

THE GFCM AGREEMENT AND MEMBERSHIP

The GFCM Agreement, was approved by the FAO Conference in 1949, under the provisions of Article XIV of the FAO constitution, and entered into force in 1952. (Amendments in 1963, 1976 and 1997).

The amendments related to the obligation of Contracting Parties to contribute to an autonomous budget for the functioning of the Commission came into force on 29 April 2004.

Membership is open to Members of the United Nations, especially coastal States, States whose vessels engage in fishing in the Convention Area as well as to Regional Economic Integration Organizations.

The GFCM is currently made up of 24 Members: 22 Mediterranean and Black Sea coastal States countries, 1 non-Mediterranean State and the European Community.

CONVENTION AREA

Mediterranean, Black Sea and connecting waters.



OBJECTIVES AND FUNCTIONS

The GFCM's objectives are to promote the following, in the Mediterranean, Black Sea and connecting waters:

- development, conservation, rational management of living marine resources;
- best utilization of living marine resources;
- sustainable development of aquaculture.

The principal functions of the GFCM are:

- to coordinate efforts by governments to effectively manage fisheries at regional level following the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries;
- to adopt binding recommendations for fisheries conservation and management in its Convention Area;
- to strengthen fisheries governance in the Region;
- cooperate with other Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) in matters of mutual interest.

STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING

The Commission holds its Regular Session on an annual basis. It implements its policy and activities through the Secretariat,

based at its headquarters in Rome, Italy, and operates during the intersessional period by means of the following committees:

- the **Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC)**
Provides independent advice on the conservation and management of fisheries, considering biological, ecological, economic and social aspects.
- the **Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ)**
Monitors trends, promotes sustainable development and responsible management of marine and brackish water Aquaculture and provides related independent advice on technical, socio-economic, legal and environmental grounds.
- the **Compliance Committee (CoC)**
Reviews the compliance with conservation, management, monitoring, control, surveillance and enforcement measures adopted by the Commission, oversees the development and implementation of the GFCM Control and Inspection scheme and reviews issues such as IUU fishing in the Convention Area.
- subsidiary bodies of SAC, CAQ and CoC
- other temporary, special or standing committees and working parties

PROJECTS

The GFCM enjoys the support of cooperative projects executed by FAO at sub-regional and regional level which enhance, in particular, scientific fishery cooperation and capacity building in participating countries in line with GFCM priorities and strategies.



Other cooperative projects in the field of aquaculture are executed by the Secretariat.

AFFILIATIONS AND PARTNERS

GFCM is a partner of the Fishery Resources Monitoring System and a member of the FAO Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics. It has 14 partner Organisations, which include IGOs, NGOs, other RFMOs, Federations of professionals, International Institutes, Scientific Bodies and Regional Centres.

CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The GFCM's fisheries conservation and management strategy focuses on a fishing effort control regime by Operational Units, defined as "groups of fishing vessels practicing the same type of fishing operation, targeting the same species or group of species and having a similar economic structure".

The GFCM implements this strategy through drawing up binding measures related to the regulation of:

- fishing methods
- fishing seasons
- fishing gear
- fishing restricted areas
- minimum landing sizes
- catch and fishing effort

The GFCM fosters the responsible management of marine and brackish water aquaculture through the adaptation of international common standards, norms and guidelines.

GEOGRAPHICAL SUB-AREAS

The GFCM endeavours to compile data, monitor fisheries and assess fisheries resources in a geo-referenced manner, through the use of 30 established Geographical Sub-Areas (GSAs).



MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF RESOURCES

GFCM's priority is to assess stocks of living marine resources which are exploited by more than one of its Members, in one or more GSAs. 38 shared stocks have so far been identified and the GFCM holds a database on data related to stock assessments submitted through the compilation of standard forms by the respective national scientists. The results of stock assessments are used in drawing up integrated management advice with conservation, economic and social considerations.

The importance of incorporating ecosystem objectives into the management of sustainable marine fisheries is being promoted by the GFCM through:

- the use of indicators, performance measures and target and limit reference points for fisheries ecosystem management objectives;
- the use of marine protected areas in combination with management tools and measures to achieve sustainable fisheries and marine ecosystems.

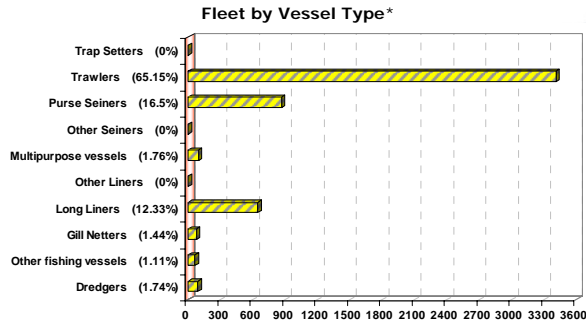
The GFCM considers the use of indicators and reference points for the sustainable management of fisheries in the Mediterranean to be vital and thus further promotes:

- the establishment of reference points to be used for a) monitoring b) management implementation and c) determination of the state of stock or "restoration";
- the identification of specific reference points, understood by all stakeholders, for each fishery or Operational Unit. Indicators for reference points are obtained through catch assessment surveys and direct methods used in estimating the biomass of fish assemblages.

DATA AND INFORMATION FRAMEWORK

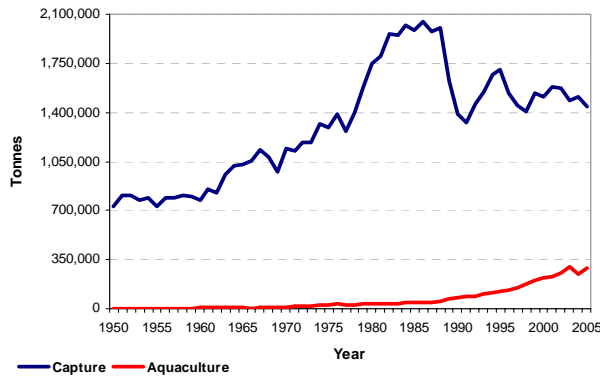
■ Authorised Vessel List (Rec. GFCM/2005/2)

Annual reporting of data on fishing vessels larger than 15 meters in length overall authorized to fish in the GFCM Area. An electronic record is maintained by the GFCM Secretariat.



*data from 16 out of 23 member countries (as at 14th February 2008)

■ Capture and aquaculture production (FAO FISHSTAT framework)



Mediterranean Fisheries and Aquaculture marine production (1950-2005)

Data source: FAO-Fisheries and Aquaculture Information and Statistics Service

■ Task 1 – Operational Units data collection framework (Rec. GFCM31/2007/1)

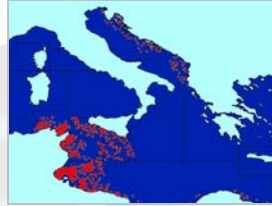
- Fleet data
- Fishing activity data
- Catch and effort data
- Socio-economic data
- Biological data

■ SIPAM - Aquaculture Information System and Network



■ Other information systems

Scientific data generated by sub-regional projects and other regional initiatives.



◀ Geographical coverage of scientific survey data

(source: MedSudMed - Fishery and Ecosystem Information System)

MEDSTAT

MedStat is an *Adaptive Approach For The Improvement Of Fishery Statistical Systems In Mediterranean Countries*. It is being implemented through the FAO Mediterranean projects and the GFCM, helping countries to develop their national fishery statistical systems, thus enabling them to better manage the sustainable development of their fisheries. In parallel, it helps create an internationally compatible system, serving as a vital tool for GFCM to monitor the state of fisheries resources and the well-being of the whole ecosystem in the Mediterranean with the additional help of other resources management tools.

RESOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recent GFCM Resolutions and Recommendations include those on:

- the management of certain fisheries exploiting demersal and deepwater pelagic species;
- the establishment of a GFCM record of vessels over 15 metres authorized to operate in the GFCM area;
- the establishment of a closed season for the dolphinfish fisheries using fishing aggregation devices (FADs);
- the establishment of fisheries restrictive areas in order to protect the deep sea sensitive habitats;
- the establishment of a list of vessels presumed to have carried out IUU fishing activities in the GFCM area;
- the implementation of GFCM Task 1 Statistical Matrix;
- the establishment of Geographical Sub-Areas in the GFCM Area;
- the use of the 40 mm square mesh size in codend of trawl nets exploiting demersal resources;
- the mesh size of trawl nets exploiting demersal resources;
- the Pelagos Sanctuary for the Conservation of Marine Mammals.

**General Fisheries Commission
for the Mediterranean**
**Commission Générale des Pêches
pour la Méditerranée**
**Comisión General de Pesca
para el Mediterráneo**
الهيئة العامة لمصايد أسماك البحر المتوسط



Headquarters Rome, Italy

Languages Arabic, English, French, Spanish

24 Members Albania, Algeria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, European Community, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey



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