



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



GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tenth Session

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**REVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY THE COMMITTEE
DURING THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This document provides a summary of the activities of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) covering the 2007 intersessional period. It especially describes the work of SAC performed through its Sub-Committees, their Working groups and Workshops as well as other activities conducted upon guidance from the GFCM.
2. It might be worth recalling that the activities of SAC followed the Programme of work identified by the ninth Session of the Committee and further appraised at the Thirty first Session of GFCM, held in Rome in January 2007.
3. It should be underlined that many relevant actions were carried out through the FAO regional projects, namely: AdriaMed, MedSudMed and MedFisis. Reference to major activities of the projects which encompass direct support to the subsidiary bodies of SAC is provided in document GFCM:SAC10/2007/Inf.18.
4. Additional information on activities of relevance to SAC that are carried out by other national or regional projects are expected to be presented under the agenda item four dealing with the integrated review of the national reports of SAC Members (document GFCM:SAC10/2007/Inf.10).

II. ACTIVITIES OF THE SAC DURING THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD

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Overview of SAC achievements

5. At its Thirty-first Session (January 2007), GFCM reviewed the report of the Ninth Session of SAC, assessed the set of proposed activities for the Committee for 2007 and agreed upon the Programme of work of SAC for the intersession¹. SAC had eight (8) months within which to implement its programme. All the **14 meetings** approved by the Commission were convened (see table below).

6. During the intersession, the Coordinators of the Sub-committees and Facilitators of Working groups collaborated actively with the Chairperson of SAC and the Secretariat. This included drawing up agendas, holding meetings and liaising with the various experts participating in the networks of the Sub-committees. It should be underlined that a great progress was made to elaborate Terms of Reference for new suggestions of holding meetings or establishing Working Groups. Overall, the number of GFCM Members represented in many instance remained relatively limited. Some Sub-Committees expressed concern on the potential negative impact of such a situation. The fact that CopeMed II and EastMed has not yet been launched probably contributed to an unbalanced participation in term of represented Members.

Meeting	Date and venue
Coordination Meeting of the Sub-Committees (CMSC)	21 September/Kavala, Greece
Session of the Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment (SCSA),	17–20 September/Kavala, Greece
Session of the Sub-Committee on Economic and Social Sciences (SCESS)	17–20 September/Kavala, Greece
Session of the Sub-Committee on Statistics and Information (SCSI)	17–20 September/Kavala, Greece
Session of the Sub-Committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE)	17–20 September/Kavala, Greece
SCSA Working Group on Small Pelagic Species	13-14 September/Athens, Greece
SCSA Working Group on Demersal Species	10-12 September/Athens, Greece
SCESS Workshop on the use of socio-economic indicators in fisheries management, including with reference to recreational and sport fisheries	3–5 July/Tripoli, Libya
SCSI/SCSA/SCESS transversal Workshop on the compilation of GFCM Task 1	19–22 June/Casablanca, Morocco
SCMEE/SCSA/SCESS transversal Workshop on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) systems	24-25 May/Tunis, Tunisia

¹ Report of the 31st Session, paragraphs 78-79.

SCMEE/SCSA/SCESS transversal Workshop on Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF)	22-23 May/Tunis, Tunisia
SCSA/SCMEE/SCESS transversal Workshop on Gear Selectivity	2-4 April /Barcelona, Spain
Workshop on the Use of Trawl Survey Data, including the outcomes of MEDITS	26-28 March/Rome, Italy
Transversal Workshop on disaggregated data methodology analysis	12-16 March/Sète, France

Sub-Committees, Working groups and Workshops

7. As shown in the table above, the four (4) Sub-Committees held their respective session in parallel, late September 2007. The recent practice of treating under a common umbrella those cross-sectional issues requiring strong interface among the Sub-Committees was pursued, especially with regard to activities related to data compilation in the framework of GFCM task 1 statistical matrix, the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF), the Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and with gear selectivity issues, thereby favouring multidisciplinary exchanges and harmonization of views among concerned scientists. This was further promoted through the holding of a transversal meeting during the Sub-Committees session, which was the opportunity for experts involved in the above mentioned fields to jointly review the outcomes of the related transversal meetings.

8. During this intersession, the Working groups and Workshops were held independently from the relevant Sub-Committee sessions and the related reports are provided separately from the respective parent Sub-Committee. The reports of all intersessional meetings (see the table above) are reproduced as documents GFCM:SAC10/2007/Inf.5 to Inf.17.

9. During the intersession, the Sub-Committees focused respectively on main areas, as follows;

- The Sub-Committee on Statistics and Information (SCSI) fine tuned the electronic data entry tools developed by the Secretariat, taking into account the comments emanating from the Transversal Workshop on the compilation of GFCM Task 1. It also addressed issues concerning the submission of catch data through the framework of the FAO STATLANT 37A form, together with the inconsistencies between GFCM Geographical Sub-Areas (GSAs) and FAO Statistical Sub-Divisions. It was suggested that a testing period for the proposed “GSA compatible” STATLANT37 A form should be implemented. In the framework of MedStat, the SCSI has drawn up an outline for a programme of work to develop national statistical systems compliant with GFCM standards. It suggested specific actions for developing a Mediterranean fleet register for 2008. The Sub-Committee also acknowledged the achievement by MedSudMed project for developing the regional Fishery Ecosystem Information System (FEIS). It agreed to give priority to the standardization of the measurement and the calibration of fishing effort of different gears. The report of the SCSI is quoted GFCM:SAC10/2007/Inf.6.
- 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 the Mediterranean fisheries. SCESS also addressed issues related to the use of market information and other

incentive mechanisms to help explaining changes in fishing effort. It launched an analysis on the legislative and socio-economic status of recreational fisheries and reviewed the possible role of sociological indicators in fisheries monitoring as well as issues for implementing the EAF. SCESS stressed the need for producing a handbook on the use of socio-economic indicators in fisheries management. The report of SCESS is quoted GFCM:SAC10/2007/Inf.7.

- The Sub-Committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE), in line with the request made by GFCM over recent years² to strengthen cooperation with partner Mediterranean conservation and management institutions (e.g: UNEP (RAC/SPA); IUCN; WWF; and ACCOBAMS), performed joint activities, especially on issues related to marine ecosystems and sensitive habitat in the Mediterranean. In this context, the Sub-Committee reviewed and made comments on preliminary version of two publications respectively on the impact of fishing gears on the environment³ and on biodiversity in Mediterranean deep Sea⁴. It 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” (revised version available in document GFCM: SAC10/2007/Inf.19) without reaching consensus on its formal adoption. The report of SCMEE is quoted GFCM:SAC10/2007/Inf.5.
- Concerning the Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment (SCSA) and with reference to the request from GFCM⁵ that a major number of stocks, especially shared stocks, and of GSAs be covered, it can be noted that the SCSA reviewed, in 2007, 27 assessments, of which five (5) shared stocks, covering ten (10) species, in thirteen (13) GSAs. The use of trawl surveys data including from MEDITS programme to perform stock assessment and to provide management advice, including within an EAF perspective was emphasized. 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, using both commercial catches and trawl survey data. The Sub-Committee also suggested to organise during 2008, a training course on protocols and methods for the use of trawl suveys data, possibly through partner institutions such as CIHEAM/IAMZ. The report of the SCSA is quoted GFCM:SAC10/2007/Inf.8.

10. The relevant conclusions and suggestions of the Working groups and Workshops as endorsed by the respective Sub-Committee, as well as the advice and recommendations of each Sub-Committee are summarized in document GFCM:SAC10/2007/3. They are expected to be presented to SAC by the concerned Sub-Committee Coordinator. The detailed outcomes of the Sub-Committees are therefore not dealt with in this document.

Selected complementary issues

² This was reiterated in paragraph 16 of the Report of the 30th session, with special reference to the identification of sensitive areas and the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF)

³ Programme of work for 2006 (paragraph 50 of th report of the 30th session)

⁴ Programme of work for 2007 (paragraph 77 of th report of the 31st session)

⁵ Paragraph 64 of the Report of the 29th Session

11. As in 2006, no meeting of **the Joint GFCM/ICCAT ad hoc Working group on Large pelagic species** in the Mediterranean was scheduled for 2007. For 2008, GFCM⁶ requested to follow-up on the Recommendations of the 7th session of the Joint GFCM/ICCAT ad hoc Working Group by organising a meeting aimed to improve the knowledge on the biology and the exploitation of small tunas in the Mediterranean including the Black Sea. The Commission also favoured the compilation of statistics and the implementation of scientific research programmes on small tunas, in view of the preparation of the 8th session of the Working group to be held in 2008. In this context, the Terms of Reference for a GFCM study on small tunas were prepared. A synopsis of this study (GFCM:SAC10/2007/Dma.2) was prepared and submitted by the Secretariat to the ICCAT Scientific Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) held in Madrid, from 1 to 5 October 2007. This document was reviewed under reference “SCRS/2007/164” and a tentative date for the eight meeting of the Joint Working Group (early May 2008) was suggested. This work is proposed to be performed by consultants hired by the GFCM. The Committee may, in addition, provide guidance on follow up action required to cope with the ascertainment made in 2004 by the Joint working group in relation to billfish and albacore.

12. GFCM was welcomed as a formal Partner at the fourth session of the **Fishery Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS)**, held in Rome, from 26 February to 2 March 2007. At present, FIRMS draws together a unified partnership of eleven (11) Regional Fishery Bodies⁷ (RFBs) and FAO. In the FIRMS frame, it should be noted that the GFCM fishery data sheet needs to be strengthened and regularly updated. During the intersession, the Commission also formally adhered to the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP).

13. In relation to Recommendation GFCM/2006/1⁸ on the management of certain fisheries exploiting demersal and small pelagic and particularly element to be identified to develop **management programmes of the fishing effort**, the limited progress achieved should be emphasized and clear guidance might be necessary to cope with this state of affair especially regarding the definition of reference year.

14. Regarding the **functioning of the Sub-Committees**, the SCSA suggested that the annual meeting of the Working Groups on demersal and small pelagic species should be held every year in the same period, preferably between the end of September and the beginning of October, and the duration of each Working Group meeting should be 5 days, including to allow practical stock assessment exercises.

15. Each Sub-Committee selected its coordinator as follows:

- SCSA: Constantina Karlou Riga (Greece)
- SCESS: Ramon Franquesa (Spain)
- SCME: M.Nejemmedine Bradai (Tunisie)
- SCS: Joel Vigneau (France)

SAC is invited to validate these selections.

16. The **Coordination Meeting of the Sub-Committees (CMSC)** held its meeting following 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

⁶ Programme of work for 2007 (paragraph 77 of the report of the 31st session)

⁷ These are: CCAMLR; the CCSBT; GFCM; IATTC; ICCAT; ICES; IOTC; NAFO; SEAFDEC; SEAFO and EUROSTAT.

⁸ Appendix E of the Report of the 30th Session of GFCM (document GFCM/SAC9/2006/Inf.3). Paragraph 3 of the Recommendation requested SAC to identify in 2006 for the concerned fisheries: the reference year, the Operational Units, fishing effort parameters and to transmit to GFCM the results of this identification.

work among the Sub-Committees. It further reviewed other relevant topics and suggested the following (report available as document GFCM:SAC10/2007/Inf.9):

- The CMSC noted that, except in limited circumstances, no clear indications on fishing effort level or reference to standard effort unit were provided through the stock assessment reviewed by SCSA. This was considered a major constraint for the formulation of “sound” management advice;
- The standard format adopted by SCMEF for submitting new proposal of Fisheries Restricted Area (FRA) was reviewed. The need to set up specific procedure to submit such proposal was stressed;
- CMSC stressed the need to further develop the definitions of MPAs and “deep Sea” for the Mediterranean;
- The possibility that GEF project could contribute performing case studies on the EAF in selected participating countries was emphasized;
- In addition to the statement made by the SCSA, SAC was invited to consider the contribution made by AdriaMed, in relation to defining criteria to address priority species and shared stocks lists (see document GFCM:SAC10/2007/Dma.5);
- CMSC assessed the efficiency of the transversal meeting held during the Sub-Committees session. It noted, however, the need to better define its purpose in order to ensure an added value for the Sub-Committees achievements;
- Implications of delays in the launching COPEMED II, EASTMED and MEDFISIS were emphasized with great concern;
- It was suggested that the Fishing Technology Working Group proposed by the SCSA should fall under the responsibility of SCMEF;
- The CMSC also stressed the need to further improve the involvement of national focal points during the intersessional period;
- It was agreed that Secretariat should review any pending publications and assess whether they are still relevant;
- The CMSC agreed that the new GFCM Website should host scientific documents presented during SAC workshops and meetings;
- 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 of climate change and the impact on fisheries was discussed. The Secretariat was invited to ensure follow-up within the framework of actions being undertaken by FAO.

III. SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE

17. The Committee is invited to review the intersessional activities of its subsidiary bodies, as a whole, especially in relation with the need to further promote coordination of inputs and outputs and the production of integrated scientific and technical advice for fisheries management.

18. The Committee is also invited to provide guidance on pending issues highlighted above, as well as on complementary suggestions emanating from the CMSC.