture marketing database and other tools requested by the CAQ working groups);
- Convening of the SIPAM annual meeting (possibly back-to-back with CAQ) after the information system is fully functional, certified and launched;
- Feasibility study on the reorganisation of the future of the SIPAM Network beyond 2008 in view of the continuation / substitution of the SIPAM Regional Centre in Tunis.

Meetings of the CAQ and its subsidiary bodies

7. The following meetings are forecasted for 2008.

Meetings	Place/Date
Working Group on Aquaculture Marketing	TBD/September 2008
Working Group on Sitting and Carrying Capacity	TBD/2008
Workshop on selection of sustainable indicators (Working Group on Sustainability)	Montpellier,France/mid March 2008
Working Group on Sustainability	TBD/2008
CIHEAM/IAZM Advance Course on Recirculation Systems and their Application in Aquaculture	Tarragona, Spain/ 10-14 March 2008
CIHEAM/IAZM Advance Course on Fish nutrition: sustainability and product quality	Zaragossa, Spain/19-23 May 2008
SIPAM Annual Meeting	TBD/earlyNovember 2008
Coordinating Meeting of the Working groups (CMWG)	TBD/early November 2008
Sixth session of the CAQ	TBD/ early November 2008

IV. SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMISSION

8. The Commission is invited to review the activities and meetings proposed by its Scientific Advisory Committee for 2008, as well as the updating of activities and meeting of the Committee on Aquaculture. The Commission may wish to take relevant decisions on these matters, including specifying priorities, as appropriate, and identifying complementary source of financing, as deemed necessary.

9. In so doing, GFCM may consider the budgetary implications of its programme of work and provide the Secretariat with supplementary guidance on budget implementation.

APPENDIX A

Draft Terms of Reference for Working Groups and Workshops**1. SCMEE/SCSA transversal Working Group on bycatch**

The organization of this meeting was agreed by the Commission during its Thirty-first Session. SCMEE suggested the following Terms of Reference:

- reduction of by-catch and fishing mortality for threatened species (*chondrychtians*, turtles, seabirds, marine mammals),
- evaluation and improvement of survival after escapement,
- technology for avoiding by-catch of juveniles (e.g. acoustic detection, etc.),
- implementation of mitigating measure (smart gear incentive program, etc.),
- physical impact on sensitive sea bed and habitat with a particular attention for continental slope bottom and sub-marine meadows.

2. SCMEE/SCSA/SCCESS transversal Working Group on Selectivity

It was suggested and endorsed by GFCM (30th Session) that the TECHNOMED network could be established as a Transversal Working Group of SAC, with the following objectives:

- assist SAC in its recommendations on fisheries management dealing with fishing technology aspects;
- favour the cooperation between Mediterranean scientists involved in fishing technology and selectivity studies;
- assure a permanent watch on fishing technology issues in the Mediterranean and Black Seas.

The Working Group will primarily rely on networking by exchange of field experiences and information (standing email forum) and will be in charge of the meeting organization on a fishing technology, especially selectivity issue at the request of the SAC. Its reports and different works will be published on the GFCM website.

3. SCSA Ad hoc meeting for the development of the GFCM Regional Fleet Register

Noting the importance of the vessel register as a tool, *inter alia* for monitoring fishery capacity, an *ad hoc* meeting with the following terms of references is proposed:

- review the status of the fishing vessel register in GFCM countries and/or sub-regions;
- design and agree upon the parameters and format which should constitute the GFCM regional fleet register;

- discuss and propose data exchange protocols for the transmission of fleet data to the GFCM Secretariat including for data updating procedures and the frequency of transmission;
- discuss confidentiality issues within the framework of Recommendation GFCM/2006/7 and distinguish between public, restricted and confidential data;
- discuss and propose simple capacity monitoring tools to be incorporated into the GFCM regional fleet register;

4. SCESS/SCIS transversal Workshop on the Review of the GFCM Fleet Segmentation

With recent experiences in implementing the GFCM Task 1 statistical matrix, the need to review the basic assumptions behind the GFCM fleet segmentation was stressed. A SCESS/SCSA/SCIS workshop is proposed to allow for proper reflection of the following issues on the basis of specific examples and background data:

- reconsider the fleet segmentations for clarity and internal consistency (e.g. consistent allocation criteria to be applied across the length classes) to avoid straddling of vessels across fleet segments;
- revise the name of “minor gear” categories;
- reconsider vessels groupings (e.g. splitting large categories into several smaller segments) to minimize a loss of information through the forced merging of vessels with different exploitation patterns and, hence, a mismatch between the economic and biological characteristics attributed to the particular fleet segment;
- understand areas of compatibility and subsequent divergence between the GFCM fleet segmentation and the European Commission fleet segmentation (e.g. vessel length categories and dominant versus exclusive gear categories).

5. SCESS/SCSA transversal Working Group on Recreational Fisheries

The mandate of the Working group will be to:

- define, as is the case for the socio-economic dimensions, a framework for the collection and analysis of biological, ecological, environmental, economic and social data for recreational fisheries management;
- define a minimal list of socio-economic indicators for GFCM task 1 as well as bio-ecological and environmental indicators for future consideration in this matrix;
- develop a common interdisciplinary methodology for monitoring recreational fisheries including for studying the economic and social impacts on national and sub-regional level;;
- develop technical guidelines and common legislation and effective enforcement for recreational fisheries in the GFCM framework;

- develop methodologies to study the interactions between recreational fisheries and commercial fisheries; and
- Continuously improve the framework as presented in Annex 11 of the SCESS report..

The terms of reference for the first meeting of the Working Group will be to:

- review the existing legal, management and environmental frameworks are to be considered;
- define an integrated framework for the collection and analysis of biological, ecological, environmental, and socio-economic data for use in recreational fisheries management;
- identify and develop priority case studies at the country level to assist in the finalization of the above; and

6. SCESS Workshop on the Methodology to use market data to understand the changes in effort in a fishery management framework

The SCESS Workshop is proposed to allow for the exchange of experiences among the countries as well as to discuss:

- potential studies at the country level, based on the methods used so far;
- potential studies in the methodologies yet to be introduced in the analyses of the market impacts;
- development of common decision support tools for the fisheries management in the Mediterranean.

As an aid to the discussion, a background paper will be prepared reviewing the methodologies used in analysing market data to understand the changes in effort.

7. Transversal Working group on Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF)

For understanding the applicability for a holistic, integrated, adaptive, and participatory approach to the implementation of the EAF, the establishment of a transversal EAF Working group was proposed with the following mandate:

- define what the application of the EAF entails (and does not entail) for the GFCM, across biological/ecological, economic, social and governance dimensions;
- define a framework for the application of the EAF within the GFCM, taking into consideration sub-regional ecosystems and fisheries;
- identify integrated pilot projects in which to apply the EAF framework;
- identify multi-disciplinary priority information to assist in the application of the EAF (i.e. differentiating between information for management and basic research information); and

- collect experiences/case studies in the application of the EAF throughout the GFCM.

Terms of Reference for the first Meeting of the transversal EAF Working Group

The meeting of the EAF Working Group will be convened to address:

- the first two aspects of its mandate: agreement on the definition of the EAF application within the GFCM area; and
- the development of an EAF implementation framework. It will be needed to establish the appropriate boundaries that take into account both jurisdictional and natural considerations that will be used to implement the framework at a more local/sub-regional levels.

8. Second Meeting of the WG of Stock Assessment Methodology (WGSAM) on the use of surveys at sea on assessment

The terms of reference of the above Working Group are the following:

- Identify and propose adequate stock assessment methods to evaluate progress towards implementing the conclusions on MSY of the WSSD (Johannesburg, 2002).
- Identify the data requirements to carry on assessments from the surveys at sea (trawl surveys, echo surveys, eggs-larvae), examine any data deficiencies, look for research needs and search for appropriate ways in addressing them
- Set a common framework for the harmonization of basic methods, protocols, data format, quality control to execute demersal and pelagic surveys in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea and software to be used to undertake joint assessments with direct methods.
- Produce on a possible GFCM protocol regarding trawl surveys which should take into consideration the MEDITS experience.
- Perform assessment analyses and interpretation of the data obtained from surveys at regional and GSA level, for sustainable exploitation of stock including if possible ecosystem considerations for fisheries management.