



WESTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC FISHERY COMMISSION Tenth Session
WECAFC LESSER ANTILLES FISHERIES COMMITTEE Seventh Session
Bridgetown, Barbados, 24-27 October 2001
DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME OF WECAFC, 2002-03

I. Introduction

1. The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) was established in 1973 by Resolution 4/61 of the FAO Council under Article 6 of the FAO Constitution in the light of the challenges faced by the fishing nations operating in the area. The purpose of the Commission was to assist in international cooperation efforts for the conservation, development and utilisation of living resources, especially shrimp, of the Western Central Atlantic.
2. WECAFC has contributed significantly to fisheries management and development in the region. For example, important contributions were made to fisheries management through the work of the Working Parties on Assessment of Marine Fishery Resources, on Fisheries Statistics, and on Economics and Planning. Significant contributions were made also by the Groups on Shrimp and Groundfish and on Spiny Lobster. Expert consultations were held on specific subjects such as shared resources in the Lesser Antilles; the use of micro-computers in fisheries; the use of length-based stock assessment methods; and sustainable fisheries development in the WECAFC region. These activities produced a substantial body of literature on fisheries management and conservation in the region. In addition, the Lesser Antilles Committee provided a forum for articulating the special needs of these small island states.
3. The Commission also contributed to human resource development and the strengthening of national institutional capacity through training courses in specific subjects such as tropical fish stock assessment and HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point).
4. The level of WECAFC activities has diminished recently for a number of reasons, one being the failure to secure funding for a follow-on project to the WECAFC project on its completion in 1981. Another has been the bilateral channeling of technical assistance funds that have previously been channeled multilaterally, in preference to FAO. Also, during this period, member countries of WECAFC appeared instead to focus their attention on consolidating their national and sub-regional capacity (OLDEPESCA, OECS, CARICOM, OSPESCA) in light of the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention.
5. Recent international agreements such as the 1993 Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas (Compliance Agreement), the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United

Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 Relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (1995 UN Agreement on High Seas Fishery), and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, have all stressed the need for international co-operation among states through organisations at sub-regional, regional, and global levels, for the conservation, management and utilisation of living aquatic resources. These developments have generated renewed interest in collaboration at the regional level.

6. All the recent agreements emphasise a need for collaboration and co-operation in the management of shared, straddling and highly migratory stocks. Where only a few countries are involved, they are required to identify or establish an organisation to undertake management, and to participate in the activities of that organisation. Failure to participate does not absolve a country of its responsibility to abide by the decisions of the organisation.

II. Ninth Session of the Commission

7. With respect to the future role of the Commission, the Ninth Session of the Commission, Saint Lucia, September 1999, agreed that:

- a regional approach to management of many of the region's fisheries was a feasible arrangement for achieving sustainable fisheries in the region, and that WECAFC is in a unique position to serve as an umbrella organisation for this purpose.
- regional technical cooperation was a crucial element if members were to benefit from the current globalisation process within the context of clearly defined national and regional objectives for sustainable development and responsible fisheries management.
- in order to enhance the effectiveness in providing fisheries management advice, it needed to:
 - Limit its activities to few key areas supported by its Members;
 - Strengthen partnership arrangements with other regional and international organisations and donors;
 - Ensure that the programmes of action were more specific and pragmatic with clear objectives, taking into account, the needs of the Members and their capacities to realise such activities;
 - Develop national and regional capacity in international fisheries management, negotiations and conflict resolutions;
 - Improve communication among the agencies involved in fisheries in the region with a view to encouraging complementarity and avoiding overlapping;
 - Provide avenues for other regional fishery bodies working in the area to report on their activities to the Commission;
 - Intensify efforts in undertaking joint activities and actions, in particular through networking arrangements; and
 - Increase its efforts in seeking external funding and sharing the costs of inter-sessional activities.
- responsible fisheries management requires regional and sub-regional cooperation through working groups for the application of the precautionary approach to fisheries of the WECAFC region and recommended that the following *ad hoc* working groups should continue their activities:
 - *Ad hoc* Working Group on Shrimp and Ground Fish Resources in the Brazil-Guianas Shelf;
 - *Ad hoc* Working Group on Spiny Lobster, *Panulirus argus*; and
 - *Ad hoc* Working Group on Flying Fish.

8. The Ninth Session of the Commission, Saint Lucia, September 1999, unanimously expressed strong support for WECAFC and recommended that it be maintained under Article VI of the FAO

Constitution. The Commission requested FAO to maintain its support to WECAFC, at least at the present level.

9. The Ninth Session of WECAFC also agreed that in view of existing constraints, the Commission should have a simple structure consisting of the Secretariat, a Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) which will act as advisory body to the Commission and *ad hoc* working groups with clearly defined Terms of Reference and time bound clauses, established as and when required.
10. Although there are constraints, especially financial, WECAFC continues to provide technical assistance and advice despite its limited capacity and has made good use of the opportunities for technical assistance provided by FAO to the region.
11. The Secretariat of the Commission is now based in the region, at the FAO Sub-Regional Office in Barbados. Current FAO support to the Commission includes the Secretariat, the Secretary of the Commission, a part-time (30%) stock assessment specialist, a part-time (30%) fishery economist, a part-time fisheries officer, a secretary, *ad hoc* technical support from FAO Fisheries Department, the FAO library documentation services, support of FAO network and contacts, and FAO communications infrastructure and network.

III. Draft Work Programme

12. The work of the Commission (refer to documents WECAFC/X/01/5 and 6) over the last biennium (2000-2001) was carried out with the financial support of FAO Regular Programme Budget and extra-budgetary support from the global project GCP/INT/648/NOR – Assistance to Developing Countries for the Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries in Fisheries Monitoring, Control and Surveillance and Improving the Provision of Scientific Advice for Fisheries Management (FISHCODE). Phase I of FISHCODE was successfully completed in 2001 and it is hoped that a Phase II will be funded by the Government of Norway.
13. The draft work programme for the Commission for the next biennium (2002-2003) and potential sources of funding are found in Table 1.
14. It should be pointed out that participating countries in the *ad hoc* working groups on the Caribbean Spiny Lobster and shrimp and groundfish resources on the Brazil-Guianas Shelf have agreed, in principle, to contribute financially the work of these groups. It is anticipated that the Tenth Session of WECAFC would agree on a formula to determine the amount. This formula should be applicable to other working groups as well.

IV. Suggested Action by the Commission

15. The Commission is invited to review the proposed work programme for the 2002-03 biennium. In its review, the members are requested to take into account the limited resources (financial and human) available to the WECAFC Secretariat and the zero growth in the FAO Regular Programme Budget adopted at the 120th Session of the Council, July 2001. The WECAFC Secretariat depends on the FAO Regular Programme Budget for its running costs and for support services.

Table 1. Draft Work Programme of WECAFC, 2002-03 (subject to obtaining the required funding for FishCode Phase II).

A. Brazil-Guianas Shrimp and Groundfish (Brazil, French Guiana, Guyana, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela)		
Activity	Time	Potential Funding
A1. Second Round of National Workshops	Early 2002	FISHCODE, PC, RP
A2. Electronic Assessment and Management Workshop	Early 2002	FISHCODE, PC, RP
A3. Fishery Assessment and Management Workshop for developing/refining management plans for different species and fisheries	Late 2002	FISHCODE, PC, RP
A4. Managers Workshop on fisheries management MCS and legal matters to promote activities and cooperation in all fisheries including sub-regional red-snapper fishery	2003	FISHCODE, PC, RP
B. Caribbean Spiny Lobster (Bahamas, Belize, Bermuda, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Saint Lucia, USA, Venezuela)		
B1. Electronic (e-mail) assistance by consultants to update stocks assessments	2002-03	FISHCODE, MC, RP
B2. Third Assessment and Management Workshop on developing/refining management plans for each country	2003	FISHCODE, MC, RP
C. Facilitating Responsible Fisheries Management in Central America (Panama, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Belize, Mexico, El Salvador, Costa Rica)		
C1. Scoping Mission – identify local participants, review important fisheries and discuss project objectives and activities	2002	FISHCODE, PC, RP
C2. Evaluation of data availability, initial estimates of status of stocks, including training in stock assessment and recommendations for formulation of management plans	2003	FISHCODE, PC, RP
D. Capacity Building in FlyingFish Working Group (Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago)		
Activity	Time	Potential Funding
D1. Assessment and Management Workshop – Preparation of Regional Management Programme	2002	FISHCODE, PC, RP
D2. Meeting of Managers and Ministers to discuss regional programme	2003	FISHCODE, PC, RP

E. Co-ordination and Liaison		
E1. Eleventh Session of the Commission	September, 2003	RP, MC
E2. Second Meeting of the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG)	April, 2003	RP
E3. Liaison with regional and international agencies. Representation at meetings	N/A	RP
E4. Support to <i>ad hoc</i> Working Group on Fish Attracting Devices (Co-ordinated by IFREMER – Martinique)	N/A	RP
E5. Support to International Queen Conch Initiative and Working Group (Co-ordinated by CFMC)	N/A	RP

Legend: FISHCODE – FISHCODE Phase II;
 MC – Member Countries;
 N/A – not applicable;
 PC – Participating Countries;
 RP – FAO Regular Programme Budget