

October 2004



## GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

### SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

#### Seventh Session

Rome, Italy, 19-22 October 2004

### Elements for a Provisional Reference Framework

#### I. INTRODUCTION

1. As part of its mandate, the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) provides the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) with a preliminary Programme of work covering the Committee's forthcoming intersession period and to be adopted by the Commission at its following Ordinary Session. In the present document, the Chairperson of SAC discusses issues related to identifying the set of activities which might constitute the preliminary programme of work of SAC, taking into account the current evolving context of the *modus operandi* of SAC, which is driven by the entry into force of the autonomous budget of the Commission.

2. The purpose of this document is not to propose a detailed work plan for the Committee<sup>1</sup>. Rather, the document outlines some elements for discussion of the SAC programme of work and considers only activities for 2005. The document should be read in conjunction with the document, GFCM:SAC7/2004/3; which provides the details of the activities proposed by each SAC Subcommittees.

#### II. CONTEXT FOR THE 2005-2006 REFERENCE FRAMEWORK

3. Since 2001, the programme of work of SAC is guided by the rolling "Reference Framework for the mandate of SAC 2002-2004". Through this Reference Framework, the Commission established the fields of priority activities to be carried out by the Committee under two main heading: Management of fisheries and Environmental protection. At its 27<sup>th</sup> Session, in 2002, GFCM confirmed that the Reference Framework provided the appropriate guidance for the work of SAC over the biennium. The Commission further stated that the Framework should be updated regularly and that the Chairperson of

<sup>1</sup> Note: A detailed work plan is necessary to ensure full coherency and interface of inputs to reach outputs requested by the Commission by better organizing, evaluating and adjusting related activities.

SAC should determine priority activities based on available inputs and achieved results of the intersession period<sup>2</sup>.

4. At its 28<sup>th</sup> Session, the Commission provided further orientations to guide the work of SAC. GFCM invited the Committee to put more emphasis, *inter alia*, on a holistic approach to fisheries management especially through taking into account the multispecies character of most shared fisheries. It further requested SAC to strengthen coordination and integration of activities among different Sub-Committees and to ensure that advice derived from stock and environmental assessments be translated into fisheries management advice that take into account the socio-economic impacts of measures being suggested. The Commission also acknowledged that many recommendations from SAC were related to the pursuit and fine tuning of ongoing work. It confirmed the priorities of the 2004 work programme with emphasis on: biological and socio-economic reference points; operational units (OPs); assessment of shared stocks in Geographical Sub-Areas (GSAs) not covered in 2002 and 2003; identification of nursery areas and sensitive habitats; as well as on matters relating to driftnet and surface gillnets fisheries<sup>3</sup>.

5. In recent years, the Commission concomitantly provided guidance on aspects related to the *modus operandi* of SAC and its subsidiaries, in order to favour more efficient implementation of the programme of work of the Committee. At its 27<sup>th</sup> Session, GFCM noted that since a growing number of issues tended to be cross-sectional among the SAC Sub-committees there were a need for stronger interface between the respective activities of the subsidiaries<sup>4</sup>. At its 28<sup>th</sup> Session, the Commission addressed this aspect more generally, through reviewing the findings and suggestions made in the Report of the Meeting of Experts on the Appraisal of SAC Achievements since 1999. This report had been commissioned by the Committee at its Sixth Session (GFCM:SAC7/2004/inf.6). GFCM remarked, *inter-alia*, that the current mode of operation of SAC did not encourage the integration of disciplines, especially for the formulation of sound management advice and the Commission agreed that problem solving and task oriented approaches should be promoted<sup>5</sup>.

6. GFCM further acknowledged that issues related to the *modus operandi* of SAC, such as the implementation of the autonomous budget of the Commission and its implications on the SAC programme of work, needed further discussions. At its Extraordinary Session in July 2004, the Commission did not provide additional views on the suggestions derived from the appraisal of SAC achievements nor on the follow-up proposals concerning SAC functioning, which had been made during the two intersessional meetings of the Coordinating Meeting of the Sub-committees (CMSC)<sup>6</sup>. However, the Commission adopted its autonomous budget for 2005, which includes a minimum set of SAC subsidiaries meetings<sup>7</sup>.

7. A first institutional step has been made through the establishment of the CMSC, which primarily aims at ensuring the interface among the work of SAC subsidiaries, thereby favouring the integration of activities and management advice. However, much work remains to be done in this respect. There is, in particular, the need for SAC to decide whether this interdisciplinary consultative entity should perform its work on an *ad hoc* and flexible basis allowing for fast reaction times or whether it should be established formally as a subsidiary; thereby complying with statutory requirements such as convening meetings on the basis of provisional agendas, providing written session documents, and producing standard formal reports instead of producing, as at present, only a "Meeting record or aide mémoire". In this respect, it would be advisable to carefully scrutinize the draft Terms of Reference suggested for the CMCS for adoption by the Commission.

8. In November 2003, the CMCS also undertook a preliminary review of the operating procedure of SAC subsidiary bodies from the structural, functional and practical stands (Appendix G, in GFCM:SAC7/2004/Mad.7). The central role expected from SAC National Focal Points for

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<sup>2</sup> Report of the 27<sup>th</sup> Session, paragraph 88.

<sup>3</sup> Report of the 28<sup>th</sup> Session (GFCM:SAC7/2004/inf.4), paragraphs: 60, 59, 64, 65 and 72.

<sup>4</sup> Report of the 27<sup>th</sup> Session, paragraph 23.

<sup>5</sup> Report of the 28<sup>th</sup> Session, paragraph 34.

<sup>6</sup> See : documents GFCM:SAC7/2004/mad.7 and 8.

<sup>7</sup> Appendix G, document GFCM/SAC:7/2004/inf.3.

coordinating the implementation of the work programme was emphasized. Focal points were identified as the prime individuals responsible for ensuring the timely collection of requested data, information and other relevant inputs to be provided by research institutes and experts in each Member country. In the same vein, Sub-committee Coordinators were viewed as key players in the implementation of Sub-committee work plans. The Committee was invited to address carefully this issue, including its financial implications.

9. In this respect, the Committee made the following general recommendations at its Sixth Session<sup>8</sup>:

- to hold Working Groups meetings back-to-back with those of the Sub-Committees;
- to limit the number of meetings held in the intersession period;
- to organize, as appropriate, focused transversal workshops on key activities or subjects;
- to undertake multi-disciplinary case studies as relevant, and to promote interface between activities; and
- to improve linkages among Sub-Committees and National Focal Points.

### **III ELEMENTS FOR THE 2005 WORK PROGRAMME**

10. It is assumed that the challenge confronting SAC in the medium-term is to complete the sequence of integrated activities which close the fisheries management cycle through providing the Commission all necessary elements to implement management plans at sub-regional or basin levels. For a number of shared fisheries, SAC should, in priority, pursue strengthening programmes which directly build toward these goals. These may include activities<sup>9</sup> such as:

- harmonising access regimes for joint or similar fisheries and facilitating agreements on allocation for shared fisheries (including shares of total fleet capacity);
- further promoting cooperative research programmes and information exchange to develop consensus on joint fishery management measures and to increase cost efficiency in regional fisheries and ecosystem research activities;
- harmonising statistical data collection, analysis and reporting for GFCM needs, including agreeing on minimum standards, establishing the vessel register and developing the digital Atlas;
- upgrading national capacities in the above tasks; and,
- increasing communication to improve coordination

11. In the short-term, to enable the Commission to enact management recommendations based on sound scientific bases, there is still the need to ensure the availability of standardised data and the subsequent analyses of stock situations, of the socio-economic implications of biologically-related advices, and of the impacts of suggested measures on the other organisms living in the areas involved. Also, it will be necessary to put into place monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of any proposed management options.

12. It is the view of the Chair that the SAC work programme for 2005 should mainly consist in finalizing, consolidating and extending most of current activities laid down in the Reference Framework for the mandate of SAC for 2003-2004. Details on the Framework, as updated by the Commission for 2004, were provided by the CMSC, as mentioned in paragraph 8 above. It is also felt that, in view of current operationalizing of the autonomous budget and possible implications on the formulation of the Programme of Work of the Committee, it might not be advisable to produce a biennial Reference Framework (2005-2006) at this stage, but rather limit this contribution to SAC programming for 2005.

13. Thus, without prejudging the results of this session and its appraisal by the next session of the Commission, a summary list of tentative priority activities and meetings deriving from the suggestions

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<sup>8</sup> Paragraph 12 of the Report.

<sup>9</sup> As underlined in document GFCM:ES/2004/inf.4, presented to the Extraordinary Session of the Commission.

made by the Sub-Committees is outlined below. The priority list is not supplemented with corresponding Terms of Reference for the work of each sub-committee and Working Group or Workshop, as these were not available to the Chair.

### **Sub-committee on Stock Assessment (SCSA)**

14. At its Sixth Session, the Committee made general recommendations in relation to SCSA programme of work for 2004<sup>10</sup> and are sought to remain valid in 2005 for the most part.

15. Taking into consideration SCSA outputs in 2004, as summarized in document GFCM:SAC7/2004/3 (paragraphs 8-17), it is suggested that priorities for 2005 concentrate on:

- carrying out the assessment of shared stocks and priority fisheries;
- pursuing activities on the identification of biological indicators, establishing reference points and testing them on selected fisheries or GSAs;
- completing maps on the distribution of juveniles;
- studying the likely biological impact of different options for managing fishing effort and capacity; and
- undertaking pilot assessments of multispecies stocks in selected GSAs.

### **Sub-committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE)**

16. At its Sixth session, in addition to approving SCMEE programme of work for 2004<sup>11</sup>, the Committee reiterated the need to: present information on incidental catches of protected species and large migratory sharks in tabular form; complete work on the mapping of essential fish habitats; provide outputs of research activities on driftnets, including data in a table format; complete the description of identified species clusters.

17. SCMEE made considerable efforts in 2004 to cope with its heavy programme of work as reported in document GFCM:SAC7/2004/3 (paragraphs 25-29). It appears over the years, however, that the mandate for this Sub-committee tends to be over ambitious in relation to available means and data. It is thus suggested that priorities for 2005 concentrate on:

- undertaking pilot studies on the management of shared stocks applying the ecosystem approach to fisheries;
- developing a research programme on the impact of fishing, including using different deep sea gear types at depths greater than 1000 meters;
- extending analyses on the impacts of driftnets on protected or endangered species to the whole Mediterranean; and
- establishing a list of projects involved in the monitoring or control of the impact of fishing on protected or endangered species with the view to enhance coordination.

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<sup>10</sup> Report of the Sixth Session, paragraph 48 (GFCM:SAC7/2004/inf.5)

<sup>11</sup> Report of the Sixth Session, paragraphs 50 to 53 (GFCM:SAC7/2004/inf.5)

### **Sub-committee on Information and Statistics (SCIS)**

18. At its Sixth Session, the Committee endorsed the work programme for SCSI and agreed to establish a transversal Working Group on the measurement of fishing effort in relation to catch and effort data collection schemes.

19. Taking into consideration SCIS outputs in 2004, as summarized in document GFCM:SAC7/2004/3 (paragraphs14-17), it is suggested that priorities concentrate in 2005 on:

- completing studies on Operational Units in all GSAs having shared stocks;
- preparing maps on the distribution of fishing operations for each GSAs;
- studying the standardization of fishing effort measures by Operational Units; and
- preparing the statistical framework for storing and processing the data banks, including format and data characteristics of each data base, responding to SAC and GFCM needs.

### **Sub-committee on Economic and Social Sciences (SCESS)**

20. At its Sixth Session, the Committee endorsed the medium-term priorities for socio-economic research in fisheries, organised into the following four categories:

- Feasibility studies related to the collection of socio-economic indicators of Mediterranean fisheries in GSAs not yet covered;
- Training in the realm of fisheries socio-economic analysis and management;
- Case studies relating to the application of the socio-economic indicators to fisheries management and the development of bio-economic models; and
- Research related to markets of fish and fishery products, including prices, quality control, labelling, import/export, etc.

21. In addition, the Committee invited the Secretariat to organize a technical meeting on the use of socio-economic indicators in fisheries management

22. Taking into consideration SCESS outputs and recommendations in 2004, as summarized in document GFCM:SAC7/2004/3 (paragraphs19-23), it is suggested that priorities concentrate in 2005, on:

- further developing studies on socio-economic indicators to cover all GSAs and establishing reference point values to be tested in selected areas;
- updating and monitoring information on the fisheries management legal framework in GFCM Members;
- establishing the minimum quality standards for socio-economic data and information; and
- undertaking market studies in relation to fisheries management in GSAs where indicators are gathered.

## Other Subsidiary Bodies

23. It could be noted that reference to specific activities for the Black Sea and for the work of the Joint EIFAC/GFCM Working Party on the management of sturgeon have been avoided pending guidance from SAC as explained in paragraphs 15 and 16 of document GFCM/SAC7/2004/2.

24. In addition (paragraph 14 of the same document), SAC refrained from discussing the outputs of the Meeting on Mediterranean Swordfish Stock Assessment and the need to review the time frame for convening and the channels for reporting outputs from the Joint GFCM/ICCAT Working Party on Large pelagic species. Therefore, follow-up actions to the recommendations of the Seventh session of this subsidiary remain to be considered by SAC.

25. Taking into consideration the summary set of priorities outlined above, and the Committee requirements to limit the number of meetings of its subsidiary bodies, it is suggested to hold the meetings listed in the table below during the forthcoming intersession period.

Meeting	Venue/Date
Eighth Session of SAC	TBD/September
Meetings of SAC Sub-Committees	TBD/late June
CMSC-1 ?	TBD/ February
CMSC-2 ?	TBD/ TBD
SCISS transversal Workshop on Data base	
3rd Joint SAC/CAQ/ICCAT Working Group on Sustainable Tuna Farming	Rome/March
SCISS transversal Workshop on measurement of Fishing effort	TBD/TBD
SCSI transversal Working Group on Operational Units	TBD/TBD
SCMEE Working Group on selectivity	TBDTBD
Joint GFCM/ICCAT Working Party on Large Pelagics?	TBD/TBD

## IV. SUGGESTED ACTION FOR THE COMMITTEE

26. The Committee may wish to assess activities proposed by its subsidiary bodies in 2005, in relation with outputs achieved in implementing their respective mandate in 2004.

27. SAC is further invited to amend, complement or refine the priorities outlined in this document taking into consideration relevant suggestions which have been made to strengthen the modus operandi of the Committee. In doing so, the Committee may wish to recommend organizing meetings, including determining respective venue and date and seek willingness from Members to host some of these meetings.