



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



GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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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 intersessional period 2004-2005. It describes the work of SAC, its Sub-Committees and Working groups as well as other activities conducted upon guidance from the GFCM. It might be worth recalling that the activities of SAC followed the Programme of work identified by the Seventh Session of the Committee, in line with the "Reference framework for the mandate of SAC 2003-2004" adopted by the Commission at its Twenty-seventh session (November 2002), and further updated at its Twenty-eighth (October 2003) and Twenty-ninth (February 2005) Sessions. At the last plenary session, it was further acknowledged that the 2005 programme would mainly consist in finalizing, consolidating or extending most of current activities for each of SAC subsidiary bodies¹.

2. The intersessional activities reported below refer only partially to many other relevant undertakings that were carried out by the FAO regional projects: CopeMed, AdriaMed, MedSudMed and MedFisis. Reference to those activities encompassing a direct support to the subsidiary bodies of SAC is provided in their respective reports, whereas complementary reporting on major activities of

¹ Report of the 29th Session, paragraphs 89 and 93.

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the projects is enclosed in document SAC8/2005/3. Additional information on activities of relevance to SAC that are carried out by other national or regional projects, are expected to be presented under agenda item four of this session through the review of the National reports of SAC Members.

II. ACTIVITIES OF THE SAC DURING THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD

Overview of SAC achievements

3. At its 29th session (February 2005), GFCM reviewed the report of the 7th session of SAC and agreed on the Programme of work of the Committee for 2005². SAC had seven months within which to implement its programme. All the meetings approved by the Commission were convened (see Appendix 1), with the exception of the first meeting of the Permanent Working group on Stock Assessment Methodologies (PWGSAM), scheduled to take place in Istanbul, Turkey, 14-18 November 2005.

4. The 29th Session of GFCM formally established the Coordination Meeting of the Sub-committee (CMSC), defined its mandate and adopted accordingly terms of reference for the Coordinators of the Sub-committees³. During the intersession, the CMSC held an informal meeting following the Sub-committee sessions (September 2005), at which it was decided that a formal meeting will be convened on the 24th of October in Tirana, Albania, i.e., prior to SAC. The outcome of this meeting will be orally reported to the Committee.

5. 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. Overall, the number of experts participating in meetings did not, however, cope with the good performance noted in 2004 and, in many instance the number of GFCM Members represented remained extremely limited. Once again, SCESS, and in a lesser extend SCMEE, expressed concern on the potential negative impact of such a situation. The fact that the first phase of CopeMed formally terminated with the 13th session of its Steering Committee in May 2005 and that EastMed has not yet been launched probably contributed to lower participation. Increased accountability of SAC National Focal Points, in particular to support the efforts made by the Coordinators to strengthen the networking of national institutions and other stakeholders would contribute to ensuring more steady participation overtime.

Workshop on Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF)

6. The workshop was organized by the Institut National des Sciences et Techniques de la Mer (INSTM) in Salammbô, Tunisia, from 7 to 9 September. It was convened under the leadership of the SCMEE. The Report of the Workshop is made available as document SAC8/2005/Dma.6.

7. The main objectives of the Workshop were to build a common understanding of the key principles and tools for an ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF), review GFCM related undertakings and identify elements for an implementation roadmap, including research science needs.

8. Presentations and discussions covered the geographical partition, time scales and classification of ecosystems to be taken into consideration, and further focused on the following topics: Essential

² Report of the 29th Session, paragraphs 89-95.

³ Report of the 29th Session, Appendix E.

and sensitive habitats; Modelling; Ecosystem indicators for spatial and temporal monitoring of fishing effort (MPAs/NFZs); Selectivity and gears; and By catch of vulnerable and protected species.

9. The importance of stakeholder participation in the process of developing and implementing an EAF framework was especially emphasized.

10. The meeting recommended that:

- each Sub-committee continue to work on respective indicators while reflecting ecosystem properties that should be linked to management objectives, be robust and easily understood by stakeholders;
- transversal collaboration among Sub-committees be reinforced in order to produce integrated advice for management, that include ecosystem considerations;
- SCMEC and SCSA test the use of ecological indicators, especially: %PPR-TLc and synthetic trend indicator (MEDITS);
- SCMEC consolidate information and classification of bottom habitats in the Mediterranean basin and improve knowledge on and characterization of essential fish habitats.
- SCSA promote assessments that incorporate ecosystem considerations (e.g. predator-prey considerations, by-catches, impact of the environment on the stock, description of the environment, biotic and abiotic, in which fishery developed, etc) and produce a reference document on the environmental impact of the different gears while exploring the feasibility of implementing mitigation measures, where relevant.

11. The Workshop also noted the necessity to:

- review the global strategic objectives for the region so as to ensure consistency with EAF principles;
- organize consultative meetings and case studies with stakeholders at sub-regional levels with support from regional projects, including for sensitizing and identifying priority issues to be dealt with at this scale.

Sub-committees

12. As mentioned above, the four Sub-committees held their respective session, late September 2005. Since the number of cross-sectional issues among the Sub-committees required stronger interface between the respective activities of the subsidiary bodies of SAC, joint debriefing on the results of the transversal Working groups and Workshops were organized, thereby favouring multidisciplinary exchanges and harmonization of views. At its informal meeting held on 30 September, the CMSC acknowledged with satisfaction such a practice.

13. The SCSA Workshop on standardization of selectivity methods applied to trawling was organized by the Institut Français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer (IFREMER) at Sète, France from 9 to 11 February 2005 with support from CopeMed and AdriaMed. The workshop reviewed available knowledge on experimental methodologies and protocols with the view to identifying those which could be suitably adapted to the specificity of the Mediterranean trawl fisheries. Based on case studies, it further assessed rules on selectivity statistical analysis for identifying priority actions towards better standardisation of methods and data transfer. The Report of

the Workshop is made available as document SAC8/2005/Dma.7.

14. The SCSI Transversal Working group on Operational units, including the Workshop on the measurement of fishing effort were organized back to back in Tangiers, Morocco by the Institut National de recherche halieutique (INRH), from 4 to 6 July 2005. The meeting also reviewed progress made with the support of the regional projects, to further expand and harmonize Catch and Effort Assessment Survey (CAS) in order to comply with data requirements of the Operational Unit Scheme. The report of this meeting is quoted SAC/2005/Dma.8.

15. The reports of the Transversal Workshops and *ad hoc* Working groups were reviewed during the meetings of the Sub-Committees. The main results of the Workshop on EAF and the Workshop on Gear Selectivity were assessed jointly by the SCSA, the SCSI and the SCMEE. The results of the SCSI Transversal Working group on Operational Units were jointly consolidated by SCSI, SCSA and SCESS, while some of the outputs of the SCSI Workshop on Statistical Framework and Data bases (including IUU white list) were built together by SCSI and SCESS. The main outcomes of these two transversal events are enclosed in the report of the Sub-committee(s) concerned and are summarized in document SAC8/2005/4, under the heading of the respective "Line" Sub-committee.

16. The conclusions and recommendations of the session of the four Sub-committees will be presented by the respective Coordinator under the corresponding agenda item and on the basis of document SAC8/2005/4. The reports of the Sub-committees, which include the main results of their Working groups or Workshops are made available as documents SAC8/2005/Dma. 1, 2, 3 and 4. The outcomes of the Sub-committees are therefore not dealt with in this paper.

17. With reference to paragraph 64 of the Report of the 29th Session of GFCM which stressed that a major number of stocks, especially shared stocks, and of GFCM Geographical Sub-areas (GSAs) should be covered by the Sub-committees, it should be noted that the SCSA assessed 22 stocks, of which 1 shared stock, covering 4 GSAs and including 5 demersal and 2 pelagic species. This compared with 2004, when SCSA reviewed 14 assessments covering 7 demersal species in 6 GSAs and 8 pelagic assessments covering 2 species in 6 GSAs, including 2 shared stocks.

18. Concerning the PWGSAM, referred to in paragraph 3 above, the SCSA formulated draft terms of reference which are reproduced as Appendix 3 to this paper, for consideration by SAC.

Joint GFCM/ICCAT Working groups

19. No meeting of the Joint GFCM/ICCAT Working group on Large pelagic species in the Mediterranean was scheduled in 2005. It is worth recalling, however, that the 7th session of SAC called on the guidance of the Commission in relation to the status, including the terms of reference, of this Joint Working Group. At its 29th session, the Commission acknowledged the need that this subsidiary body be endowed with multidisciplinary capacity. It further favoured the strengthening of the mandate of the Joint Working group and expressed willingness to formally adopt the proposed revised terms of reference (attached as Appendix 4 for ease of reference), following their possible endorsement by ICCAT at its 19th Regular Meeting (Seville, Spain, November 2005).

20. The Joint GFCM (SAC/CAQ)/ICCAT Working Group on Sustainable Tuna Farming, held its third and final meeting, in Rome, Italy on 16 to 18 March 2005 and produced, as required, Technical guidelines for addressing the sustainability of this activity. Based on the data and information provided by the experts, the guidelines were developed under the following main headings: i) Capture fisheries; ii) Transport and transfer; iii) Farming, including Registration, Socio-economic issues, Environmental issues, Data and Research and Animal welfare; iv) Harvesting and marketing; v)

Summary of statistical issues. The guidelines are provided as document SAC8/2005/Inf.5⁴. Bearing in mind that the 29th Session adopted Recommendation GFCM/2005/3(C) which endorsed Recommendation [04-06] by ICCAT on Bluefin Tuna Farming⁵, SAC may wish to provide guidance on action that may be deemed opportune to follow-up on this issue.

Pending issues

21. At its 29th Session, GFCM further acknowledged the need to identify technical measures for the management of swordfish fisheries and recommended that Member favour, as a priority, the collection of all available data on the fisheries and on the biology of this species⁶. Referring to paragraph 19 above and bearing in mind that Recommendation GFCM/2005/3(A) endorsed Recommendation [03-04] by ICCAT relating to Mediterranean Swordfish⁷, SAC may wish to consider identifying specific initiative for the reduction of the mortality of juvenile swordfish. 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 small tunas, billfish and albacore⁸.

22. With reference to Recommendation GFCM/2005/1 on the management of certain fisheries exploiting demersal and deepwater species, it should be noted that the SCMEE reviewed the situation of research on Mediterranean deep-sea fisheries, including investigations on the use of different gear types in selected locations.

23. With reference to Recommendation GFCM/2005/2 on the establishment of a record of fishing vessels over 15 metres in length authorized to operate in the GFCM Area⁹, it could be noted that follow-up action by SCSI and by the Secretariat through the MedFisis project is enclosed respectively in documents SAC8/2005/Dma.2 and SAC8/2005/3.

24. The Agenda of each Sub-committee comprised this year the selection of respective Coordinators for the period 2006-2008. SCSA and SCSI agreed on the re-conduction for another term of the current Coordinator. SCESS and SCMEE were not in a position to identify a suitable volunteer for this charge. SAC may wish to provide guidance on how to cope with this situation.

III. SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE

25. The Committee is invited to review and discuss the intersessional activities of its subsidiary bodies, especially in relation with their *modus operandi* and the need to further promote coordination of inputs and the production of integrated scientific and technical advice.

26. The Committee is also invited to provide guidance on pending issues highlighted above, as well as on the suggestions emanating from the CMSC and from the Workshop on Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries.

⁴ Also in Report of the 3rd Meeting of the Joint GFCM/ICCAT Working Group, Annex 1 (document SAC8/2005/Dma.5)

⁵ Report of the 29th Session, Appendix G

⁶ Report of the 29th Session, paragraph 90.

⁷ Report of the 29th Session, Appendix G

⁸ See Report of the 7th Session of SAC, paragraphs 52 and 53.

⁹ Report of the 29th Session, Appendix G.

APPENDIX 1 Meetings of SAC subsidiaries

	Title	Date (2005)	Place	Coordinator/ Facilitator	Experts¹⁰/Country Participation
Stock Assessment (SCSA)	Annual Session, including Working Group on Demersal Species and Working Group on Small Pelagic Species	26-30 September	Rome, Italy	C.Karlou-Riga	39 / 8
	Workshop on Gear Selectivity	9-11 February	Sète, France	J. Sachi	27 / 9
	Permanent Working group on Stock Assessment Methodologies	14-18 November	Istanbul, Turkey	TBD	N/A
Statistics and Information (SCSI)	Annual session	27-30 September	Rome, Italy	M. Camilleri	19 / 6
	Transversal Workshop on Statistical Framework and Data bases	26 September		M. Camilleri	13 / 6
	Transversal Working Group on Operational Units and Workshop on Measurement of Fishing Effort	4-6 July	Tangiers, Morocco	M. Camilleri	19 / 6
Economic and Social Sciences (SCESS)	Annual Session	27-30 September	Rome, Italy	M. I. Malouli	6 / 4
Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE)	Annual Session	27-30 September	Rome, Italy	A. Garcia	11 / 7

¹⁰ GFCM Secretariat and FAO regional projects staff excluded.

Meetings of the Scientific Advisory Committee

Title	Date	Place	Coordinator/ Facilitator
Eighth Session	25-28 October	Tirana, Albania	C. Piccinetti
3rd Joint GFCM/ICCAT Working Group on Sustainable Tuna Farming	16-18 March	Rome, Italy	V.Restrepo/A. Lovatelli
Transversal SCMEE/SCSA/SCSS Workshop on Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries	7-9 September	Salammbô, Tunisia	G.Le Corre/G.Bianchi and T.Bahri
Coordination of the four Sub-Committees (CMSC)	24 October	Tirana, Albania	C. Piccinetti

APPENDIX 2

Terms of reference of the Coordinating Meeting of the Sub-Committees (CMSC) and of the Coordinators of the Sub-Committees

1. Membership and *Modus operandi* of the CMSC

The CMSC will comprise the Chair and the two Vice-Chairpersons of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), the Executive Secretary and the Deputy Executive Secretary of GFCM, the Coordinators of the Sub-Committees (SCSA, SCESS, SCIS and SCMEE) and the Coordinator(s) of cross-sectoral Working Groups¹¹.

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

2. CMSC Mandate

- Propose and/or update elements of the Reference Framework for the mandate of SAC for the intersessional period and plan the distribution of activities among Sub-Committees;
- promote the organization of and the participation in interdisciplinary or cross-sectional working groups answering directly to SAC;
- examine the reports of the interdisciplinary or cross-sectional working groups and Sub-Committees and prepare proposals for an integrated Programme of Work of SAC;
- collate draft recommendations of subsidiary bodies and formulate, as appropriate, multidisciplinary advice on fisheries management for examination by SAC;
- 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 SAC or approved by consensus by the members of the CMSC.

3. Mandate of the Coordinators of the Sub-Committees

- Maintain an updated list of the National Focal Points and experts participating in related networks, providing full contact details, and ensure the distribution of related information;

¹¹ “Cross sectoral” or “Transversal” ad hoc Working Groups are those Working Groups reporting directly to SAC, such as the Joint GFCM/ICCAT Working Group on Large Pelagic Species or Working groups of common interest placed under the leadership of one particular Sub-committee.

- encourage the participation of experts in Sub-Committee activities and their scientific and technical contributions;
- organize, in close liaison with the CMSC, the activities of the Sub-Committee in such a way that issues raised by GFCM and/or SAC are addressed;
- coordinate intersessional activities, notably the organization of Sub-Committee meetings and, as appropriate, in collaboration with the facilitator, those of the Working group(s), including preparation of the annotated provisional agenda and/or terms of reference;
- supervise the drafting of meeting reports, including the presentation of attached appendixes/reference documents;
- liaise with scientific and technical bodies of other international/regional organizations dealing with topics of common interest;
- represent the Sub-Committee at meetings of the CMSC , in particular for preparing work and advice for SAC.

APPENDIX 3

Terms of Reference for the Permanent working group for Stock Assessment Methodology

The mandate of this Permanent working group is to develop the point of the ToR of the SCSA: “Review and analyze the assessment methods and propose the most appropriate ones”. According to this SC proposes the following ToRs:

- Use of different methods (e.g. biomass dynamic models) to produce assessments using the data obtained in the trawl surveys carried out in the Mediterranean,
- Compare the VPA, echo surveys and DEPM applied to the small pelagics and analyse their reliability and usefulness to assess these resources.
- Explore the reliability and applicability of ecological and bioeconomic models, in particular those that have already been applied in Mediterranean fisheries.
- Study the possibility of fixing the stock assessment parameters for the main species in the same area.

APPENDIX 4

Revised Terms of reference for the Joint GFCM/ICCAT Working group on Large Pelagic Species in the Mediterranean

1. Mandate

The Joint *ad hoc* GFCM/ICCAT Working Group on Large Pelagic Species in the Mediterranean was established in 1993. Its mandate needs to be updated and amended so as to reflect the various thematic dimension of the management of Tuna and tuna like species in the Mediterranean, the Black Sea and connecting waters, especially to ensure the provision of biological, social and economic and environmental information and independent advice thereon in accordance to the function of each Commission, respectively through the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and to the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).

It is suggested to upgrade the Joint *ad hoc* Working group as a Permanent GFCM/ICCAT Joint Working Group on Large Pelagic Species in the Mediterranean with the following broad mandate.

The mandate of the Permanent working group shall cover all technical and scientific aspects related to research on and management of fisheries catching large pelagic species in the Mediterranean, with inputs other relevant subsidiary bodies of GFCM/SAC and ICCAT/SCRS, as appropriate. It shall, in particular,

- assess and analyse data and information provided by Members and by the relevant fisheries organizations, programmes and projects on catch and efforts as well as on related biological, socio-economic and environmental parameters relevant to the conservation and management of large pelagic species, including stock assessments, ecosystem trends, environmental conditions and socio-economic performance of the fisheries concerned;
- collect and analyse fleet statistics in the format and following the agreed criteria relative to the Vessel Registers of the parent bodies;
- analyse the results of intersessional works and formulate preliminary advice and options on the conservation and management of large pelagic fisheries in the Mediterranean for further review and assesment by the SAC and the SCRS;
- identify cooperative research programmes and monitor their implementation;
- carry out such other activities as may be requested by the GFCM or ICCAT.

2. *Modus operandi*

The Permanent Working Group (PGW) shall carry its duty in conformity with the relevant provision of the Rules of Procedure, respectively of GFCM and ICCAT. It shall, in particular:

- be convened on an *ad hoc* basis, jointly by the Secretariat of each parent organizations (one convener be appointed by the GFCM Secretariat and one be appointed by the ICCAT Secretariat) on request of one of the Commission and upon acknowledgement of the other parent bodies;

- elect its Chairperson among the participants at each meeting;
- prepare draft terms of reference of its proposed next meeting for review and possible endorsement by SAC and/or SCRS. When approved, the co-Conveners will refine the terms of reference for the meeting and develop a provisional agenda accordingly, following GFCM and ICCAT mechanisms for internal consultation.

Both Secretariats should ensure announcement of the meetings to their respective constituents. The Reports of the PGW shall be published independently by both organizations.

Members have an obligation to provide information on catch and efforts, operational units and other relevant data and information related to the mandate of this Permanent Working Group in such a way as to enable it to fulfil its function and responsibilities.

Any advice, draft recommendation or resolution prepared by the Permanent Working Group shall be subject to the formal endorsement of the Commission wishing to implement such a measure.

Any costs incurred by the activities of this PWG which are beyond the regular budget of either Commission shall be subject to the approval of each Commission.