

July 2022

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Food
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Продовольственная и
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организация
Объединенных
Наций

Organización
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WESTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC FISHERY COMMISSION (WECAFC)

EIGHTEENTH (VIRTUAL) SESSION

Managua, Nicaragua, 26-29 July 2022

Summary of the report of the Eleventh Session of the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) meeting held during the intersessional period- SAG XI (virtual meeting 25-27 April 2022)

This document presents a summary of the Eleventh Session of SAG held 25-27 April, 2022 attended by more than 30 observers, conveners of 11 ad hoc working groups and SAG members. The purpose of this report is to provide the Commission's 18th session (WECAFC18) participants an overview of key topics that the Scientific Advisory Group reviewed, based on the work done by the WECAFC partners, the several regional projects, Working Groups and subject experts.

Suggested action by the Commission

1. The Commission is invited to review, amend as appropriate, and endorse the report. Particularly, the Commission is requested to provide guidance with regard to issues discussed during the session.
2. The Commission is requested to endorse the recommendations

I. ISSUES COVERED IN SELECTED PAPERS

1. **In 2020, landings of marine fisheries in the Western Central Atlantic (FAO fishing area 31)** were 1.25 million tonnes, following a declining trend since 2016 and well below the maximum of 2.5 million tonnes reported in 1984. The WECAFC region accounts for approximately 1.4 percent of total world capture fisheries however a substantial amount of underreporting of catches must be considered.
2. **SAG XI reviewed again the state of fisheries in the region** with the following results: based on information of 43 species and species groups representing approximately 66% of the total reported landings regionally, as of 2020 it is estimated that the status of populations of the Western Central Atlantic (FAO Area 31) is that 21% were overfished representing an increase in overfishing since the previous report (12%). It was estimated that 60% of the stocks are fully fished and the status of 19 % of the stocks was unknown.
3. As at the 9th session, SAG expressed concerns regarding the geographical coverage of the review, which does not include FAO statistical area 41, and particularly waters under Brazilian jurisdiction, which are under WECAFC competency. Further SAG noted the need to differentiate between industrial and artisanal capacities when estimating national fleet capacity. SAG highlighted the improvements in the information available on the state of fisheries since SAG 9, and further noted the continued need for disaggregated data geographically and to obtain official statistics for Area 41. Further, Members were encouraged to report data annually in order to reduce carry-over estimates. SAG noted that the importance of recreational fisheries in the region was increasing and also emphasized the need for more information, particularly on the socio-economic aspects of these fisheries.
4. **Progress achieved on the development of the Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) and the regional database (RDB, WECAFIS)** It was shared that significant progress had been made on the DCRF since SAG IX and X and WECAFC 17 (July 2019) at which it was endorsed as an Interim DCRF (iDCRF). New developments were more advanced and the final v0.8 structure was more tailored to facilitate members' data collection capacities and re-organization of species lists in alignment with WECAFC mandates, and subsequent endorsement by the Second meeting of the Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group (FDS-WG 2) in March 2022. A fully functioning RDB now exists and on-going data preparatory workshops were convened in 2021 towards operationalizing the iDCRF and progressing FIRMS (Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System) Inventories of stocks and fisheries (<http://firms.fao.org/firms/search/institution/wecafc/en>). Mobilization of additional resources is underway towards furthering the operationalization of the DCRF within Member countries.
5. **SAG reviewed the content presented in the review of “The biological data, the stocks spatial distribution, and the ecological connectivity between the areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) and the exclusive economic zones (EEZs) in the WECAFC region”**, to better understand the connectivities of these important resources between the ABNJ and national EEZs and towards harmonizing management across the primary management bodies in the region (COPACO, CRFM, OSPESCA, COPPESAALC, CFMC). SAG supported the continued research as initiated in this study towards better informing these important issues on biological and ecological connectivities of the marine resources in the WECAFC region.
6. **SAG considered the study on “Health and safety in the dive fisheries of key species in the WECAFC region**. SAG noted the importance of continued research on this topic, particularly to other countries other than the eight included in this study in the context of the general lack of information.

II. Management Plans and Regional Plans of Actions and Strategies

7. **SAG XI considered the a) Draft Caribbean Regional Management Plan for the Moored Fish Aggregating Devices Fishery, b) the WECAFC guide for improved monitoring MFAD catches** and improved assessment of MFAD impact on stocks. SAG noted that the management plan was comprehensive but noted the need for an overall summary particularly to facilitate managers understanding of key points and priorities of various actions of the plan and timelines. The authors provided SAG with updated information after the meeting, including an Executive Summary and SAG endorsed the added content. SAG and observers at the meeting noted the need for the monitoring guide to include data collection on marine mammals. SAG also requested the monitoring plan provision for validation of the ICT data.
8. **SAG XI reviewed the Draft Regional Fish Spawning Aggregation Fishery Management Plan: Focus on Nassau Grouper and Mutton Snapper (FSAMP)** which incorporates an Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management (EBFM). The plan also prioritized collaborations with fishing communities and harmonization of management actions across Member countries. SAG supported the overall objectives of the Draft Management Plan, further noting the critical need for strong collaborations to accomplish the goals. SAG also noted the difficulties associated with enforcement/monitoring of these fisheries, further noting that co-management should be considered and the implementation plan needs to be adaptive.
9. **SAG XI considered the updated work on the “implementation of the Queen conch regional management and conservation plan”** noting progress on a) data collection, b) informing domestic consumption of queen conch, c) preparation of a CITES resolution for consideration at next CITES session, d) traceability tools, e) improvements to stock assessment modules and f) promotion of decent work, health, and safety in the fisheries sector. The plan highlighted the critical need for Member countries' strong collaborations particularly in the traceability component. SAG endorsed the plan and requested the WG revise bullet 4 of the recommendation to read “Member states are strongly encouraged to participate in the development of this genetic work”.
10. **SAG XI also considered the Draft Regional Strategy on the management of bycatch and discards in Latin American and Caribbean bottom trawl (shrimp and groundfish) fisheries** and noted the cross-cutting objectives of this strategy with other conservation strategies of the Commission in particular that of the IUU, the Sharks RPOA, the SPAW, and the FAO CLME+ Subproject on shrimps and groundfish of the Great North Brazilian Shelf Ecosystem (NBSL ME) and the Sustainable Bycatch Management Project in Latin America and Caribbean Trawl Fisheries (REBYC-II LAC), the latter project (REBYC-II LAC) now operationally closed. SAG emphasized the need for implementation of national strategies for reducing bycatch and discards in order for a regional plan to be effective.
11. **SAG XI encouraged the continued collaboration across WGs and leveraging of resources across all these projects, finding synergies where appropriate, in particular as related to improving data availability and sharing and increasing capacities analytically, and noted these projects also incorporate the EAFM, a key recommendation of the FAO International Guidelines on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards.**
12. **SAG XI considered the Draft Regional Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks, Rays and Chimaeras** in the WECAFC Area, that included establishing a new task force within the WG in the intersession with the main objective to finalize the RPOA for further consideration by SAG and the Commission. It was noted that until the RPOA was adopted by Members that guidelines of the FAO International Plan of Action (IPOA) for sharks would be followed. SAG noted: 1) that it was not necessary to have a Plan of Action in place before implementing a regional plan and that a possible next step could be a survey to inform what is currently in place at the national levels and what measures would be considered

acceptable, and 3) add common/local names to the RPOA (Appendix 6), and 3) include conservation status (endangered, threatened, protected, etc..) in the RPOA.

III. REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS FOR WECAFC 18

13. **Five recommendations** applicable to the WECAFC area were prepared by the Working Groups and subject experts, which were subsequently reviewed by SAG XI. The synoptic presentation of the recommendations and resolutions is the following.

- **RECOMMENDATION WECAFC/XVIII/2022/1** amendment to Recommendation WECAFC/17/2019/21 “On the sustainability of fisheries using Moored Fish Aggregating Devices (MFADs) in the WECAFC area”.
- **RECOMMENDATION WECAFC/XVIII/2022/2 ON** “fisheries governance, transshipment and information-sharing”.
- **RECOMMENDATION WECAFC/XVIII/2022/3** “on increased efforts in the implementation of the Regional Queen Conch Fishery Management and Conservation Plan in the WECAFC region”.
- **RECOMMENDATION WECAFC/XVIII/2022/4** “CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM-working group on spawning aggregations (SAWG)”
- **RECOMMENDATION WECAFC/XVIII/2022/5 ON** “WECAFC fisheries data, statistics, and information”.

IV. Other emerging and continuing issues of concern

- SAG supports continued research on climate change and sargassum influxes to better identify impacts on small-scale and impacts on coastal communities, to recognize and be responsive to possible opportunities from sargassum influxes, and to strengthen instruments for improving infrastructure and improving resilience of these communities particularly in response to extreme events.
- SAG supports continued studies on and support research on recreational fisheries in the region noting increasing growth of, the significant economic importance these fisheries are to the region, and the general lack of information.
- SAG supports continued studies on the health and safety in dive fisheries including the post-harvest sectors and expand the research in these fisheries to other countries in the region.

V. On the operation of SAG and joint working groups and other matters of interest

14. **SAG 9 requested** that WG conveners participate in-person (or virtually) at SAG sessions to facilitate Members comprehension on matters of substantive importance to WGs (e.g., action items, recommendations). At the 11th SAG session nine of the eleven WGs participated. It was noted that seven of the WGs also met during the intersession and four WGs met twice or more (FDS-WG, QC, SAWG, S & G).

15. **SAG XI noted that three of the WGs did not meet since SAG X** (recreational and the newly established combined flying fish-dolphin fish and the deep sea fisheries).

16. **SAG X requested** WGs to review their Terms of Reference (TORs) in the context of a standardized format template. SAG XI reviewed the revised Tailored TORs as detailed in the full SAG XI report under preparation.
17. **SAG XI recommended** that SAG meet informally during the intersessions with the multiple WGs towards improving overall understanding of the large number of matters of interest to each WG; this is to advance knowledge by the SAG and also to add efficiencies in both SAG and in Commission performance.
18. **SAG XI encouraged** WGs ensure that in the development process of actions/plans and presentations clear formats are used to facilitate clarity and comprehension by managers and to increase efficiencies in the work of SAG.
19. **SAG noted and congratulated the Secretariat on the new website noting in particular the user-friendliess**
20. **SAG also noted the intensive schedule of the Secretariat** and emphasized the continued need for support by the FAO to the Secretariat in relation to the growing number of topics being considered by the Commission.

WESTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC FISHERY COMMISSION (WECAFC)
ELEVENTH (VIRTUAL) SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY GROUP (SAG)
Convened 25-27 April 2022
Recommendations to the 18th session of WECAFC for SAG review [With Revisions on MFADS and Conch WG Recommendations indicated in highlighted text]

The Scientific Advisory Group is invited to review and discuss the following draft recommendations and propose actions for WECAFC and its membership to follow up at the 18th plenary session of the Commission [Highlighted text indicates the two Recommendations the SAG recommended minor textual edits]

1. (DRAFT) RECOMMENDATION WECAFC/XVIII/2022/1 AMENDMENT TO RECOMMENDATION WECAFC/17/2019/21 “ON THE SUSTAINABILITY OF FISHERIES USING MOORED FISH AGGREGATING DEVICES (MFADS) IN THE WECAFC AREA”
2. (DRAFT) RECOMMENDATION WECAFC/XVIII/2022/2 ON “FISHERIES GOVERNANCE, TRANSSHIPMENT AND INFORMATION-SHARING”
3. (DRAFT) RECOMMENDATION WECAFC/XVIII/2022/3 ON “INCREASED EFFORTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL QUEEN CONCH FISHERY MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION PLAN IN THE WECAFC REGION”
4. (DRAFT) RECOMMENDATION WECAFC/XVIII/2022/4 CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM-WORKING GROUP ON SPAWNING AGGREGATIONS (SAWG)
5. (DRAFT) RECOMMENDATION WECAFC/XVIII/2022/5 ON WECAFC FISHERIES DATA, STATISTICS, AND INFORMATION

1. (DRAFT) RECOMMENDATION WECAFC/XVIII/2022/1 AMENDMENT TO RECOMMENDATION WECAFC/17/2019/21 “ON THE SUSTAINABILITY OF FISHERIES USING MOORED FISH AGGREGATING DEVICES (MFADS) IN THE WECAFC AREA”

Cover note

The use of Moored Fish Aggregating Devices (MFADs) to facilitate the capture of large oceanic and coastal pelagics in the WECAFC region has increased over the last three decades. This has been particularly the case in the insular Caribbean, where MFADs are being primarily used to improve the revenue and livelihoods of small-scale fishers and food security. Recent estimates point to 3,600+ MFAD units deployed across the region, mainly privately owned by fishers, which are being used by 6,200+ fishers and 2,700+ fishing vessels for commercial and/or subsistence purposes¹. However, the use of MFADs remains largely unregulated across the region, raising challenges in governance and prompting concerns about their impacts on fish stocks and the ecosystem². Challenges in governance include lack of adequate MFAD regulatory frameworks and management plans, potentially leading to conflicts among MFAD users and to the dilution of economic benefits through excessive multiplication of MFADs. Concerns about MFAD impacts on stocks include lack of catch and effort and biological data, disproportionate catches of juvenile tuna and target species considered overexploited (e.g. blue marlin), and the fact that catch per unit effort on MFADs is not a reliable index of stock abundance. Concerns about MFAD impacts on ecosystems include potential accumulation of non-biodegradable marine debris due to MFAD losses and potential incidental entanglement of marine animals.

In response to such concerns, the WECAFC ad hoc Working Group on the Development of Sustainable Development of MFAD fishing in the Lesser Antilles was established in Martinique in 8-10 October 2001 with the main goal of increasing the exchange of information, practices and experiences across the region in the management and exploitation of large pelagics using MFADs.

The second Working Group meeting took place in Guadeloupe in 5-10 July 2004, during which IFREMER shared the results of the DOLPHIN project that described fish aggregations around MFADs in the French Antilles. This meeting led to the later execution of the MAGDELESA project by IFREMER between 2011 and 2014, which generated considerable new knowledge on the MFAD fishery.

Around that same period (2010-2012), JICA and CRFM joined forces to execute a pilot project "*Formulation of a Master Plan on sustainable use of fisheries resources for coastal community development in the Caribbean*" in St Lucia and Dominica. This project sought to build capacity to manage large pelagics fished on MFADs and increase MFAD productivity by focusing on technical aspects of MFAD design, construction, deployment and maintenance. It also promoted a co-management approach to fisheries in which fishers were expected to increase their participation and responsibility in decision making and provision of fisheries data.

In 2012, during the 14th WECAFC Session Commission in Panama, the decision was made to continue with the Working Group as a Joint Working Group with IFREMER. In 2013, the experience of the JICA-CRFM pilot project led to the execution of the JICA-CRFM Caribbean Fisheries Co-Management (CARIFICO) Project, which over a five-year period sought to further support the development a co-management approach to MFAD fisheries in Dominica, St Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, St Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Grenada. This project contributed to the CRFM-JICA CARIFICO/WECAFC-IFREMER MAGDELESA Workshop on FAD Fishery Management in St Vincent in 9-11 December 2013, where it was proposed that the

¹ Draft Caribbean Regional Management Plan for the Moored Fish Aggregating Device (MFAD) Fishery

Working Group expand to a Joint Working Group with possible participation of JICA, IFREMER, CRFM and WECAFC.

In 2015, recognizing the need for increased coordination, harmonization, and cooperation across the insular Caribbean on MFAD use, the CRFM led the development of a Sub-regional Management Plan for the MFAD fishery for the Eastern Caribbean.

In April 30th -May 2nd 2019, the Joint JICA, IFREMER, CRFM and WECAFC Working Group on MFADs met for the third time in Puerto Rico; its Terms of Reference (ToR), which were formalized during the Seventeenth Session of WECAFC in July15-18 2019, included the review of the CRFM Sub-Regional Management Plan to adapt it to the broader WECAFC region. As such, in 2021, with the support of the GCP/SLC/217/EC project “*Support to the Secretariat of WECAFC in implementing targeted actions of the 2019-2020 Workplan on improved regional fisheries governance*”, the WECAFC Secretariat coordinated the drafting of the Regional MFAD fishery Management Plan.

Of further relevance, in April 2017, the ICCAT-IATTC-IOTC Joint Tuna-RFMO FAD Working Group met in Madrid and provided significant technological and scientific insights on the use of FADs in tuna fisheries. In June 2020 ICCAT’s 19-02 recommendation entered into force, which amended the Recommendation on a Multi-annual Conservation and Management Program for Bigeye and Yellowfin unas, and which binds a number of WECAFC and CRFM members in terms of FAD fisheries by industrial fleets catching these tunas.

WECAFC Members recognize that the implementation of adequate MFAD regulation is necessary for sustainable management of the fish stocks and that this should lead to increased employment opportunities and income for their fishing industry and local communities and to better social outcomes by reducing conflicts, improving equity in access to pelagic resources, and safety at sea.

Reaffirming the need for further action by all interested parties to ensure the long-term sustainable use and management of the offshore pelagic fisheries resources in the region based on an ecosystem approach to fisheries that considers proper dimension of regional MFAD fisheries development under conditions of fully utilized resources availability in the WECAFC region, and

Recalling that the objective of the Commission is to promote the effective conservation, management and development of the living marine resources within the area of competence of the Commission, in accordance with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, and address common problems of fisheries management and development faced by WECAFC members, the following guidance is provided to the Commission.

1. Fisheries governance

RECOGNIZING that sustainable development of MFAD fisheries in the WECAFC area provides new opportunities for income generation, livelihoods, and contributes to food security;

NOTING the issues on access to resources via MFADs fisheries, and property rights claims and disagreements on MFAD aggregated resources;

NOTING that the MFAD fishery in the Lesser Antilles has grown substantially in the last ten years, apparently increasing catches of pelagic species but also catches of vulnerable and already overexploited stocks of species; and adding the need to regulate MFAD numbers and MFAD density to avoid adverse economic consequences;

ACKNOWLEDGING the good efforts of various WECAFC members to license MFADs fishers, prepare legislation for MFAD fishery, ensure disaggregated data collection and analysis in terms of MFAD fishery, encourage best-practice design and training in MFAD construction and use, promote safety-at-sea when fishing

with MFADs, reduce conflicts over the use of MFAD, notify maritime authorities of MFADs locations, establish co-management regimes for MFAD fishery and promoting the proper maintenance of MFADs;

REAFFIRMING also its commitment to promote the use of co-management and other participatory approaches involving all affected parties in the development and implementation of relevant policies and programmes;

RECOGNIZING the significant contribution of the CRFM 2015 Sub-regional Management Plan for FAD Fisheries in the Eastern Caribbean and its integration into WECAFC Caribbean Regional Management Plan for the Moored Fish Aggregating Device (MFAD) Fishery, emphasizing on objectives and works necessary to improve MFAD fisheries management in the Caribbean;

RECOGNIZING the need of implementing WECAFC Regional management plan for FAD fisheries with critical considerations on the status of exploitation of the targeted resources as dictated by ICCAT and CFRM resource assessments;

NOTING the economic impact of natural phenomena, such as strong hurricanes, on the destruction of MFADs and the lack of reporting of MFAD numbers, locations, lifespan and replacement;

NOTING the potential of low-cost Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to improve Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) in the MFAD fishery

ADOPTS in conformity with the provision of Article 6 (h) of the Revised Statutes of the WECAFC the RECOMMENDATION that:

- WECAFC Members prepare (if relevant) national level MFAD fisheries development and MFAD management plans that consider status of exploitation of targeted and bycatch species as determined by ICCAT and CRFM stock assessment results. These national management plans should consider the following practical MFAD management actions;
 1. Strengthen MFAD fisher participation in the management process
 2. Strengthen Fisher Advisory Committees or similar intersectoral coordinating mechanisms
 3. Update legal instruments to support effective (co-)management arrangements and align with best practices
 4. Explore using Territorial Use Rights for Fishing (TURFs) arrangements for improved MFAD governance
 5. Develop, implement, and harmonize local/national adaptive MFAD fishery management plans
 6. Implement MFAD fisher licensing, vessel registry, and MFAD registry systems
 7. Harmonize minimum catch and effort and biological data requirements across the region and integrate national data sets into a regional database
 8. Integrate low-cost Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into the monitoring system
 9. Improve MFAD fisher training
 10. Improve post-harvest and infrastructure support
 11. Improve MFAD designs to minimize marine litter
 12. Explore public-private partnerships (PPP) to support long-term MFAD use that complies with best practices
 13. Integrate local MFAD networks into regional research programs to inform management
- WECAFC Members adopt appropriate legislation in support of a sustainable MFAD fishery adhering to the FAO Code of Conduct if insufficient technical and scientific data are available for proper management of MFADs at this time.
- WECAFC secretariat, CRFM, and OSPESCA, support the regional harmonization of national MFAD technologies and fishing protocols that will secure compatible fishery regulations contained in national

fishery management plans and related legislation, in accordance with the best available information (including scientific evidence and local and traditional knowledge) and consistent with international best practices, and present the progress made to the respective regular sessions of these RFBs.

2. Data collection and information-sharing

NOTING that the exchange of information between researchers, fisheries managers and fishers on MFADs fishery has improved in recent years and needs to be strengthened;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING the need to improve data and information to reduce uncertainties to stock assessment methodologies currently used and to monitor the long-term impacts of these fisheries on the stocks especially recognizing that MFAD catch rates (CPUE) are indicators of biomass aggregation by MFADs, which may not reflect relative abundance of the wild stocks;

NOTING the ongoing effort of the CRFM through its pelagics fisheries Working Group meetings and in collaboration with the CLME+ project, to improve conservation and management of the offshore pelagic resources;

NOTING the concerns of the WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Recreational Fisheries about the billfish stocks in the Caribbean and the untapped value of this resource in terms of catch-and-release fisheries; and considering the noticeable dominance of blue marlin as the most impacted species in MFAD fisheries in the region;

ACKNOWLEDGING the potential of low-cost Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to improve fishery data collection and Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) in the MFAD fishery and the good efforts of various WECAFC members to integrate ICT in their MFAD fisheries

ADOPTS in conformity with the provision of Article 6 (h) of the Revised Statutes of the WECAFC the RECOMMENDATION that:

- WECAFC Members aim to collect and analyze biological, ecological, social and economic data and other scientific literature and information to inform decision making processes on MFAD fisheries;
- WECAFC Members standardize as far as possible MFAD protocols that could generate compatible MFAD fishery statistics using standard terminology (as determined by the Working Group on MFADs) for the different varieties of MFAD fisheries in the WECAFC area and report in an agreed format on their total catch (i.e. landings and discards) and effort data in FAO Area 31 to the Working Group on MFADs in support of ongoing research, decision making and management processes at national and regional level;
- WECAFC members explore integrating the use of ICT systems in their fishery statistic systems to facilitate collection and standardization of catch and effort and biological data and, additionally explore validation methods (e.g., observers, cameras etc.) to validate ICT data.
- WECAFC secretariat, CRFM, and OSPESCA, support a regional MFAD characterization of the impacts and impacts mitigation measures of MFAD fishing in the different regions (within the WECAFC area), and building that regional knowledge into the management decision-making.
- WECAFC support its Members, in the establishment of stakeholder- and public outreach and communication campaigns, in the area including addressing the need to enhance and increase communication of research findings and best practices on MFAD to the fishers and facilitate inputs from stakeholders.

3. Research

CONSIDERING the need to conduct more research related to the potential impact of MFADs on the migration patterns, size/age/sex structures and compositions of stocks, change in yields per recruit and other biological effects due to the conspicuous presence of juvenile tuna species in MFADs, as well as on the currently used concept of CPUE for stock assessment and management purposes, co-management options, social and economic aspects, environmental and climate change, fishing techniques and technologies;

CONSIDERING that species diversity associated with MFADs varies according with regions within the WECAFC area as well as seasonality of the catch rates of target and bycatch species²;

NOTING research efforts on FADs in other regions to generate fishery-independent data to help provide a more reliable picture of the abundance and composition of stocks;

CONSIDERING that high rates of losses of current MFAD designs likely constitute a significant source of marine debris;

NOTING the increasing uncertainty surrounding the question of whether MFADs help reduce fishing pressure on coastal resources;

ADOPTS in conformity with the provision of Article 6 (h) of the Revised Statutes of the WECAFC the RECOMMENDATION that:

- WECAFC members be encouraged to participate in regional research programs to help generate fishery-independent data on key species of interest associated with MFADs;
- WECAFC members be encouraged to partake in research seeking to develop fishing techniques and technologies minimizing impacts on vulnerable and overexploited fish groups;
- WECAFC members be encouraged to partake in research seeking to improve MFAD designs to reduce marine debris, while adhering to minimum standards to reduce entanglement of marine animals;
- WECAFC members be encouraged to partake in research seeing to assess potential links between MFAD fishing and fishing pressure on nearshore/coastal resources.

² Reviewed in CRFM (2015) 2015 Draft Sub-Regional Management Plan for FAD Fisheries in the Eastern Caribbean (Stakeholder Working Document). CRFM Technical & Advisory Document 2015/ 05

2. (DRAFT) RECOMMENDATION WECAFC/XVIII/2022/2 ON “FISHERIES GOVERNANCE, TRANSSHIPMENT AND INFORMATION-SHARING”

Cover note

IUU fishing is considered a major threat to sustainable fisheries management in the Wider Caribbean Region, undermining regional efforts to conserve and manage fish stocks. In 2009, It was estimated that 20–30 percent of total reported catches in the WECAFC area originate from illegal and unreported catches, representing a value of 450 to 750 million USD annually.³

Overall, there has been a general decline in reported fish capture production in the Western Central Atlantic region from the 1980s fisheries production of 2.4 million tonnes to around 1.5 million tonnes in 2016 to date, with the 2015 to 2018 showing an average production of 1.47 million tonnes, live weight⁴. It has been reported that, in this region, the stocks of many shared and highly migratory species continue to be heavily exploited and increasingly targeted for harvest even though they are already depleted well below biomasses that could achieve maximum sustainable yields.

The Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) Ministerial Council, at its 14th Meeting held virtually on 25 June 2020, has expressed concern that depletion of tuna stocks in the other parts of the world can cause the affected fishing fleets to shift their operations to the Western Central Atlantic Ocean, whether legally or illegally.

Given this potential for increased fishing effort by distant water fishing fleets, WECAFC Members need to strengthen their cooperation to promote the effective conservation, management and development of the living marine resources of the area of competence of the Commission, which is the final objective of the organization..

WECAFC Members recognize that the sustainable management of the fish stocks should lead to increased employment opportunities and income for their fishing industry and local communities. WECAFC Members are also cognizant of the positive effects that sound administrative, legal and scientific frameworks bring to the fisheries together with enhanced cooperation between and among Regional Fishery Management Organizations/Regional Fishery Bodies. WECAFC Members note that national administrations need to strike the right balance the resources allocated for access to the fisheries with the resources allocated to fulfil Monitoring Control and Surveillance obligations as part of their flag states’ responsibilities as they are two sides of the same coin.

WECAFC Members should give the due consideration to the possibility of a situation where their fisheries development policies can become stifled and thus lead to IUU fishing by some distant water fishing nations. In this regard, WECAFC is called to play a key role to promote the necessary coordination to address the conservation of the fishery resources.

³ From Draft Recommendation WECAF/17/2018/1 „on the marking and identification of fishing vessels in the WECAFC area“ – as these only available estimates are based on the Agnew et al. 2009 estimates, these estimates could be outdated.

⁴ FAO (2018). Report of the first meeting of the regional working group on illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Bridgetown, Barbados. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report. No. 1190.

Noting that the WECAFC Members are called to promote the effective conservation, management and development of the living marine resources of the area of competence, the CRFM Ministerial Council has opined that WECAFC Member should do what was necessary, including putting in place the requisite legislation and regulation to adequately manage, protect and use the resources available in a sustainable manner.

Following the CRFM Ministerial meeting, the WECAFC Regional Working Group on IUU Fishing (RWG-IUU) met virtually on September 8-9, 2020. Members shared information on progress toward implementation of the WECAFC17 recommendations and discussed WECAFC members' States of readiness to implement the Regional Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing (RPOA-IUU). In light of these discussions and the updated work plan of the RWG-IUU, and mindful that IUU fishing and the often attendant organized crime harms legitimate fishing activities and livelihoods, jeopardizes food and economic security, benefits transnational crime, distorts markets, contributes to human trafficking, and undermines ongoing efforts to implement sustainable fisheries policies, the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC),

1. Fisheries governance

NOTING the current situation with regard to fish stocks status and related management concerns;

NOTING the concern expressed by the CRFM Ministerial Council that depletion of global fish stocks and accompanying fishing effort reductions can cause the affected fishing fleets to shift to the WECAFC region, whether legally or otherwise;

RECALLING the obligations of Member States under:

- a. the CRFM-OSPESCA Joint declaration and action plan (y2012, revised in 2019),
- b. the Castries, St Lucia, Declaration on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (2010),
- c. the Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy (2010),
- d. Resolution WECAFC/15/2014/6 on region-wide support to the implementation of the CRFM “Castries, St Lucia, (2010) Declaration on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing”,
- e. Resolution WECAFC/15/2014/9 “on the implementation of the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) and the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Flag State Performance in the region”;
- f. WECAFC 17 recommendation WECAFC/17/2019/15 “on the monitoring and control of transshipment at sea”;
- g. WECAFC 17 recommendation WECAFC/17/2019/17 “on the marking of fishing gear”; and
- h. the Regional Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing in WECAFC Member Countries (2019-2029) endorsed at WECAFC 17.

REITERATING the importance of strengthening national legislation for effective conservation, management and sustainable utilization of the fisheries resources and related ecosystems, including combatting IUU fishing, to optimize benefits and to effectively discharge responsibilities and obligations under international fisheries management instruments;

ADOPTS in conformity with Article 6 of the WECAFC Revised Statutes this RECOMMENDATION that:

Member States should make the necessary investments in administrative, legal and scientific frameworks in support of meeting international fisheries conservation and management obligations (including RFMO initiatives) as well as implementation of related RFB initiatives;

Member States should develop a strengthened evidence base for fisheries management decision-making, and to develop the capacity to use it skillfully to balance resources allocated for access to new fishing opportunities with their capacity to effectively implement their flag State responsibilities;

The WECAFC Secretariat and the RWG-IUU should develop a report format and process that will allow WECAFC to monitor the progress of implementation of this and all other RWG-IUU recommendations that have been endorsed by WECAFC.

2. Transshipment

RECALLING the Recommendation WECAFC/17/2019/15 supporting developments towards arrangements for an effective system for enhanced surveillance of transshipment operations at sea and enforcement of relevant legislation, including effective information-sharing among WECAFC Members and with other States and international organizations, aimed at strengthening the monitoring, control and surveillance network for fisheries-related activities;

NOTING with concern, that while some countries have transshipment regulations in place, the limited implementation of the regulatory framework addressing transshipment and landing activities in port and at sea can increase the risk of fish and fish products derived from IUU fishing entering the supply chain;

NOTING that the 33rd Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI33) in 2018 expressed concern about transshipment activities and called for an in-depth study to support the development of guidelines on best practices for regulating, monitoring and controlling transshipment which will be presented at COFI 34 (postponed to February 2021);

CONCERNED about evidence that transshipment activities in the Caribbean also support other criminal activities such as smuggling of narcotics and weapons as well as violations of labor laws and human rights;

ADOPTS in conformity with Article 6 of the WECAFC Revised Statutes the RECOMMENDATION that:

WECAFC Members should support the process towards development and implementation of international guidelines on the management (regulation, monitoring and control) of transshipment;

WECAFC Members should seek to develop and effectively implement measures in the WECAFC region consistent with the adopted international guidelines for the effective management (regulation, monitoring and control) of transshipment so as to minimize the risk of fish and fish products derived from IUU fishing entering national and international markets and that this is without prejudice to the existing international obligations applicable to individual WECAFC Members as flag, port, coastal and market States to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing.

3. Information-sharing

NOTING the existing obligation by flag States to exercise effective jurisdiction and control over their vessels;

RECALLING the importance of regional information-sharing and cooperation, especially on the identities and operations of fishing and fishing support vessels operating in the WECAFC region, to support countries in effectively meeting their international responsibilities as flag, port, coastal and market States to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing;

NOTING that the Second Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on Port State Measures (MOP2) requested that: (1) the PSMA Global Information Exchange System (GIES) be operationalized as soon as possible for an effective implementation of the PSMA; (2) that a prototype be prepared for the Third Meeting of the Technical Working Group on Information Exchange (TWG-IE), and that the meeting participants agreed that active participation by States in this initiative can be an important element to maximize the potential of the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (Global Record) to support the functioning of the GIES;

NOTING that several WECAFC Members are Parties to the PSMA and the second meeting of the Parties to the PSMA noted that the effective implementation of the PSMA requires further uptake of the Agreement and called on those that have not yet adhered to the PSMA to do so;

NOTING that WECAFC Members who are already Party to the PSMA should submit to FAO information on their designated ports and national contact points, as per Article 7 and Article 16 (3) of PSMA, while those who are not Party may choose to designate a national contact point and communicate it to FAO for the purposes of exchange of information under the PSMA;

FURTHER NOTING that WECAFC Members that are Parties to the PSMA are to start exchanging daily inspection reports in 2021 with other Parties of the PSMA, and that inspection reports include identity of the vessels inspected (under a foreign flag) and that this identity has to be verified, to the greatest extent possible

NOTING ALSO that a significant portion of the fishing vessels in the region are small-scale fishing vessels with a length overall of less than 12 meters and most catches are taken by a variety of these small-scale vessels;

MINDFUL that IUU fishing and fishing related activities can be carried out by both industrial-scale vessels and the large number of small-scale vessels throughout the region;

NOTING the new developments on the Global Record in order to facilitate multi-tenancy functionality allowing national and regional records to be built from the basis of the Global Record system, adapted to fit the specific requirements of the region at reduced cost and maintenance in comparison to the development of a new system;

FURTHER RECALLING the importance of IMO numbers for the identification of fishing vessels and for identifying IUU fishing activities and for implementing appropriate measures, and that WECAFC Members should ensure that its flagged motorized fishing vessels, refrigerated transport vessels and supply vessels down to a size limit of 12 meters Length Overall (LOA) and authorized to operate outside waters under national jurisdiction, obtain an IMO number and use it as a mark for identification. The IMO number should be marked either on the stern or stern quarter, with the name and port of registry, or on the side of the hull or superstructure.

ADOPTS in conformity with Article 6 of the WECAFC Revised Statutes this RECOMMENDATION that

Member States develop effective mechanisms for information-sharing, consistent with existing approaches, to include fishing vessel related information, such as their beneficial owners, vessel identifiers operations, authorizations, histories, and compliance to improve monitoring, control and surveillance operations, verification of information and risk assessment to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing in the region and beyond; to complement individual WECAFC Members activities such mechanisms should also be built at the regional level.

3. **(DRAFT_ Revised) RECOMMENDATION WECAFC/XVIII/2022/3 ON INCREASED EFFORTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL QUEEN CONCH FISHERY MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION PLAN IN THE WECAFC REGION**

“Managing queen conch fisheries presents a broad range of challenges, including the complex biology of the species, uncertainty of catch and effort data, illegal trade, weak surveillance and enforcement mechanisms, unsustainable fishing practices, and even the frequency of severe dive accidents impacting on the quality of life and living conditions of entire towns. Problems in the fishery are dynamic, adding to the complexity of the issues which fishery sector managers have to face and for which they typically do not have enough human, technical and/or financial resources.⁵” “Queen conch fisheries are believed to be fully developed in most areas, and that the alleged increase in levels of illegal fishing often occurs due to a lack of knowledge, awareness and enforcement.⁶”

The need for coordinated management of the queen conch has long been recognized by fisheries scientists and managers in the Wider Caribbean region. The Regional Queen Conch Fishery Management and Conservation Plan provides a set of management measures that can be applied at the regional or sub-regional level for the sustainability of queen conch populations, the maintenance of a healthy fishery and the sustenance of fishers and fishers’ communities. As the Plan is progressively implemented, improvement in the long-term governance of queen conch fisheries across the Caribbean is expected, as stated in strategy 4B of the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) of the “Sustainable Management of the Shared Marine Resources of the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) and Adjacent Regions.”

The 14 management measures recommended in this Regional Queen Conch Fishery Management and Conservation Plan were analyzed by experts participating in the Second Meeting of the WECAFC/CFMC/OSPESCA/CRFM Working Group, held in Panama from 18 to 20 November 2014. Implementation status of the 14 management measures have been discussed at the Third and Fourth meetings of the CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES Working Group on Queen respectively held in 2018 and 2019. In general, Member States have made improvements in the management of their fisheries at the national levels through implementation of the measures. However, given the differences in scales, gears, products, markets and geographic locations of Member States, harmonization of management measures at the regional level has not occurred yet. The degree of implementation of the Regional Queen Conch Regional Management and Conservation Plan was preliminarily evaluated using quantitative values collected in 2019-2020, and the Working Group found that some progress was made.

To help address the issue of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, it is important to note the management measure for traceability of queen conch throughout the value chain identified in the Regional Queen Conch Management and Conservation Plan. Traceability can be advantageous by helping to ensure that seafood caught by legal versus illegal fishing practices can be distinguished, allowing legally harvested products

⁵ Prada, M. C.; Appeldoorn, R. S.; Van Eijs, S. & Pérez, M. M. 2017. Regional Queen Conch Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No. 610. Rome, FAO. 70 pp.

⁶ Theile, S. 2005. Status of the queen conch, *Strombus gigas* stocks, management and trade in the Caribbean: A CITES review. Proc. Annu. Gulf Caribb. Fish. Inst., 56: 675–694.

to fetch higher prices⁷. This management measure is also aligned with the objectives of the Regional Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing in WECAFC Member Countries (RPOA-IUU) (2019-2029) which are to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing in the area of competence of the WECAFC through effective information-sharing and regional cooperation; and contribute to promoting the effective conservation, management and development of the living marine resources in the WECAFC area, in accordance with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

The Fifth meeting of the CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES Working Group on Queen Conch was held during 13-14 December 2021 in Puerto Rico and online. The purposes of the meeting were to continue monitoring implementation of the Regional Queen Conch Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan, and to discuss implementation of the Recommendations developed by the Working Group and the Scientific, Statistical and Technical Advisory Group (SSTAG), as well as other items for collaboration called for in the Terms of Reference for the Working Group. Meeting participants also discussed the progress of activities as called for in the Work Plan for 2019 – 2021 and the implementation of Recommendation WECAFC/XVII/2019/12 on Improved Compliance with Trade Measures for Queen Conch and Recommendation WECAFC/XVII/2019/13 on Queen Conch Conversion Factor adopted at WECAFC17. An updated Work Plan for 2021-2024 was also developed. The Fifth Meeting of the Working Group agreed that any gaps in implementation of the management measures in the Regional Queen Conch Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan should be addressed and continued monitoring of the implementation status was required. There was also discussion about the ongoing issue of IUU fishing and the possibility of using genetic techniques to determine the origin of queen conch products. The Fifth meeting agreed that the QCWG should liaise with the IUU Working Group to develop a joint recommendation to address IUU fishing in queen conch fisheries in the region.

It is expected that additional human, technical and financial resources will be required by the Member States and the WECAFC Secretariat in order to continue supporting the implementation of the management measures outlined in the Regional Queen Conch Fishery Management and Conservation Plan.

Failing to approve this recommendation will undermine the sustainable management and conservation of the queen conch resource and hinder the development of genetic tools to help combat IUU fishing in the queen conch fishery.

1. Continued support for implementation of the QC regional management and conservation plan

The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC),

RECALLING that the objective of the Commission is to promote the effective conservation, management and development of the living marine resources within the area of competence of the Commission, in accordance with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication and to address common problems of fisheries management and development faced by members of the Commission;

⁷ Prada, M. C.; Appeldoorn, R. S.; Van Eijs, S. & Pérez, M. M. 2017. Regional Queen Conch Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No. 610. Rome, FAO. 70 pp.

RECALLING the establishment of the WECAFC Working Group on Queen Conch by WECAFC 14 in 2012;

REAFFIRMING the commitments made by Queen Conch range States at the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP16, Bangkok, 3–14 March 2013) to implement the Decisions on “Regional cooperation on the management of and trade in the Queen Conch (*Strombus gigas*)” agreed at CoP16;

FURTHER REAFFIRMING Recommendation WECAFC/16/2016/1 and the Decisions 17.285–17.290 related to queen conch adopted at 17th Conference of the Parties to CITES(CoP17, Johannesburg, 24 September–4 October 2016) (see FAO Technical Paper No. 610), calling upon WECAFC members to implement the Regional Queen Conch Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan;

COGNIZANT of the fact that National CITES Management Authorities are required to make a “Legal Acquisition Finding” before issuing an export permit for queen conch and noting that a resolution on guidance to CITES Parties for making Legal Acquisition Findings was adopted at CoP18 (Geneva, Switzerland 17–28 August 2019).

RECALLING the outcomes of the Third and Fourth meetings of the CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES Working Group on Queen Conch, respectively held in Panama, 30th October- 1st November 2018 with support from the European Union, NOAA Fisheries and FAO; and in San Juan, Puerto Rico, from 16 to 17 December 2019 with support from NOAA Fisheries and FAO.

RECALLING that the Commission adopted Recommendation WECAFC/16/2016/1 “on the regional plan for the management and conservation of Queen conch in the WECAFC area – addendum to recommendation WECAFC/15/2014/3 on the management and conservation of queen conch in the WECAFC area; and Recommendations WECAFC/17/2019/12 on improved compliance with trade measures for Queen Conch and WECAFC/17/2019/13 on Queen Conch conversion factor.

NOTING the Regional Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing in WECAFC Member Countries (2019-2029) which was developed by the Joint WECAFC/CRFM/OSPESCA Regional Working Group on IUU (RWG-IUU) Fishing and endorsed at the 17th Session of the Commission;

RECALLING that the RPOA-IUU Fishing sets out 28 measures and actions to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing in the Wider Caribbean Region and to fulfill the WECAFC Member States’ obligations in the capacities as port, flag, coastal and market State under the aspects of Policy and legal framework, MCS and operations, Regional information-sharing and cooperation Capacity development;

ADOPTS in conformity with the provision of Article 6 (h) of the Revised Statutes of the WECAFC the RECOMMENDATION that:

Given the importance of evaluating the degree of implementation of the Regional Queen Conch Management and Conservation Plan, the quantitative values collected in 2019-2020 should be updated with additional data from all countries in the Wider Caribbean participating in the queen conch fishery using the information presented at the 2021 Working Group meeting.

Monitoring the plan's implementation should be done to increase communication, coordination, and planning towards the application of ecosystem-based approaches to fisheries of this valuable resource.

Genetic work utilizing the Single Nucleotide Polymorphisms (SNPs) technique or other similarly advanced genetic techniques should be considered in order to develop appropriate and validated genetic markers. This technique has the potential to identify spatial distribution of the species, and thus would provide useful information for queen conch connectivity and traceability. This would also support the development of Legal Acquisition Findings as required under CITES. The SNPs technique also has the potential to map the genes and provide information about population genetic structure and thus allow for identification of spatial variability (or distribution) of the species .

Member States are strongly encouraged to participate in the development of this genetic work, and in order to be statistically robust, at least 15 countries would be required to provide genetic samples of queen conch.

The QC Scientific, Statistical and Technical and Advisory Sub-group (SSTAG) should liaise with the Regional Working Group on IUU Fishing to further strengthen activities to counteract IUU fishing of queen conch and advance implementation of the 28 measures and actions identified in the RPOA-IUU fishing.

4. (DRAFT) RECOMMENDATION WECAFC/XVIII/2022/4
CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM-WORKING GROUP ON SPAWNING
AGGREGATIONS (SAWG)

Cover Note

The SAWG has held two meetings since the adoption of the Recommendation WECAFC/17/2019/14 “*On the Sustainable Management of Spawning Aggregations and Aggregating Species*” at the 17th Session of the Commission (WECAFC17) held from 15-18 July 2019. This document enshrined 10 recommendations which emerged from commitments made to an associated 2018-2020 work plan at the second meeting of the SAWG in March 2018. These recommendations were subject to review at the third meeting of SAWG in December 2019, during which many of these recommendations were found to have been accomplished through diligent intersessional efforts.

The advancement of the formal adoption process for the *Regional Fish Spawning Aggregation Draft Fishery Management Plan* (FSAMP) and completion of the “*Big Fish*” Regional Communications Strategy now demand elevated levels of commitment for their most needed implementation. Annual calls for regional harmonization of closed seasons and strengthened enforcement have been issued, along with short films for stakeholder engagement. Many activities have also been implemented at the member State level, including status assessments, passing of legislation and the creation of protected areas.

It is recognized that at the regional level, many of the data-dependent recommendations have not been achieved, impeded by data scarcity and resource limitations for implementation of associated high-level tasks. Fundraising efforts are ongoing to support the development of projects to determine the status of all known FSA sites, and to produce a set of standard monitoring protocols and sustain an associated regional monitoring database.

Another gap is the lack of national implementation of a seasonal closure for Nassau grouper and mutton snapper as called for in FSAMP. Recognizing the need for this measure, the Chair of the WECAFC Executive Committee sent a letter to the WECAFC membership in August 2020 strongly encouraging member States to establish synchronized regional closed seasons for Nassau grouper and mutton snapper to safeguard their spawning aggregations, and promote their effective conservation, management, and development.

The transition from the 2018-2020 workplan to the 2021-2025 workplan reaffirms the commitment of the SAWG to procure funding to pursue its data dependent objectives, and to establish a framework to facilitate regional monitoring of FSA management trends by WECAFC. The Fifth meeting of the SAWG had to be re-scheduled given Covid-19 travel restrictions, and as such, opportunities to achieve concrete results toward conservation and recovery of the FSAs continue to be postponed. The need for strong education and communication should be highlighted.

In the meantime, existing recommendations have been modified to reflect the status of deliverables. These recommendations call for adoption and implementation of the FSAMP, and actions to advance improved data collection, assessment, communication, and outreach for the conservation of FSAs. They also promote capacity building and the mobilization of resources to assist WECAFC members conduct priority research, monitoring, management, and enforcement activities.

The ramifications of not adopting these recommendations include the perpetuation of gaps in knowledge and critical information necessary to guide decision makers, inadequate protection and management of FSAs, and overexploitation of FSAs that [further] threatens their sustainability.

Preamble

The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC):

- RECALLING that the objective of the Commission is to promote the effective conservation, management and development of the living marine resources within the area of competence of the Commission, in accordance with the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication and to address common problems of fisheries management and development faced by members of the Commission;
- REAFFIRMING its commitment to support management and implementation of regional strategies and regulations to protect spawning aggregations and aggregating species through the establishment of the WECAFC Working Group on Spawning Aggregations (SAWG) at the 14th session of WECAFC in 2012.
- NOTING that stocks of many species of groupers and snappers in the Caribbean have declined significantly in the last three decades, some of their fish spawning aggregations (FSAs) have declined or disappeared and that immediate action is required to stop further reductions.
- MINDFUL that many fishers' livelihoods are dependent on harvest from spawning aggregations and the fisheries that they support, but also that these fishers have experience and expertise that could be invaluable in the conservation, management, and possible tourism at such sites and that the development of economic alternatives for affected fishers should accompany efforts to halt fishing during spawning periods or close areas where spawning occurs.
- REAFFIRMING the recommendations of the Declaration of Miami (2013) issued at the 1st CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM Working Group on Spawning Aggregations.
- REAFFIRMING and supporting the recommendations and the workplan from the 2nd meeting of the CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM Working Group on Spawning Aggregations.
- NOTING members' commitment to the 2018 SAWG workplan, various planned actions and that activities are well underway,
- COMMITTED to individually and collectively taking measures and actions to further improve the management and conservation of fish spawning aggregations and species that aggregate to spawn in the Wider Caribbean Region

Action Items

The CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA-/CRFM-Working Group on Spawning Aggregations, at its Third and Fourth Meetings on 18-19 December 2019 and 9-10 November 2020, ADOPTS in conformity with the provision of Article 6 (h) of the Revised Statutes of the WECAFC the RECOMMENDATION that:

1. WECAFC, CFMC, and as appropriate CRFM, OSPESCA, and CEP-SPAW support the national adoption and strategic implementation of a Regional Fish Spawning Aggregation Fisheries Management Plan by all Member States.
2. WECAFC Secretariat and Members invest resources and support the standardization of existing monitoring programs, or introduction where these do not exist, to coalesce them into a unified regional monitoring program utilizing standard protocols to share data designed to track the status and trends of aggregations and the species that form them and thus contribute to local, national, and regional management efforts.

3. Members of WECAFC identify and determine the status of all known Fish Spawning Aggregation (FSA) sites (particularly for mutton snapper and Nassau grouper), confirm the timing of spawning seasons, and inform the SAWG and WECAFC Scientific Advisory Group (SAG).
4. Members of WECAFC call for standardized measures to protect Fish Spawning Aggregations (FSAs) at the national, regional, and international scale, including strengthening enforcement of closed seasons, closed areas, sales bans during the closed season, and international collaboration and communication around law enforcement.
5. Members of WECAFC agree upon and adopt a regional seasonal closure for all commercial and recreational fishing of Nassau grouper (*Epinephelus striatus*), at least for the period 1 December – 31 March and that Members will not permit export or commercial sale of Nassau grouper or its products (e.g., roe, fillets) for the duration of the seasonal closure.
6. WECAFC Secretariat supports an assessment of the economic value of FSAs and the socio-economic impact of proposed management measures to inform future management decision-making.
7. Members offer training to fishers (displaced due to FSA closures) in monitoring, research, assessment, and suitable economic alternatives. Fishers and other stakeholders to be involved in cooperative research and FSA management.
8. The WECAFC Secretariat and Members support and promote a regional outreach and communication strategy on conservation and management of FSAs.
9. Members of WECAFC prioritize FSAs for monitoring, conservation, and management based on status, vulnerability, and Members' institutional capacity.
10. The WECAFC Secretariat, together with the Members of WECAFC, seek to mobilize resources to assist the Members in the implementation of priority research, monitoring, enforcement, management and conservation of FSAs and the species that form them, with particular focus on mutton snapper and Nassau Grouper.

5. (DRAFT) RECOMMENDATION WECAFC/XVIII/2022/XX ON WECAFC FISHERIES DATA, STATISTICS, AND INFORMATION

Cover note

Fisheries for States of the Western Central Atlantic Fisheries region, in particular for African, Caribbean, Pacific (ACP) countries and the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) from the Caribbean are important for food security and nutrition, as source of livelihoods, income earnings, and also source of foreign exchange for national governments.

For many years, the Caribbean regional data deficiencies and limited statistical information have been impeding national policy-making and fishery management in a regional context of shared marine resources.

The “Review of fisheries management performance and conservation in the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) area” in 2015 identified a number of challenges in data and statistics in support to fisheries management, including: inadequate legislation; challenges for cooperation with stakeholders with regard to acquisition of data and information on a routine basis; a weak data and information base for supporting fisheries management. The need to strengthen and maintain a quality statistical monitoring system was considered key to the success of immediate fisheries management needs⁸.^[1]

Despite some regional European Union (EU) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) programmes aiming at improving statistics in the Caribbean region, a lack of capacity to collect and exchange data and information, and to analyze the status and trends of fishery resources and regional data policies remains. In the meantime, environmental trends as well as extreme weather events suggest that climate change and variability are already impacting the region’s fisheries, in some cases severely.

During WECAFC 14 (6–9 February 2012, Panama) and 15 (26–28 March 2014, Trinidad and Tobago), the EU expressed the need for increased attention to improved fisheries data and information collection as the basis of better fisheries management in the region. The identified data gaps continue to undermine any significant effort to improve fishery management. This need was considered so pressing that one of the four technical Focus Areas in the WECAFC Strategic Plan 2014–2020 was dedicated to this topic and the current Programme of Work includes activity 2.4, “Improved fishery and aquaculture data collection, analysis and dissemination at regional and national level,” in support of this subject.

WECAFC 16 (Guadeloupe, France, 20–24 June 2016) agreed to establish a working group for fisheries data and statistics matters (FDS-WG), based on the ongoing work of the WECAFC-FIRMS (Fisheries and Resource Monitoring System) Partnership and supported by the development of a regional database (RDB) in collaboration with the WECAFC Members and partners in the region.

The most recent Commission session (17th) (Miami, July 2019) adopted 11 regional fisheries management recommendations, including among others for the conservation and management of sharks and rays, the management of Caribbean spiny lobster, the management of shrimp and groundfish resources of the North Brazil-Guianas Shelf, improved compliance with trade measures for Queen conch, the sustainability of fisheries using moored fish aggregating devices, the sustainable management of

⁸ Singh-Renton, Susan & McIvor, Ian. (2015). Review of Current Fisheries Management Performance and Conservation Measures in the WECAFC Area.

spawning aggregations and aggregating species. In order to support these conservation and management measures, the Commission also adopted the WECAFC interim Data Collection Reference Framework (iDCRF), and an interim List of Main Species for data collection in the WECAFC area. The proposed actions if supported will contribute towards continued improvement in the quality of statistics and data available for monitoring and management in the region, building on the initiatives undertaken through the WECAFC-FIRMS and FDS-WG activities.

Following this 17th WECAFC Commission, the second session of the FDS-WG2 met virtually three times between October 2020 and March 2022 to address the requested improvements of the iDCRF, the operationalization of the regional database, and the steps for increasing Members capacities. In its Concluding meeting (10 March 2022), the FDS-WG2 adopted draft recommendations as laid out in this document.

The Commission is asked to:

NOTE that reliable and timely fisheries data, statistics and information are instrumental to supporting national science-based policy-making and management, and development and monitoring of Regional Fisheries Management Plans;

RECALL that WECAFC 17 urged WECAFC Members to provide national data and statistics to the Regional Database in line with the interim DCRF and to support and promote the WECAFC-FIRMS partnership as a collaborative platform for collating and sharing scientific information throughout the region and leveraging of ongoing regional projects.

1. Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF)

RECALLING that the objective of the Commission is to promote the effective conservation, management and development of the living marine resources within the area of competence of the Commission, in accordance with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, and to address common problems of fisheries management and development faced by members of the Commission;

MINDFUL that qualitative and quantitative improvement of regional data and statistics requires harmonization and standardization at national and regional level with the definition of minimum data requirements in support of evidence-based decision-making;

MINDFUL of the global Reference Harmonization standard being developed by the FAO's Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics under which WECAFC, ICCAT, FAO and other RFBs collaborate for harmonizing and streamlining data collection and reporting frameworks including consideration of multiple reporting burdens;

REAFFIRMING the commitment of CARICOM States to improving evidence-based decision-making through regional cooperation as expressed in multiple regional policy documents including the "Strategic Action Programme for the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystem", the CARICOM Strategic Plan, 2015 -2019, the Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy (CCCFP) and the CRFM Strategic Plan, 2013-2021;

RECOGNIZING the continued efforts by the WECAFC members to increase their capacities to collect, analyze and report fisheries data and statistics;

RECALLING the endorsement of the WECAFC-FIRMS partnership by WECAFC 15 in 2014;

FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation WECAFC/17/2019/22 “ON WECAFC INTERIM DATA COLLECTION REFERENCE FRAMEWORK;”

FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation WECAFC/XVII/2019/5+6+7 “ON THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF SHARKS AND RAYS IN THE WECAFC AREA” related to reporting data and information on sharks and rays including for non-contracting parties to ICCAT;

FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation WECAFC/XVII/2019/9 “ON THE MANAGEMENT OF CARIBBEAN SPINY LOBSTER IN THE WECAFC AREA” section 4 related to Catch Documentation Schemes;

ADOPTS in conformity with Article 6 of the WECAFC Revised Statutes the RECOMMENDATIONS that:

1(a) Recognize the DCRF serves a minimum of two purposes, including i) a capacity building tool, which can be used by Members as a reference standard to set-up national data collection and information systems for all aquatic marine species, and ii) an instrument to support the scientific mandate and priorities of WECAFC-CRFM-OSPESCA ICM.

1(b) Recognize the DCRF, its appendices, and associated documents titled, “Data sharing and access policies” and “Lists of fisheries and stocks within the WECAFC competence area,” are living documents based on a modular task-oriented structure articulated around clear supporting bases for reference list of species, with parts more mature than others, and as such conducive to a staged and incremental approach to implementation of the DCRF for some Members.

1(c) Endorse version v.8 of the Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) and its appendices, including in particular Appendix 2, "WECAFC subareas" and Appendix 3, “WECAFC Reference list of main species.”

1(d) Recommend the following general principles for the delineation of WECAFC sub-areas and divisions:

- That the WECAFC subareas and divisions are identified, as far as possible, consistently with the major ecosystems in the region as the starting point for defining their delineations, and as the overarching principle.

- That in defining the subareas and divisions, established maritime boundaries and 200 nautical mile EEZ limits are utilized (where they are established and are not disputed) and other default limits as the prevailing principle, in combination with, where required or preferred, simple longitudinal, latitudinal or oblique straight lines in the cases where:

- (a.) there are no established maritime boundaries, to avoid issues of undefined/disputed maritime spaces; and

(b.) there are locally recognized and important ecosystem boundaries, together with other considerations, such as WECAFC Member countries' data collection capacities, that would limit adequate reporting.

- That some of these subareas and divisions remain to be finalized and are subject to further discussion and modification. This document and any proposal for, or final delineation of, any subarea or division is without prejudice to the WECAFC Member States' maritime claims and boundaries.

- That these delimitations do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of FAO or WECAFC or its Member States concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers and boundaries.

1(e) Further recommend regarding statistical delineations:

- That the above general principles should be followed for further proposals on the final statistical limits, subject to approval by the WECAFC Members directly involved.

- The adoption of a provisional list of subareas and divisions, that include correspondence to the Large Marine Ecosystems, or marine ecoregions, as identified in DCRF Appendix 2, and promotes the use by all WECAFC Members in their national data collection of the newly established WECAFC geographic subareas and divisions as per DCRF Appendix 2.

- That, to the extent possible, reporting is done at the finest possible division level to ensure the availability of spatial granular data required for scientific purposes.

1(f) Recommend the use by all WECAFC Members in their national data collection on the evolved categorization of WECAFC Reference list of aquatic species developed by the FDS-WG as DCRF Appendix 3, which consists of three groups and several subgroups with defined bases for selection:

- Group 1, “Main Reference Species,” are key species to the region, other than those included in Group 3, and of specific interest to the WECAFC mandate for which States are strongly encouraged to statistical reporting:
 - Subgroup Basis 1: Species with fisheries management plans endorsed.
- Group 2, “Other Reference Species,” other than those included in Group 3, are Species of interest for WECAFC that could be elevated to the Group 1, with three Subgroups:
 - Subgroup Basis 2: Species of interest to historical WGs of regional bodies (WECAFC, CRFM, OSPESCA, including through their Interim Coordination Mechanisms)
 - Subgroup Basis 3: Species in high seas (areas beyond national jurisdiction)/straddling / shared and not under mandate of another RFMO
 - Subgroup Basis 4: Species for WECAFC region originating from 1978 working party on fishery statistics and/or of interest for other reasons (e.g., of local interest including high commercial value, for biodiversity reasons, or for importance of impacts from/due to climate changes)
- Group 3, “Other species of interest for WECAFC Members,” are...
 - Subgroup Basis 5 - Species under the mandate of other RFMOs, including for mandatory reporting (e.g., ICCAT), such as tuna and tuna-like species and pelagic sharks.

1 (g) Strongly encourage WECAFC Members to proceed with the use of DCRF for monitoring and reporting, with prioritization for provision of data for Tasks III (Fleet), II (Catch by species and Effort), and IV (Biological data), with high priority on Group1 species.

1 (h) Recommend continued participation in the FDS-WG and specifically to support the intersessional work plan as related to interactions with thematic working groups relating to:

- national vessel mappings to regional fleet segment classifications, promotion of species and associated subareas for priority reporting, species biological parameters.
- further tailor the DCRF and associated data sharing policies in consideration of the use of relevant data sets by those working groups.

2. WECAFC Regional Database (WECAFIS)

RECALLING that the objective of the Commission is to promote the effective conservation, management and development of the living marine resources within the area of competence of the Commission, in accordance with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, and to address common problems of fisheries management and development faced by members of the Commission;

NOTING that the 16th session of WECAFC held in Guadeloupe, France, 20-24 June 2016, agreed to establish the Regional Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group (FDS-WG);

FURTHER NOTING that FDS-WG acts as a steering committee for the Regional Database as per its Terms of Reference;

MINDFUL that sharing of information in support to management and monitoring of Regional Fisheries Management Plans requires an instrument for data dissemination and sharing;

NOTING that data access and sharing in the region is to “facilitate regional fisheries data and information exchange to support evidence-based fisheries policy-making at national and regional levels, while ensuring non-disclosure and/or careful handling of sensitive fisheries data and information;”

RECOGNIZING the important role of WECAFC, CRFM, and OSPESCA to validate regional inventories and to support and facilitate consistency and harmonization with national inventories and their publishing through FIRMS as a contribution to the global monitoring framework requested under SDG14.4.1;

RECALLING Recommendation WECAFC/17/2019/22 “ON WECAFC INTERIM DATA COLLECTION REFERENCE FRAMEWORK” section 4 related to the Regional Database;

FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation WECAFC/XVII/2019/11 “ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SHRIMP AND GROUND FISH RESOURCES OF THE NORTH BRAZIL-GUIANAS SHELF IN THE WECAFC AREA” section 1 related to the Regional Database;

RECALLING Resolution WECAFC/XVII/2019/8 “ON THE WECAFC-FIRMS PARTNERSHIP;”

ACKNOWLEDGING that WECAFC Regional Database is a fully functional information system;

REITERATES the promotion to WECAFC MEMBERS of provisioning of national data and statistics to the WECAFC-CRFM-OSPESCA Regional DataBase (RDB) according to Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF);

ADOPTS in conformity with Article 6 of the WECAFC Revised Statutes the **RECOMMENDATIONS** that:

2(a) The Western Central Atlantic Fisheries Information System (“WECAFIS”) has the mandate to disseminate data and statistics covered by DCRF with due consideration of DCRF data access and sharing rules, as well as FIRMS information on status and trends of fisheries and stocks under the WECAFC competence area.

2(b) The WECAFIS be published in the Data section of the new WECAFC website.

2(c) Members publish DCRF data in WECAFIS for Task I, and for Task II.1 and Task II.2, Task III.1 and Task IV.1 with high priority for Groups 1 species to reinforce management of shared stocks , and promote proceeding with related tasks including:

- carrying out mappings of national vessel types to regional fleet segment classifications

2(d) Members recognize the important role of WECAFC, CRFM, and OSPESCA to validate regional inventories and to support and facilitate consistency and harmonization with national inventories and their publishing through FIRMS as contribution to the global monitoring framework requested under/SDG14.4.1.

2(e) WECAFC Members are therefore encouraged to:

- Update or further develop their inventories of fisheries and develop status reports on national fisheries and publish in FIRMS
- Update or further develop new List of Stocks and stock status reports be updated and published in FIRMS
- Engage in training opportunities towards completion of WECAFIS-DCRF data templates towards progressing operationalization of the DCRF and WECAFC-FIRMS data templates to enrich FIRMS content

2(f) SAG is encouraged to review and provide recommendations in light of other processes as regards the information/content on list of stocks and stock status

3. WECAFC Capacity Building for collection and production of data, statistics, and information

RECALLING that WECAFC's mandate covers all living marine resources, without prejudice to the management responsibilities and authority of other competent fisheries bodies and other living marine resources management organizations or arrangements in the area

CONCERNED about the challenges that WECAFC members still face to collect data and produce statistics on all living marine resources

ACKNOWLEDGING continuing technical support from FAO and financial support from donors, including the EU and the USA, to develop WECAFC Members' capacities for production and collection of data, statistics, and information;

RECALLING the important steps taken by the WECAFC, OSPESCA, and CRFM members in the recent years in terms of increasing their capacities to collect, analyze and report reliable and timely fisheries data and statistics

RECALLING Recommendation WECAFC/XVII/2019/11 "ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SHRIMP AND GROUND FISH RESOURCES OF THE NORTH BRAZIL-GUIANAS SHELF IN THE WECAFC AREA" section 2 related to capacity building on stock assessment and bioeconomic analysis of priority fisheries

FURTHER RECALLING Recommendation WECAFC/17/2019/22 "ON WECAFC INTERIM DATA COLLECTION REFERENCE FRAMEWORK" section 7 related to strengthening of national capacity

ADOPTS in conformity with Article 6 of the WECAFC Revised Statutes the **RECOMMENDATIONS** that:

3(a) Members reiterate recognition that the WECAFC-FIRMS project provides a collaborative platform for collation and sharing of scientific information, leveraging ongoing regional projects, and prioritizing national data needs.

3(b) Membes are encouraged to acknowledge the development by the FDS-WG of criteria and related scoring to support the identification and prioritization of capacity-building investments and projects that improve science-based decision-making and support the further development of these criteria as a dashboard for monitoring needs and mobilizing resources for the benefit of WECAFC and its Members.

3(c) Members recognize that further investments should be made to build national capacities of WECAFC Members for data collection, analysis, and reporting with priorities on implementing DCRF and feeding the WECAFIS through the SAG process.

WESTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC FISHERY COMMISSION (WECAFC)

EIGHTEENTH (VIRTUAL) SESSION

Managua, Nicaragua, 26-29 July 2022

Tailored Terms of Reference of the WECAFC Working Groups

Updated terms of reference for the WECAFC working groups were reviewed at SAG XI. After consideration, the SAG identified there had been some confusion regarding submission of updated TORS. WGs had been provided **[[date]]** a template for updating TORS and specific request made to make changes tailored specifically to the individual WG. However, most of the WGs simply provided the updated tailored TORS without any indication of what had changed. WGs were requested to review their updated TORS and provide a summary of what had changed. WGs were asked to make submissions within 15 days of receiving guidance from SAG. Revised tailored Terms of Reference are provided in this Appendix for each WG that submitted.

1. Tailored Terms of Reference for the Moored Fishery Aggregating Devices Working Group

I. Updated TOR

WORKING GROUPS TERMS OF REFERENCE TEMPLATE

CRFM/WECAFC/JICA/IFREMER Working Group on Moored Fish Aggregating Device (MFAD) fisheries [insert date of endorsement of ToRs by Commission]

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I. Background and justification

Fishery management advice and recommendations, based on the best available scientific information, are provided to WECAFC member countries for their implementation by dedicated Working Groups, established by the Commission.

The Working Groups that were established or confirmed in the subsequent sessions since the 14th session of the Commission in 2012 are the following:

OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Caribbean Spiny Lobster

CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES Working Group on Queen Conch

WECAFC Working Group on the Management of Deep-Sea Fisheries

WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Recreational Fisheries

CRFM/WECAFC/JICA/IFREMER Working Group on Fisheries Using fish aggregating devices (FADS)

CRFM/WECAFC Working Group on Flyingfish in the Eastern Caribbean (established since the 17th Session of WECAFC as the flyingfish- Dolphinfish WG)

WECAFC/CRFM/IFREMER Working Group on Shrimp and Groundfish in the Northern Brazil-Guianas Shelf

CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM Working Group on Spawning Aggregations

Regional Working Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (RWG-IUU)

WECAFC Working Group for the Conservation And Management of Sharks in the Wider Caribbean Region

WECAFC/CRFM/OSPESCA Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group (FDS-WG)

Most Working Groups are joint working groups with other regional partner institutions, such as the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), the Organization of Fisheries for the Central American Isthmus (OSPESCA), the Caribbean Fishery Management Council (CFMC), the French Research Institute for Exploration of the Sea (IFREMER), etc. Fishery scientists, experts, managers and decision-makers of member countries, Regional partner organizations including academia and NGOs participate in the Working Groups, which have specific terms of reference that are time bound. The data used by the Working Groups to assess the status of fish stocks, to conduct fishery assessments and to generate fishery management advice and recommendations to the Commission are collected by the participating countries and NGOs.

The key drivers behind the establishment of these working groups are the need to collaborate and cooperate in the assessment and management of shared resources; need to standardize data collection and reporting systems to enable assessment of stock status using data and information from a range of countries that target the stock/species/resources throughout their distribution range; need to standardize conservation and management measures for effective management, need for training and capacity building to improve data collection and assessment of the status of fisheries/fish stocks; etc.

In undertaking its work, the Working Group will pay due attention to the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and its related guidelines, including the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries especially in regards to livelihoods and food security of communities and value chain stakeholders dependent on sustainable management of these natural resources, as well as their contribution to achieving the targets of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, namely SDG 1 and

2; 5, 8; 12, 13 and 14, as well as any other agreed international or regional instruments for the conservation and management of fisheries, and the principles of precautionary, participatory and ecosystem approaches to fisheries management. The activities of the WG are also guided by any specific regional or international fisheries management or related obligations and initiatives or instruments of relevance to the respective resources associated with the specific WG – e.g. any FMPs, Declarations, agreed CMMs, regional strategies, regulations, etc.

II. Role of the Working Group

a. Scope of the Work

The scope of each Working Group is to provide scientific and management advice for the sustainable management, conservation and development of living marine resources in the area of competence of WECAFC. This includes the development and support to national and regional plans of action in order to regulate target and bycatch fisheries, as well as manage existing populations within the region. Using a multidisciplinary approach, the working group will contribute to the sustainable management by providing management advice to Members of WECAFC based on the best available scientific knowledge/evidence and traditional/local ecological knowledge

In pursuing this goal, the Working Group will contribute to the fulfilment of national and regional responsibilities for the marine environment and for the management of [pelagic oceanic and coastal fish resources harvested using Moored Fish Aggregating Devices \(MFADs\) - including large and small tuna, swordfish, billfishes, dolphinfish, and mackerels](#) - and related or interacting species or fisheries in the WECAFC Region.

b. Goal

The goal of each Working Group is to inform and provide guidance for the management of living marine resources in WECAFC members in such a manner as to promote transformation to responsible fisheries that provide economic opportunities, food security and human nutrition, secure social wellbeing while ensuring the conservation of living marine resources and the protection of marine biodiversity.

c. Tasks/ functions

The Working Group will:

Collect, review and share the existing (past and present) data and information on the MFAD fishery in the WECAFC area, involving the fishers and private sector, in addition to identifying the potential for sustainable management and development of such fisheries in the region.

Analyze the data and information collected from MFAD fisheries and make recommendations for the sustainability of the fisheries in the WECAFC region.

Promote the reporting of MFADs fisheries statistics to ICCAT.

Facilitate the sharing of data, information, and experiences related to MFAD fisheries in the region in collaboration with the Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group and the Recreational Fisheries Working Group.

Monitor changes in distribution and abundance of species pelagic oceanic and coastal fish species harvested using MFADs, [including large and small tuna, swordfish, billfishes, dolphinfish, and mackerels - in the WECAFC region.](#)

Develop common and feasible methodologies for assessment and monitoring of the fish stock especially in data poor fisheries.

Collaborate with academia and other research institutions to gain knowledge on the biology of key pelagic oceanic and coastal fish species harvested using MFADs and on relevant socioeconomic and governance aspects of such fisheries to improve management.

Seek partnerships with other institutions that could provide assistance in the monitoring, evaluation, and recommendations for management for sustainable use, protection and conservation of the resources

Seek partnerships with other institutions that could aid with the implementation of local/national level MFAD fishery management plans and co-management arrangements.

Monitor and provide advice on the management and implementation of regional strategies, regulations and management plans to protect the fish resources.

Establish communication between the members of the Working Group, other Working Groups and relevant parties on issues of common interest in order to strengthen regional collaboration in the assessment and management of living marine resources.

Report to the Commission and contribute to communication and visibility of the deliverables of the Working Group as may be needed.

Identify needs of communities dependent on the MFAD fishery resources and investigate alternative livelihoods from fisheries and aquaculture (recreational fishing, hospitality and tourism, etc.)

d. Membership

Membership of the Working Group shall consist of all Member States of CRFM and WECAFC, OSPESCA, including overseas territories and Departments.

III. Mode of Operation

a. Role of Countries

The members of the Working Group will play a leading role in its activities through the following activities and commitments:

Participate in agreed activities of the Working Group, and ensure the participation of appropriate experts;

Implement, at the National level, the work identified in the WECAFC endorsed work plan (as appropriate);

Report on implementation of agreed conservation and management measures

Assist with mobilization of resources for the activities of the Working Group;

Facilitate the organization of Working Group meetings in the languages of the Commission

Host Working Group meetings on a rotational basis;

Facilitate the identification of the Convener of the Working Group.

b. Role of Convener

The Convener of the Working Group will play a leading role during the organization of the meetings and subsequent follow up with the Secretariat of WECAFC by coordinating the inputs of the members of the Working Group. The Convener should:

Seek experts from among the WECAFC Members, contact potential partner organizations, and solicit their interest to join in the Working Group;

Call for meetings as appropriate;

Ensure that technical contributions are received in a timely manner and in the appropriate format;

Ensure that outputs are delivered as agreed during each meeting;

Collaborate closely with FAO-WECAFC and other sub-regional and regional organizations as appropriate;

Assist in the preparation and publication process of the proceedings of the Working Group meeting;

Participate (in person or virtually) at the SAG meetings to present the draft working documents and provide any clarifications as required;

Facilitate the review by the Working Group membership within a reasonable period of time (max. 15 days) on suggested edits or modifications as considered necessary to address the comments of the SAG and the return of the revised document to the WECAFC Secretariat for distribution and consideration by the Commission;

Participate in the Commission's sessions (physically or virtually) if required, to support the Secretariat in clarifying or substantiating some points of the draft working documents;

Assist in the relevant processes to gather information in support of seeking funds to implement priority activities of the Working Group.

c. Election and role of Convener of the Working Group

The Working Group shall elect a Convener from among its Members to serve over a two-year period. The term of office of the Convener may be extended as determined appropriate. In the case where another qualified Convener is not available, the Convener's term may be renewed for an additional two-year term until another Convener is selected.

d. Roles of the FAO/WECAFC Secretariat

The FAO/WECAFC Secretariat will play a supporting role in the activities of the Working Group by assisting in:

Coordinating activities of the Working Group, among WECAFC and Non-WECAFC Members, at the wider regional level (including facilitate procurement of funding);

Assisting with logistical arrangements for the convening of meetings of the Working Group;

Providing technical assistance, such as a technical secretary or research support, if needed and as resources permit;

Liaising with other Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) active in the Wider Caribbean Region and neighboring areas for their engagement as much as possible in the work of the Working Group; these RFBs include amongst others OSPESCA, CRFM, CFMC, ICCAT, NAFO, NEAFC, CECAF, COPPESAALC, etc;

Liaising with other relevant regional and international organizations as appropriate, such as the Sargasso Sea Commission, SPAW Protocol, etc;

Coordinating the formulation and adoption of recommendations and/or resolutions and reports/documents by the Working Group so as to facilitate the decision-making process by the Commission;

Ensuring the strategic linkage between the work of the Working Group and programmes and projects hosted to support the fisheries and healthy ecosystems framework of the CLME+ and any future phase of this project;

Facilitating training and collaboration of WECAFC Member States and sub-regional training institutions as appropriate and based on available resources.

- e. Roles of other Subregional organizations (e.g. CFMC, CRFM, ICCAT, OSPESCA, UNEP-CEP, IFREMER, NOAA, CARICOM, OECS, etc.)

Sub-regional organizations have an important role to play in assisting their member countries to participate fully in the activities of the Working Group. Therefore, they may be invited to:

Provide expertise, technical assistance and support;

Facilitate procurement of funding when possible;

Collaborate in implementing the activities of the Working Group;

Collaborate with the WECAFC Secretariat and sub-regional organizations in coordinating the activities of the Working Group;

Facilitate the decision-making process at the Sub-regional level.

IV. Outputs

In discharging its duties, the Working Group will deliver the following outputs:

Biennial Work Plans;

Reports on assessment and monitoring of the status of fish stocks;

Draft Fisheries Management Plans;

Draft Regional Plans of Actions;

Proposed Recommendations and Resolutions to the Commission,

Revised TORs as needed

V. Communication

A mechanism for on-going communication among Working Group members (video conference, Skype, zoom meeting and email), is essential to ensure that the work of the group is sustained between meetings. It must include all Working Group members and the communication tools must be accessible to all Working Group members.

The successful functioning of the Working Group also requires that each member country and organization/ agency identify a national node or focal point who will be contacted through the WECAFC National Focal Point and technically coordinate at national level all matters pertinent to the WG. The outputs of the Working Group will be communicated through working group reports to WECAFC, OSPESCA, CFMC, CRFM, CITES, UNEP-CEP, ICCAT, IFREMER, and national fishery administrations via the WECAFC Secretariat.

VI. Working Group meetings and cost

The Working Group should meet physically or virtually on a regular basis, the timing of which is decided by the members, but at a minimum once every two years. The meetings should be of 2-5 days' duration. The meetings should use cost effective accommodations and institutional facilities and where possible take advantage of other meetings in the region. Meetings shall be chaired by the Convener of the Working

Group. The reports of the meetings will be formally submitted to OSPESCA, WECAFC, CFMC and CRFM, ICCAT, CITES, UNEP-CEP, IFREMER, Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute Network, etc.

VII. Amendments to the Terms of Reference

Amendment of these terms of reference may be done at each biennial meeting of the Commission for implementation by the working groups in the subsequent intersessional period.

VIII. Templates for Recommendations and Resolutions

[Standardized templates will ensure a common understanding of what should be included in draft recommendations and resolutions, ease the reporting of deliverables as well as facilitate their review by other WECAFC bodies, as appropriate. Working Groups should include the following elements when preparing draft recommendations and resolutions to be presented to the WECAFC membership or other WECAFC bodies (e.g. the Scientific Advisory Group or other WECAFC Working Groups).

Recommendations and Resolutions

Draft recommendations and resolutions for review by other WECAFC bodies and the WECAFC membership should include the following elements:

Cover Note: A brief cover note for draft recommendations and/or resolutions should be provided to assist reviewers. The cover note should include a clear, candid, and transparent explanation of:

- why the action was developed;
- at which Working Group meeting it was discussed;
- a brief overview of how the Working Group arrived at its decision to put the action forward;
- how the action will impact future WECAFC activities, including, where relevant any possible changes in resource or workload requirements for Members or the WECAFC Secretariat;
- the ramifications of *not* approving the recommended action;
- the full picture of the context for the recommended action.

Preambular Text: This should provide essential elements to highlight the context and intent of the proposed action in a concise bulleted format. The preambular text should include only the core historical elements and should include references to related decisions or measures.

Action Text: This should indicate clearly what action(s) the Working Group is taking, or is asking the WECAFC Membership to take, at a national, subregional, and/or regional level, including specific timelines to which the action(s) will adhere.

Considering that each Working Group can have more than one meeting, and more than one issue to address during each intersessional period, the Working Groups can produce several reports/documents or draft resolutions/recommendations. In order to facilitate analysis by the Commission, each Working Group shall prepare a single set of recommendations and/or resolutions organized by fishery or by theme, including all the topics addressed in the intersessional meetings. In this regard, the Commission would consider a single set of draft recommendations and/or resolutions for spiny lobster, queen conch, flying fish and dolphinfish, FADs, FDS, etc.

The Working Groups shall refer relevant recommendations and resolutions of a scientific nature to the SAG for scientific review at least one month before the meeting of SAG, in order to provide adequate

time to the Secretariat and SAG members to review them before the meeting. This will improve the efficiency of the reviews during the SAG sessions.

2 Tailored Terms of Reference for the Regional Working Group on Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing (RWG-IUU WG)

Changes to the template ToRs and previous (approved) ToRs for RWG-IUU

- a. The earlier (approved 2014) ToRs do not speak to the issue of convener; however “traditionally” the representative of the CRFM has functioned in this role since the inaugural meeting of the RWG in 2015. This arose from the fact that initially, this working group was a “taking on board” of the CRFM’s working group on IUU. Given this reality, but mindful of the format given in the template, the ToRs have been revised such that it is clearly stated that the “Representative of the CRFM is the convener of the Working Group.” However, given the template, the option that “the Working Group may choose to elect another Convener from among its Members to serve over an agreed period” is proposed in these revised ToRs. The further option that “in such/any case, the term of office of the Convener may be extended as determined appropriate. In the case where another qualified Convener is not available, the Convener's term may be renewed for an additional term until another Convener is selected” has also been included as per the template. This allows the WG to maintain the current situation regarding the convener, but still be consistent with the 2021 ToRs’ template.
- b. In keeping with the above change, CRFM has been removed from the list of “other sub-regional organisations” since it is already mentioned as convening the RWG-IUU
- c. While the template states that “the meetings should be of 2-5 days’ duration”, we have inserted “to the extent practicable”, mindful that current travel restrictions may militate against such duration.
- d. Reference (in general) to “working groups” in the 2021 template has been changed to “working group” to make it specific.

Regional Working Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (RWG-IUU)

[insert date of endorsement of ToRs by the Commission]

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I. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

Fishery management advice and recommendations, based on the best available scientific information, are provided to WECAFC member countries for their implementation by dedicated Working Groups, established by the Commission.

The Working Groups that were established or confirmed in the subsequent sessions since the 14th session of the Commission in 2012 are the following:

1. [OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Caribbean Spiny Lobster](#)
2. [CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES Working Group on Queen Conch](#)
3. [WECAFC Working Group on the Management of Deep-Sea Fisheries](#)
4. [WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Recreational Fisheries](#)
5. [CRFM/WECAFC/JICA/IFREMER Working Group on Fisheries Using fish aggregating devices \(FADS\)](#)
6. [CRFM/WECAFC Working Group on Flyingfish in the Eastern Caribbean \(established since the 17th Session of WECAFC as the flyingfish- Dolphinfish WG\)](#)
7. [WECAFC/CRFM/IFREMER Working Group on Shrimp and Groundfish in the Northern Brazil-Guianas Shelf](#)
8. [CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM Working Group on Spawning Aggregations](#)
9. [Regional Working Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing \(RWG-IUU\)](#)
10. [WECAFC Working Group for the Conservation And Management of Sharks in the Wider Caribbean Region](#)
11. [WECAFC/CRFM/OSPESCA Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group \(FDS-WG\)](#)

Most Working Groups are joint working groups with other regional partner institutions, such as the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), the Organization of Fisheries for the Central American Isthmus (OSPESCA), the Caribbean Fishery Management Council (CFMC), the French Research Institute for Exploration of the Sea (IFREMER), etc. Fishery scientists, experts, managers and decision-makers of member countries, Regional partner organizations including academia and NGOs participate in the Working Groups, which have specific terms of reference that are time bound. The data used by the Working Groups to assess the status of fish stocks, to conduct fishery assessments and to generate fishery management advice and recommendations to the Commission are collected by the participating countries and NGOs.

The key drivers behind the establishment of these working groups are the need to collaborate and cooperate in the assessment and management of shared resources; need to standardize data collection and reporting systems to enable assessment of stock status using data and information from a range of countries that target the stock/species/resources throughout their distribution range; need to standardize conservation and management measures for effective management, need for training and capacity building to improve data collection and assessment of the status of fisheries/fish stocks; etc. etc.

In undertaking its work, the Working Group will pay due attention to the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and its related guidelines, including the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries, as well as any other agreed international or regional instruments for the conservation and management of fisheries, and the principles of precautionary, participatory and ecosystem approaches to fisheries management. The activities of the WG are also guided by any specific regional or international fisheries management or related obligations and initiatives or instruments of

relevance to the respective resources associated with the specific WG – e.g. any FMPs, Declarations, agreed CMMs, regional strategies, regulations etc.

II. ROLE OF THE WORKING GROUP

A. SCOPE OF THE WORK

The scope of each Working Group is to provide scientific and management advice for the sustainable management, conservation and development of living marine resources in the area of competence of WECAFC. This includes the development and support to national and regional plans of action in order to regulate target and bycatch fisheries, as well as manage existing populations within the region. Using a multidisciplinary approach, the working group will contribute to the sustainable management by providing management advice to Members of WECAFC based on the best available scientific knowledge/evidence and traditional/local ecological knowledge. In pursuing this goal, the Working Group will contribute to the fulfilment of national and regional responsibilities for the marine environment and for the management of all living aquatic species and resources WECAFC and related or interacting species or fisheries in the WECAFC Region.

B. GOAL

The goal of each Working Group is to inform and provide guidance for the management of living marine resources in WECAFC members in such a manner as to promote responsible fisheries that provide economic opportunities, secure social wellbeing while ensuring the conservation of living marine resources and the protection of marine biodiversity. Specifically, the objective of the RWG-IUU is to improve coordination and cooperation between national organizations / institutions responsible for fisheries-related MCS in support of their common efforts to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing.

C. TASKS/ FUNCTIONS

The Working Group will:

- As a matter of priority, identify and recommend cost effective measures that can be easily implemented in the short to medium term to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing;
- Review and assess the nature and extent of IUU fishing in the WECAFC area. In particular, the specific areas and species that are targeted by foreign illegal fishing and the main market for these IUU fishing products;
- Review current methods and arrangements for timely collection, analysis, reporting and dissemination of data and information relating to Distant Water Fishing Nations (DWFN) IUU fishing activities;
- Assess the viability of adopting modern technologies and methodologies to increase data capture, coverage and reliability;
- Develop recommendations for the establishment of formal protocols to facilitate the collection, compilation and transmittal of information regarding IUU fishing to the Flag State;
- Conduct a comprehensive review and assessment of the methods by which IUU fishing products are harvested, handled and traded including potential loopholes in legal systems and make recommendations for cost effective strategies and mechanisms to address identified deficiencies;
- Review and assess best practices employed to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing and determine the suitability for adoption and implementation in the WECAFC area;
- Review and assess systems and mechanisms used by WECAFC Member to address IUU fishing and make such recommendations as may be necessary to improve their effectiveness;

- Provide advice and recommendations on viable methodologies to engage with flag States, regional fishery bodies and regional fishery management organizations in relation to data exchanges, in pursuit of reducing IUU fishing opportunities within the WECAFC area;
- Recommend mechanisms to ensure effective cooperation and coordination among WECAFC Members and entities as well as among national agencies within states as may be necessary to combat IUU fishing and seafood fraud including but not limited to sharing of data and information, capacity building, legal reforms, and enhancing prosecutorial success;
- Promote the concept of collaborative policing approaches, with national fishers, and, where possible, through fisher organizations;
- Recommend way of improving public education and awareness in order to strengthen community support and political will to marshal the resources and implement the legal and institutional reforms needed to eradicate IUU fishing;
- Identify and recommend policies and measures to ensure transparency in activities such as the allocation of fishing permits and licenses by official authorities; the reporting of catches, payment of fees, taxes and charges by fishers and fishing entities; and disclosure of the identity of the beneficial owners of fishing vessels and companies throughout the supply chain;
- Seek complementary funding to support activities relating to data capture, analysis and sharing at the regional, national and local levels;
- Promote technical assistance, training, experience exchange, and institutional development, to increase MCS knowledge and capability amongst participating parties; and
- Perform other tasks as may be determined by the members.

D. MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Working Group shall consist of all Member States of CRFM and WECAFC, OSPESCA, including overseas territories and Departments.

Specifically, the national organizations responsible for fisheries MCS and IUU fishing in general nominated by each WECAFC member; and, experts of key partner organizations (OECS, Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations, CRFM, OSPESCA, FAO). Persons or organizations with expertise in matters pertaining to MCS and IUU fishing may also be invited to participate as [experts] observer to the RWG-IUU. The WECAFC Secretariat will act as secretary to the RWG-IUU.

II. MODE OF OPERATION:

A. ROLE OF COUNTRIES

The members of the Working Group will play a leading role in its activities through the following activities and commitments, and through a monitoring, control, surveillance and enforcement perspective:

- Participate in agreed activities of the Working Group, and ensure the participation of appropriate experts;
- Implement, at the National level, the work identified in the WECAFC endorsed work plan (as appropriate);
- Report on implementation of agreed measures
- Assist with mobilization of resources for the activities of the Working Group;
- Facilitate the organization of Working Group meetings in the languages of the Commission
- Host Working Group meetings on a rotational basis.
- Facilitate the identification of the Convener of the Working Group

B. ROLE OF CONVENER

The Convener of the Working Group will play a leading role during the organization of the meetings and subsequent follow up with the Secretariat of WECAFC by coordinating the inputs of the members of the Working Group. The Convener should:

- Seek experts from among the WECAFC Members, contact potential partner organizations, and solicit their interest to join in the Working Group;
- Call for meetings as appropriate;
- Ensure that technical contributions are received in a timely manner and in the appropriate format;
- Ensure that outputs are delivered as agreed during each meeting
- Collaborate closely with FAO-WECAFC and other sub-regional and regional organizations as appropriate;
- Assist in the preparation and publication process of the proceedings of the Working Group meeting;
- Participate (in person or virtually) at the SAG meetings to present the draft working documents and provide any clarifications as required;
- Facilitate the review by the Working Group membership within a reasonable period of time (max. 15 days) on suggested edits or modifications as considered necessary to address the comments of the SAG and the return of the revised document to the WECAFC Secretariat for distribution and consideration by the Commission;
- Participate in the Commission's sessions (physically or virtually) if required, to support the Secretariat in clarifying or substantiating some points of the draft working documents;
- Assist in the relevant processes to gather information in support of seeking funds to implement priority activities of the Working Group.

C. ELECTION AND ROLE OF CONVENER OF THE WORKING GROUP

The Representative of the CRFM is the convener of the Working Group.

- However, the Working Group may choose to elect another Convener from among its Members to serve over an agreed period. In such/any case, the term of office of the Convener may be extended as determined appropriate. In the case where another qualified Convener is not available, the Convener's term may be renewed for an additional term until another Convener is selected.

D. ROLES OF THE FAO/WECAFC SECRETARIAT

The FAO/WECAFC Secretariat will play a supporting role in the activities of the Working Group by assisting in:

- Coordinating activities of the Working Group, among WECAFC and Non-WECAFC Members, at the wider regional level (including facilitate procurement of funding);
- Assisting with logistical arrangements for the convening of meetings of the Working Group;
- Providing technical assistance, such as a technical secretary or research support, if needed and as resources permit
- Liaising with other Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) active in the Wider Caribbean Region and neighboring areas for their engagement as much as possible in the work of the Working Group; these RFBs include amongst others OSPESCA, CRFM, CFMC, ICCAT, NAFO, NEAFC, CECAF, COPPESAALC, etc..
- Liaising with other relevant regional and international organizations as appropriate
- Coordinating the formulation and adoption of recommendations and/or resolutions and reports/documents by the Working Group so as to facilitate the decision-making process by the Commission

- Ensuring the strategic linkage between the work of the Working Group and programmes and projects hosted to support the fisheries and healthy ecosystems framework of the CLME+ and any future phase of this project.
- Facilitating training and collaboration of WECAFC Member States and sub-regional training institutions as appropriate and based on available resources.

E. ROLES OF OTHER SUBREGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (E.G. CFMC, ICCAT, OSPESCA, UNEP-CEP, IFREMER, NOAA, CARICOM, OECS, CARICOM IMPACS, RSS, ETC.)

Sub-regional organizations have an important role to play in assisting their member countries to participate fully in the activities of the Working Group. Therefore, they may be invited to:

- Provide expertise, technical assistance and support;
- Facilitate procurement of funding when possible;
- Collaborate in implementing the activities of the Working Group;
- Collaborate with the WECAFC Secretariat and sub-regional organizations in coordinating the activities of the Working Group
- Facilitate the decision-making process at the Sub-regional level.

III. OUTPUTS

In discharging its duties, the WG will deliver the following outputs, from the perspective of monitoring, control, surveillance and enforcement:

- Biennial Work Plans including providing performance of projects on a routine schedule;
- Reports on the status of monitoring, control, surveillance and enforcement of measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing in WECAFC Member Countries;
- Report on the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing in WECAFC Member Countries
- Make recommendation for the revision and/or updating of the Regional Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing in WECAFC Member Countries
- Proposed Recommendations and Resolutions to the Commission,
- Revised TORs as needed

IV. COMMUNICATION

A mechanism for on-going communication among Working Group members (video conference, Skype, zoom meeting and email), is essential to ensure that the work of the group is sustained between meetings. It must include all Working Group members and the communication tools must be accessible to all Working Group members.

The successful functioning of the Working Group also requires that each member country and organization/ agency identify a national node or focal point who will be contacted through the WECAFC National Focal Point and technically coordinate at national level all matters pertinent to the WG. The outputs of the Working Group will be communicated through working group reports to WECAFC, OSPESCA, CFMC, CRFM, CITES, UNEP-CEP, ICCAT, IFREMER, and national fishery administrations via the WECAFC Secretariat.

V. WORKING GROUP MEETINGS AND COST

The Working Group should meet physically or virtually on a regular basis, the timing of which is decided by the members, but at a minimum once every two years. The meetings should, to the extent practicable be of 2-5 days' duration. The meetings should use cost effective accommodations and institutional facilities and where possible take advantage of other meetings in the region. Meetings shall be chaired by the Convener of the Working Group. The reports of the meetings will be formally submitted to OSPESCA, WECAFC, CFMC and CRFM, ICCAT, CITES, UNEP-CEP, IFREMER, Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute Network, etc.

VI. AMENDMENTS TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Amendment of these terms of reference may be done at each biennial meeting of the Commission for implementation by the working groups in the subsequent intersessional period.

VII. TEMPLATES FOR RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

Standardized templates will ensure a common understanding of what should be included in draft recommendations and resolutions, ease the reporting of deliverables as well as facilitate their review by other WECAFC bodies, as appropriate. Working Groups should include the following elements when preparing draft recommendations and resolutions to be presented to the WECAFC membership or other WECAFC bodies (e.g. the Scientific Advisory Group or other WECAFC Working Groups).

Recommendations and Resolutions

Draft recommendations and resolutions for review by other WECAFC bodies and the WECAFC membership should include the following elements:

- **Cover Note**: A brief cover note for draft recommendations and/or resolutions should be provided to assist reviewers. The cover note should include a clear, candid, and transparent explanation of:
 - a. why the action was developed,
 - b. at which Working Group meeting it was discussed,
 - c. a brief overview of how the Working Group arrived at its decision to put the action forward;
 - d. how the action will impact future WECAFC activities, including, where relevant any possible changes in resource or workload requirements for Members or the WECAFC Secretariat;
 - e. the ramifications of *not* approving the recommended action;
 - f. the full picture of the context for the recommended action.
- **Preambular Text**: This should provide essential elements to highlight the context and intent of the proposed action in a concise bulleted format. The preambular text should include only the core historical elements and should include references to related decisions or measures.
- **Action Text**: This should indicate clearly what action(s) the Working Group is taking, or is asking the WECAFC Membership to take, at a national, subregional, and/or regional level, including specific timelines to which the action(s) will adhere.

Considering that each Working Group can have more than one meeting, and more than one issue to address during each intersessional period, the Working Group can produce several reports/documents or draft resolutions/recommendations. In order to facilitate analysis by the Commission, each Working Group shall prepare a single set of recommendations and/or resolutions organized by fishery or by theme, including all the topics addressed in the intersessional meetings. In this regard, the Commission would

consider a single set of draft recommendations and/or resolutions for spiny lobster, queen conch, flying fish and dolphinfish, FADs, FDS, IUU fishing etc.

The Working Group shall refer relevant recommendations and resolutions of a scientific nature to the SAG for scientific review at least one month before the meeting of SAG, in order to provide adequate time to the Secretariat and SAG members to review them before the meeting. This will improve the efficiency of the reviews during the SAG sessions.

**III. Tailored Terms of Reference for the
CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES Working Group on
Queen conch WG**

VIII. Updated TOR

WORKING GROUPS TERMS OF REFERENCE DRAFT TEMPLATE

[CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES Working Group on Queen conch]

[insert date of endorsement of ToRs by Commission]

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I. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

Fishery management advice and recommendations, based on the best available scientific information, are provided to WECAFC member countries for their implementation by dedicated Working Groups, established by the Commission.

The Working Groups that were established or confirmed in the subsequent sessions since the 14th session of the Commission in 2012 are the following:

1. OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Caribbean Spiny Lobster
2. CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES Working Group on Queen Conch
3. WECAFC Working Group on the Management of Deep-Sea Fisheries
4. WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Recreational Fisheries
5. CRFM/WECAFC/JICA/IFREMER Working Group on Fisheries Using fish aggregating devices (FADS)
6. CRFM/WECAFC Working Group on Flyingfish in the Eastern Caribbean (established since the 17th Session of WECAFC as the flyingfish- Dolphinfish WG)
7. WECAFC/CRFM/IFREMER Working Group on Shrimp and Groundfish in the Northern Brazil-Guianas Shelf
8. CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM Working Group on Spawning Aggregations
9. Regional Working Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (RWG-IUU)
10. WECAFC Working Group for the Conservation And Management of Sharks in the Wider Caribbean Region
11. WECAFC/CRFM/OSPESCA Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group (FDS-WG)

Most Working Groups are joint working groups with other regional partner institutions, such as the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), the Organization of Fisheries for the Central American Isthmus (OSPESCA), the Caribbean Fishery Management Council (CFMC), the French Research Institute for Exploration of the Sea (IFREMER), etc. Fishery scientists, experts, managers and decision-makers of member countries, Regional partner organizations including academia and NGOs participate in the Working Groups, which have specific terms of reference that are time bound. The data used by the Working Groups to assess the status of fish stocks, to conduct fishery assessments and to generate fishery management advice and recommendations to the Commission are collected by the participating countries and NGOs.

The key drivers behind the establishment of these working groups are the need to collaborate and cooperate in the assessment and management of shared resources; need to standardize data collection and reporting systems to enable assessment of stock status using data and information from a range of countries that target the stock/species/resources throughout their distribution range; need to standardize conservation and management measures for effective management, need for training and capacity building to improve data collection and assessment of the status of fisheries/fish stocks; etc.

In undertaking its work, the Working Group will pay due attention to the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and its related guidelines, including the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries especially in regards to livelihoods and food security of communities

and value chain stakeholders dependent on sustainable management of these natural resources, as well as their contribution to achieving the targets of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, namely SDG 1 and 2; 5, 8; 12, 13 and 14, as well as any other agreed international or regional instruments for the conservation and management of fisheries, and the principles of precautionary, participatory and ecosystem approaches to fisheries management. The activities of the WG are also guided by any specific regional or international fisheries management or related obligations and initiatives or instruments of relevance to the respective resources associated with the specific WG – e.g. any FMPs, Declarations, agreed CMMs, regional strategies, regulations, etc.

II. ROLE OF THE WORKING GROUP

A. SCOPE OF THE WORK

The scope of each Working Group is to provide scientific and management advice for the sustainable management, conservation and development of living marine resources in the area of competence of WECAFC. This includes the development and support to national and regional plans of action in order to regulate target and bycatch fisheries, as well as manage existing populations within the region. Using a multidisciplinary approach, the working group will contribute to the sustainable management by providing management advice to Members of WECAFC based on the best available scientific knowledge/evidence and traditional/local ecological knowledge

In pursuing this goal, the Working Group will contribute to the fulfilment of national and regional responsibilities for the marine environment and for the management of [queen conch] and related or interacting species or fisheries in the WECAFC Region.

B. GOAL

The goal of each Working Group is to inform and provide guidance for the management of living marine resources in WECAFC members in such a manner as to promote transformation to responsible fisheries that provide economic opportunities, food security and human nutrition, secure social wellbeing while ensuring the conservation of living marine resources and the protection of marine biodiversity.

C. TASKS/ FUNCTIONS

The Working Group will:

- Collect, review and share the existing (past and present) data and information on the fishery in the WECAFC area, involving the fishers and private sector, especially women and youth, in addition to identifying the potential for sustainable management and development of such fisheries in the region.
- Analyze the data and information collected from capture fisheries and aquaculture production and make recommendations for the sustainability of the fisheries in the WECAFC region.
- Monitor changes in distribution and abundance of [queen conch] in the WECAFC region.
- Develop common and feasible methodologies for assessment and monitoring of the fish stock especially in data poor fisheries.
- Seek partnerships with other institutions that could provide assistance in the monitoring, evaluation, and recommendations for management for sustainable use, protection and conservation of the resources.
- Monitor and provide advice on the management and implementation of regional strategies, regulations and management plans to protect the fish resources.
- Establish communication between the members of the Working Group, other Working Groups and relevant parties on issues of common interest in order to strengthen regional collaboration in the assessment and management of living marine resources.

- Report to the Commission and contribute to communication and visibility of the deliverables of the Working Group as may be needed.
- Identify needs of communities dependent on the fishery resources and investigate alternative livelihoods from fisheries and aquaculture (recreational fishing, hospitality and tourism, etc.)
- [Continue to assess the implementation status of the 14 managements measures in the Regional Queen Conch Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan.]
- [Progressively advance in developing priority research at the regional level identified by the CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES Working Group on Queen conch (i.e. genetic connectivity, reproductive success and update of population dynamics parameters) that serve as a basis for better fisheries management.]
- [Expand the collection of socio-economic information to analyze how current a decline in the queen conch stock may decline impacts income, livelihoods, trade, and determine the need for innovative management strategies.]

D. MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Working Group shall consist of all Member States of CRFM and WECAFC, OSPESCA, including overseas territories and Departments.

III. MODE OF OPERATION:

A. ROLE OF COUNTRIES

The members of the Working Group will play a leading role in its activities through the following activities and commitments:

- Participate in agreed activities of the Working Group, and ensure the participation of appropriate experts;
- Implement, at the National level, the work identified in the WECAFC endorsed work plan (as appropriate);
- Report on implementation of agreed conservation and management measures
- Assist with mobilization of resources for the activities of the Working Group;
- Facilitate the organization of Working Group meetings in the languages of the Commission
- Host Working Group meetings on a rotational basis;
- Facilitate the identification of the Convener of the Working Group.

B. ROLE OF CONVENER

The Convener of the Working Group will play a leading role during the organization of the meetings and subsequent follow up with the Secretariat of WECAFC by coordinating the inputs of the members of the Working Group. The Convener should:

- Seek experts from among the WECAFC Members, contact potential partner organizations, and solicit their interest to join in the Working Group;
- Call for meetings as appropriate;
- Ensure that technical contributions are received in a timely manner and in the appropriate format;
- Ensure that outputs are delivered as agreed during each meeting;
- Collaborate closely with FAO-WECAFC and other sub-regional and regional organizations as appropriate;

- Assist in the preparation and publication process of the proceedings of the Working Group meeting;
- Participate (in person or virtually) at the SAG meetings to present the draft working documents and provide any clarifications as required;
- Facilitate the review by the Working Group membership within a reasonable period of time (max. 15 days) on suggested edits or modifications as considered necessary to address the comments of the SAG and the return of the revised document to the WECAFC Secretariat for distribution and consideration by the Commission;
- Participate in the Commission's sessions (physically or virtually) if required, to support the Secretariat in clarifying or substantiating some points of the draft working documents;
- Assist in the relevant processes to gather information in support of seeking funds to implement priority activities of the Working Group.

C. ELECTION AND ROLE OF CONVENER OF THE WORKING GROUP

- The Working Group shall elect a Convener from among its Members to serve over a two-year period. The term of office of the Convener may be extended as determined appropriate. In the case where another qualified Convener is not available, the Convener's term may be renewed for an additional two-year term until another Convener is selected.

D. ROLES OF THE FAO/WECAFC SECRETARIAT

The FAO/WECAFC Secretariat will play a supporting role in the activities of the Working Group by assisting in:

- Coordinating activities of the working group, among wecafc and non-wecafc members, at the wider regional level (including facilitate procurement of funding);
- Assisting with logistical arrangements for the convening of meetings of the working group;
- Providing technical assistance, such as a technical secretary or research support, if needed and as resources permit;
- Liaising with other regional fishery bodies (rfbs) active in the wider caribbean region and neighboring areas for their engagement as much as possible in the work of the working group; these rfbs include amongst others ospesca, crfm, cfmc, iccat, nafo, neafc, cecaf, coppesalc, etc;
- Liaising with other relevant regional organizations as appropriate, such as the sargasso sea commission, spaw protocol, etc;
- Coordinating the formulation and adoption of recommendations and/or resolutions and reports/documents by the working group so as to facilitate the decision-making process by the commission;
- Ensuring the strategic linkage between the work of the working group and programmes and projects hosted to support the fisheries and healthy ecosystems framework of the clme+ and any future phase of this project;
- Facilitating training and collaboration of wecafc member states and sub-regional training institutions as appropriate and based on available resources.

E. ROLES OF OTHER SUBREGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (E.G. CFMC, CRFM, ICCAT, OSPESCA, UNEP-CEP, IFREMER, NOAA, CARICOM, OECS, ETC.)

Sub-regional organizations have an important role to play in assisting their member countries to participate fully in the activities of the Working Group. Therefore, they may be invited to:

- Provide expertise, technical assistance and support;
- Facilitate procurement of funding when possible;
- Collaborate in implementing the activities of the Working Group;
- Collaborate with the WECAFC Secretariat and sub-regional organizations in coordinating the activities of the Working Group;
- Facilitate the decision-making process at the Sub-regional level.

IV. OUTPUTS

In discharging its duties, the Working Group will deliver the following outputs:

- Biennial Work Plans;
- Reports on assessment of the status of fish stocks;
- Draft Fisheries Management Plans;
- Draft Regional Plans of Actions;
- Proposed Recommendations and Resolutions to the Commission,
- Revised TORs as needed

V. COMMUNICATION

A mechanism for on-going communication among Working Group members (video conference, Skype, zoom meeting and email), is essential to ensure that the work of the group is sustained between meetings. It must include all Working Group members and the communication tools must be accessible to all Working Group members.

The successful functioning of the Working Group also requires that each member country and organization/ agency identify a national node or focal point who will be contacted through the WECAFC National Focal Point and technically coordinate at national level all matters pertinent to the WG. The outputs of the Working Group will be communicated through working group reports to WECAFC, OSPESCA, CFMC, CRFM, CITES, UNEP-CEP, ICCAT, IFREMER, and national fishery administrations via the WECAFC Secretariat.

VI. WORKING GROUP MEETINGS AND COST

The Working Group should meet physically or virtually on a regular basis, the timing of which is decided by the members, but at a minimum once every two years. The meetings should be of 2-5 days' duration. The meetings should use cost effective accommodations and institutional facilities and where possible take advantage of other meetings in the region. Meetings shall be chaired by the Convener of the Working Group. The reports of the meetings will be formally submitted to OSPESCA, WECAFC, CFMC and CRFM, ICCAT, CITES, UNEP-CEP, IFREMER, Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute Network, etc.

VII. AMENDMENTS TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Amendment of these terms of reference may be done at each biennial meeting of the Commission for implementation by the working groups in the subsequent intersessional period.

VIII. TEMPLATES FOR RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

[Standardized templates will ensure a common understanding of what should be included in draft recommendations and resolutions, ease the reporting of deliverables as well as facilitate their review by other WECAFC bodies, as appropriate. Working Groups should include the following elements when preparing draft recommendations and resolutions to be presented to the WECAFC membership or other WECAFC bodies (e.g. the Scientific Advisory Group or other WECAFC Working Groups).

Recommendations and Resolutions

Draft recommendations and resolutions for review by other WECAFC bodies and the WECAFC membership should include the following elements:

- **Cover Note**: A brief cover note for draft recommendations and/or resolutions should be provided to assist reviewers. The cover note should include a clear, candid, and transparent explanation of:
 - a. why the action was developed;
 - b. at which Working Group meeting it was discussed;
 - c. a brief overview of how the Working Group arrived at its decision to put the action forward;
 - d. how the action will impact future WECAFC activities, including, where relevant any possible changes in resource or workload requirements for Members or the WECAFC Secretariat;
 - e. the ramifications of *not* approving the recommended action;
 - f. the full picture of the context for the recommended action.

- **Preambular Text**: This should provide essential elements to highlight the context and intent of the proposed action in a concise bulleted format. The preambular text should include only the core historical elements and should include references to related decisions or measures.

- **Action Text**: This should indicate clearly what action(s) the Working Group is taking, or is asking the WECAFC Membership to take, at a national, subregional, and/or regional level, including specific timelines to which the action(s) will adhere.

Considering that each Working Group can have more than one meeting, and more than one issue to address during each intersessional period, the Working Groups can produce several reports/documents or draft resolutions/recommendations. In order to facilitate analysis by the Commission, each Working Group shall prepare a single set of recommendations and/or resolutions organized by fishery or by theme, including all the topics addressed in the intersessional meetings. In this regard, the Commission would consider a single set of draft recommendations and/or resolutions for spiny lobster, queen conch, flying fish and dolphinfish, FADs, FDS, etc.

The Working Groups shall refer relevant recommendations and resolutions of a scientific nature to the SAG for scientific review at least one month before the meeting of SAG, in order to provide adequate time to the Secretariat and SAG members to review them before the meeting. This will improve the efficiency of the reviews during the SAG sessions.

4. Tailored Terms of Reference for the SAWG

WESTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC FISHERY COMMISSION (WECAFC)
ELEVENTH (VIRTUAL) SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY GROUP (SAG)
25-27 APRIL 2022
CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM Working Group on Spawning Aggregations (SAWG) Convener: Myles Phillips
Summary of Changes from Existing TOR (2019) to Revised Interim TOR (2022)

Summary of Changes

The revised interim Terms of Reference (TOR) represents a departure from the existing TOR (Appendix 1) of the working group as enshrined in WECAFC/XVII/2019/Ref.28. This relatively simple TOR comprised four overarching aims for working group activities, as well as specific objectives for the period 2016-2018.

In 2021, a standardized template for presentation of TORs was recommended to all working groups. The Fish Spawning Aggregation Working Group Task Force made initial edits, before making the draft document available to all working group members via Google Drive for review and suggested edits. The changes to the template were tracked and have been captured in Appendix 2 of this document. This document, with changes accepted, has been presented to the Scientific Advisory Group XI Meeting in May 2022. The 2019 TOR was chiefly used to inform the Tasks/Functions section of the 2022 TOR.

Edits of primary interest occurred in the following sections of the 2022 TOR, and have been summarized or extracted here for review:

I. Background and Justification

In addition to minor edits to the description of the working groups, changes were made to the format and content of the key drivers behind the establishment of the Working Groups. Drivers were listed in bullet format rather than as a paragraph, and two new drivers were added (highlighted below).

- collaborate and cooperate in the assessment and management of shared resources;
- standardize data collection and reporting systems to enable assessment of stock status using data and information from various countries targeting the stock/species/resources throughout their distribution range;
- standardize the conservation and management measures for effective management;
- provide training and capacity-building to improve data collection and assessment of fisheries/fish stocks;
- harmonize regulations across the region, and countries, for effective fishery management; and
- cooperate to implement and enforce actions for effective fishery management.

II. Role of the working group

- a) Scope - Minor edits with addition of wording to highlight FSA focus and emphasis on conservation of Nassau Grouper and Mutton Snapper.
- b) Goal – Minor edits.

- c) Tasks/Functions – 2019 TOR and Recommendations were used to modify and expand indicative functions from the template to reflect the SAWG’s mandate, including a multidisciplinary approach to regional technical advisory and focus on Nassau Grouper and Mutton Snapper.
- d) Membership – Minor edits.

III. Mode of Operation

- a) Role of Countries – Minor edits.
- b) Role of Convener – Minor edits.
- c) Election and role of Convener – Minor edits
- d) Roles of the FAO/WECAFC Secretariat – Minor edits
- e) Roles of other Subregional organisations – Addition of language indicative of the framework for technical collaboration with respect to parrotfish established between the SAWG and CAR-SPAW-RAC

IV. Outputs – Minor edits. It was proposed to include reporting on project performance in biennial work plans.

V. Communication – Minor edits.

VI. Working Group Meetings and Cost – Minor edits.

VII. Amendments to Terms of Reference – Minor edits.

VIII. Templates for Recommendations and Resolutions – Minor edits.

Appendix 1: Existing TOR

TERMS OF REFERENCE CFMC /WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM Working Group on Spawning Aggregations

The working group will carry out the following tasks:

- Compile and analyze data on spawning aggregations in the member countries and monitor any changes.
- Seek partnerships with other institutions that could provide assistance in the monitoring, evaluation, and recommendations for management for protection and conservation of spawning aggregations.
- Provide advice on the management and implementation of regional strategies and regulations to protect spawning aggregations.
- Report to the appropriate institutions at each session.

In the period 2016–2018 the Working Group will specifically work on:

- a) Update and publish a spawning aggregations monitoring manual for the WECAFC members.
- b) Follow up on the recommendation WECAFC/15/2014/1 on the establishment of a regional closed season for fisheries in the WECAFC area to protect spawning aggregations of groupers and snappers.
- c) Establish an outreach and communication campaign on the closed areas and regionally agreed closed season.
- d) Support the development of a regional plan for the management and conservation of fish species that aggregate to spawn (targeting groupers and snappers), in accordance with the best available scientific evidence to be presented to the 17th session of WECAFC in 2018 for review, consideration and regional adoption.

Appendix 2 – Revised Interim TOR

WORKING GROUPS TERMS OF REFERENCE DRAFT TEMPLATE

[CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM-Working Group on Spawning Aggregations]

[insert date of endorsement of ToRs by Commission]

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I. Background and justification

Fishery management advice and recommendations, based on the best available scientific information, are provided to WECAFC member countries for their implementation by dedicated Working Groups, established by the Commission.

The Working Groups that were established or confirmed in the subsequent sessions since the 14th session of the Commission in 2012 are the following:

1. [OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Caribbean Spiny Lobster](#)
2. [CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES Working Group on Queen Conch](#)
3. [WECAFC Working Group on the Management of Deep-Sea Fisheries](#)
4. [WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Recreational Fisheries](#)
5. [CRFM/WECAFC/JICA/IFREMER Working Group on Fisheries Using fish aggregating devices \(FADS\)](#)
6. [CRFM/WECAFC Working Group on Flyingfish in the Eastern Caribbean \(established since the 17th Session of WECAFC as the flyingfish- Dolphinfish WG\)](#)
7. [WECAFC/CRFM/IFREMER Working Group on Shrimp and Groundfish in the Northern Brazil-Guianas Shelf](#)
8. [CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM Working Group on Spawning Aggregations](#)
9. [Regional Working Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing \(RWG-IUU\)](#)
10. [WECAFC Working Group for the Conservation And Management of Sharks in the Wider Caribbean Region](#)
11. [WECAFC/CRFM/OSPESCA Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group \(FDS-WG\)](#)

Most Working Groups (WGs) are joint groups with other regional partner institutions, such as the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), the Organization of Fisheries for the Central American Isthmus (OSPESCA), the Caribbean Fishery Management Council (CFMC), the French Research Institute for Exploration of the Sea (IFREMER), etc. Fishery scientists, experts, managers, and decision-makers of member countries as well as regional partner organizations, including academia and NGOs, participating in the WGs, which have specific, time-bound terms of reference. The data used by the Working Groups to assess the status of fish stocks, to conduct fishery assessments and to generate fishery management advice and recommendations to the Commission are collected by the participating countries and NGOs.

The key drivers behind the establishment of these WGs are the need to :

- collaborate and cooperate in the assessment and management of shared resources;
- standardize data collection and reporting systems to enable assessment of stock status using data and information from various countries targeting the stock/species/resources throughout their distribution range;
- standardize the conservation and management measures for effective management;
- provide training and capacity-building to improve data collection and assessment of fisheries/fish stocks;
- harmonize regulations across the region, and countries, for effective fishery management; and
- cooperate to implement and enforce actions for effective fishery management.

Each WG will pay due attention to the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and its related guidelines, including the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries, as well as any other agreed international or regional instruments for the conservation and management of fisheries. Also, the principles of precautionary, participatory and ecosystem approaches to fisheries management will be considered. The activities of the WGs are also guided by any specific regional or international fisheries management, or related obligations and initiatives or instruments of relevance, to the respective resources associated with the specific WG – e.g. any FMPs, Declarations, agreed CMMs, regional strategies, regulations etc.

II. Role of the Working Group

A. SCOPE OF THE WORK

The scope of each WG is to provide scientific and management advice for the sustainable management, conservation, and development of living marine resources in the area of competence of WECAFC. This scope also includes the development and support for the implementation of national and regional plans of action, and fishery management plans, to regulate target and bycatch fisheries, as well as manage existing populations in the region. Using a multidisciplinary approach, the WG will contribute to sustainable management by providing advice to the Members of WECAFC based on the best available scientific knowledge/evidence and traditional/local ecological knowledge. In pursuing this goal, the WG will contribute to the fulfillment of national and regional responsibilities for the marine environment and for the management of fish spawning aggregations, and related or interacting species or fisheries in the WECAFC Region, with special emphasis on the mutton snapper and Nassau Grouper

B. GOAL

The goal of each WG is to inform and provide guidance for the management of living marine resources to the WECAFC members in such a manner as to promote responsible fisheries, provide economic opportunities, and secure social wellbeing while ensuring the conservation of living marine resources and the protection of marine biodiversity.

C. TASKS/ FUNCTIONS

The WG will:

- Identify issues (gaps, deficiencies), challenges, and best practices in data collection at the national level in the region, and provide recommendations on how to address issues and challenges, and implementation of best practices.
- Collect, review and share the past and present data and information on spawning aggregations and their associated fisheries in the WECAFC area, involving the fishers and private sector
- Analyze the data and information collected from capture fisheries and aquaculture production and make recommendations for the sustainability of the fisheries of aggregating species in the WECAFC region.
- Monitor changes in distribution and abundance of all living aquatic species and resources of relevance to the mandate of the WG in the WECAFC region
- Develop common methodologies for data collection, assessment, and monitoring of the fish aggregations and stocks
- Seek partnerships with other institutions that could provide assistance in the monitoring, evaluation, and effective implementation of management recommendations for the protection and conservation of fish spawning aggregations.

- Monitor and provide advice on the management and implementation of regional strategies, regulations, and management plans to protect fish spawning aggregations .
- Establish communication between the members of the WG , other WGs and relevant parties on issues of common interest in order to strengthen regional collaboration in the conservation, assessment and management of fish spawning aggregations . Ensure development of education and outreach programs that articulate the message/s of the WG and facilitate the achievement of the goals and objectives of the SAWG work plan.
- Report to the Commission and contribute to communication and visibility of the deliverables of the Working Group as may be needed

D. MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the WG shall consist of all those Member States of CRFM and WECAFC, OSPESCA, including overseas territories and Departments. Specifically, Member representatives will be national Officers responsible for fisheries management with activities related, but not limited to, the following domains: statistical analyses of fisheries data, data collection, designing data collection systems, analyzing statistics for statistical bulletins, report preparation, organizing and managing data collection, storage and dissemination according to a variety of needs (e.g., RFMO reporting, departmental, scientific meetings, etc.).

III. Mode of Operation

A. ROLE OF COUNTRIES

The members of the WG will play a leading role i through the following activities and commitments :

- Participate in agreed activities and ensure the participation of appropriate experts;
- Implement, at the national level, the work identified in the WECAFC endorsed work plan (as appropriate);
- Identify and report on country-specific challenges and opportunities related to implementation of agreed conservation and management measures
- Assist with mobilization of resources and the development and dissemination of outreach materials ;
- Facilitate the organization of meetings in the languages of the Commission
- Host meetings on a rotational basis.
- Facilitate the identification of the Convener

B. ROLE OF CONVENER

The Convener of the WG will play a leading role during the organization of the meetings and subsequent follow up with the Secretariat of WECAFC by coordinating the inputs of the members of the WG . The Convener should:

- Seek experts from the WECAFC Members, contact potential partner organizations, and solicit their interest to join the WG ;
- Call for meetings as appropriate;
- Ensure that technical contributions are received in a timely manner and in the appropriate format;
- Ensure that outputs are delivered as agreed during each meeting
- Collaborate closely with FAO-WECAFC and other sub-regional and regional organizations as appropriate;
- Assist in the preparation and publication process of the proceedings of the WG meeting;

- Participate (in person or virtually) at the meetings to present the draft working documents and provide any clarifications as required;
- Facilitate the review by the WG membership within a reasonable period of time (max. 15 days) on suggested edits or modifications as considered necessary to address comments and the return of the revised document to the WECAFC Secretariat for distribution and consideration by the Commission;
- Participate in the Commission's sessions (physically or virtually) if required, to support the Secretariat in clarifying or substantiating some points of the draft working documents;
- Assist in the relevant processes to gather information in support of seeking funds to implement priority activities of the WG .
- Identify, participate and share information on inter-sessional activities.

C. ELECTION AND ROLE OF CONVENER

- The WG shall elect a Convener from among its Members to serve over a two-year period. The term of office of the Convener may be extended as determined appropriate. In the case where another qualified Convener is not available, the Convener's term may be renewed for an additional two-year term until another Convener is selected.

D. ROLES OF THE FAO/WECAFC SECRETARIAT

The FAO/WECAFC Secretariat will play a supporting role in the activities of the Working Group by assisting in:

- Coordinating activities of the WG , among WECAFC and Non-WECAFC Members, at the wider regional level (including facilitating procurement of funding);
- Assisting with logistical arrangements for the convening of meetings ;
- Providing technical assistance, such as a technical secretary or research support, if needed and as resources permit
- Liaising with other Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) active in the Wider Caribbean Region and neighboring areas for their engagement and collaboration as much as possible in the work of the WG ; these RFBs include amongst others OSPESCA, CRFM, CFMC, ICCAT, NAFO, NEAFC, CECAF, COPPESAALC, etc.
- Liaising with other relevant regional and international organizations as appropriate, such as the Sargasso Sea Commission, SPAW Protocol, etc.
- Coordinating the formulation and adoption of recommendations and/or resolutions and reports/documents by the WG so as to facilitate the decision-making process by the Commission
- Ensuring the strategic linkage between the work of the WG and programmes and projects hosted to support the fisheries and healthy ecosystems framework of the CLME+ and any future phase of this project.
- Facilitating training and collaboration of WECAFC Member States and sub-regional training institutions as appropriate and based on available resources.

E. ROLES OF OTHER SUBREGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (E.G. CFMC, CRFM, ICCAT, OSPESCA, UNEP-CEP, IFREMER, NOAA, CARICOM, OECS, ETC.)

Sub-regional organizations have an important role to play in assisting their member countries to participate fully in the activities of the Working Group. Therefore, they may be invited to:

- Provide expertise, technical assistance and support;
- Facilitate procurement of funding when possible;
- Collaborate in implementing the activities of the Working Group;
- Collaborate with the WECAFC Secretariat and sub-regional organizations in coordinating the activities of the WG
- Facilitate the decision-making process at the Sub-regional level.

Regional Activity Centre for the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife for the Wider Caribbean Region (CAR-SPAW-RAC)

Pursuant to mutual aims and objectives with the WG:

- The convener of this working group will contribute as a technical representative to the SPAW STAC Ad Hoc Working Group on Parrotfish.
- CAR-SPAW-RAC will provide expertise, technical assistance and support with respect to management of species of parrotfish which form spawning aggregations.

IV. Outputs

In discharging its duties, the WG will deliver the following outputs :

- Biennial Work Plans including providing performance of projects on a routine schedule;
- Reports on assessment and monitoring of the status of spawning aggregations;
- Draft Fisheries Management Plans;
- Draft Regional Plans of Action ;
- Proposed Recommendations and Resolutions to the Commission,
- Revised TORs as needed

V. Communication

A mechanism for on-going communication among WG members (video conference, Skype, zoom meeting and email), is essential to ensure that the work of the group is sustained between meetings. It must include all members and the communication tools must be accessible to all members.

The successful functioning of the WG also requires that each member country and organization/ agency identify a national node or focal point who will be contacted through the WECAFC National Focal Point and technically coordinate at national level all matters pertinent to the WG. The outputs of the WG will be communicated through reports to WECAFC, OSPESCA, CFMC, CRFM, CITES, UNEP-CEP, ICCAT, IFREMER, and national fishery administrations via the WECAFC Secretariat.

VI. Working Group meetings and cost

The WG should meet physically or virtually on a regular basis, the timing of which is decided by the members, but at a minimum once every two years. The meetings should be of 2-5 days and use cost effective accommodations and institutional facilities and where possible take advantage of other meetings

in the region. Meetings shall be chaired by the Convener of the WG. The reports of the meetings will be formally submitted to OSPESCA, WECAFC, CFMC and CRFM, ICCAT, CITES, UNEP-CEP, IFREMER, Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute Network, etc.

VII. Amendments to the Terms of Reference

Amendment of these terms of reference may be done at each biennial meeting of the Commission for implementation by the working groups in the subsequent intersessional period.

VIII. Templates for Recommendations and Resolutions

[Standardized templates will ensure a common understanding of what should be included in draft recommendations and resolutions, ease the reporting of deliverables as well as facilitate their review by other WECAFC bodies, as appropriate. Working Groups should include the following elements when preparing draft recommendations and resolutions to be presented to the WECAFC membership or other WECAFC bodies (e.g. the Scientific Advisory Group or other WECAFC Working Groups).

Recommendations and Resolutions

Draft recommendations and resolutions for review by other WECAFC bodies and the WECAFC membership should include the following elements:

- **Cover Note**: A brief cover note for draft recommendations and/or resolutions should be provided to assist reviewers. The cover note should include a clear, candid, and transparent explanation of:
 - a. why the action was developed,
 - b. at which WG meeting it was discussed,
 - c. a brief overview of how the WG arrived at its decision to put the action forward;
 - d. how the action will impact future WECAFC activities, including, where relevant any possible changes in resource or workload requirements for Members or the WECAFC Secretariat;
 - e. the ramifications of *not* approving the recommended action;
 - f. the full picture of the context for the recommended action.
- **Preambular Text**: This should provide essential elements to highlight the context and intent of the proposed action in a concise bulleted format. The preambular text should include only the core historical elements and should include references to related decisions or measures.
- **Action Text**: This should indicate clearly what action(s) the WG is taking, or is asking the WECAFC Membership to take, at a national, subregional, and/or regional level, including specific timelines to which the action(s) will adhere.

Considering that each WG can have more than one meeting, and more than one issue to address during each intersessional period, the WGs can produce several reports/documents or draft resolutions/recommendations. In order to facilitate analysis by the Commission, each WG shall prepare a single set of recommendations and/or resolutions organized by fishery or by theme, including all the topics addressed in the intersessional meetings. In this regard, the Commission would consider a single set of draft recommendations and/or resolutions for spiny lobster, queen conch, flying fish and dolphinfish, FADs, FDS, etc.

The WGs shall refer relevant recommendations and resolutions of a scientific nature to the SAG for scientific review at least one month before the meeting of SAG, in order to provide adequate time to the Secretariat and SAG members to review them before the meeting. This will improve the efficiency of the reviews during the SAG sessions.

5. Tailored Terms of Reference for the
WECAFC/CRFM/OSPESCA Working Group on Fishery, Data and Statistics

IX. Updated Tailored Terms of Reference

X. Content Changed from the Template provided by the Secretariat

What was changed from the Template

- [insert Working Group Name]

WECAFC-CRFM-OSPESCA Fisheries Data and Statistics (FDS-WG) Working Group

- [insert date of endorsement of ToRs by Commission]
- [to be completed upon endorsement date]

II. Role of Working Group

a. Scope of work

- [insert specific resources under the mandate of the Working Group]
- [all living aquatic species and resources under the mandate of the WECAFC]

c. Tasks/functions

- - added
- [Formulate recommendations and guidelines for data collection and statistics.]
- Develop standardized data collection formats and templates to be collectively considered for coordinated national and regional implementation.]
- Modified
- [Monitor changes in distribution and abundance of species [insert species or resources of relevance to the mandate of the WG] in the WECAFC region.]
- to read:
- Monitor changes in distribution and abundance of [all living aquatic species and resources of relevance to the mandate of WECAFC] in the WECAFC region

- Membership
- Added

[Specifically, Member representatives will be national Officers responsible of Fishery Statistics and Data in WECAFC Member Countries (e.g., statisticians, data managers, directors of fisheries statistics, or fisheries offices, etc.) with activities related to the following domains: statistical analyses of fisheries data, data collection, designing data collection systems, analyzing statistics for statistical bulletins, report preparation, organizing and managing data collection, storage and dissemination according to a variety of needs (e.g., RFMO reporting, departmental, scientific meetings, etc.).]

- I. Mode of Operation
- II. Roles of Countries

Modified

[The members of the Working Group will play a leading role in its activities through the following activities and commitments:]

to read

[The members of the Working Group will play a leading role in its activities through the following activities and commitments, and through a data and statistics perspective:]

c) [Election and role of Convener of Working Group]

Added to TORs moving from the Guidance document:

- [In addition to the election of a Convener, this FDS WG will elect two Co-Conveners from among its Members to serve over a two-year period.
- In cases where it is identified that a period of training (shadowing) the existing Convener in a training capacity may benefit the transition to Convener succession, the Members may identify two Co-Conveners who would act in this capacity working closely with the existing Convener until the subsequent WG meeting.]

XI.

WORKING GROUPS TERMS OF REFERENCE DRAFT

WECAFC/CRFM/OSPESCA Working Group on Fishery, Data and Statistics

[insert date of endorsement of ToRs by Commission]

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I. Background and justification

Fishery management advice and recommendations, based on the best available scientific information, are provided to WECAFC member countries for their implementation by dedicated Working Groups, established by the Commission.

The Working Groups that were established or confirmed in the subsequent sessions since the 14th session of the Commission in 2012 are the following:

- XII. OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Caribbean Spiny Lobster**
- XIII. CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES Working Group on Queen Conch**
- XIV. WECAFC Working Group on the Management of Deep-Sea Fisheries**
- XV. WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Recreational Fisheries**
- XVI. CRFM/WECAFC/JICA/IFREMER Working Group on Fisheries Using fish aggregating devices (FADS)**
- XVII. CRFM/WECAFC Working Group on Flyingfish in the Eastern Caribbean (established since the 17th Session of WECAFC as the flyingfish- Dolphinfish WG)**
- XVIII. WECAFC/CRFM/IFREMER Working Group on Shrimp and Groundfish in the Northern Brazil-Guianas Shelf**
- XIX. CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM Working Group on Spawning Aggregations**
- XX. Regional Working Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (RWG-IUU)**
- XXI. WECAFC Working Group for the Conservation And Management of Sharks in the Wider Caribbean Region**
- XXII. WECAFC/CRFM/OSPESCA Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group (FDS-WG)**

Most Working Groups are joint working groups with other regional partner institutions, such as the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), the Organization of Fisheries for the Central American Isthmus (OSPESCA), the Caribbean Fishery Management Council (CFMC), the French Research Institute for Exploration of the Sea (IFREMER), etc. Fishery scientists, experts, managers and decision-makers of member countries, Regional partner organizations including academia and NGOs participate in the Working Groups, which have specific terms of reference that are time bound. The data used by the Working Groups to assess the status of fish stocks, to conduct fishery assessments and to generate fishery management advice and recommendations to the Commission are collected by the participating countries and NGOs.

The key drivers behind the establishment of these working groups are the need to collaborate and cooperate in the assessment and management of shared resources; need to standardize data collection and reporting systems to enable assessment of stock status using data and information from a range of countries that target the stock/species/resources throughout their distribution range; need to standardize conservation and management measures for effective management, need for training and capacity building to improve data collection and assessment of the status of fisheries/fish stocks; etc. etc.

In undertaking its work, the Working Group will pay due attention to the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and its related guidelines, including the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries, as well as any other agreed international or regional instruments for the conservation and management of fisheries, and the principles of precautionary, participatory and ecosystem approaches to fisheries management. The activities of the WG are also guided by any specific regional or international fisheries management or related obligations and initiatives or instruments of relevance to the respective resources associated with the specific WG – e.g. any FMPs, Declarations, agreed CMMs, regional strategies, regulations etc.

II. Role of the Working Group

A. SCOPE OF THE WORK

The scope of each Working Group is to provide scientific and management advice for the sustainable management, conservation and development of **all** living marine resources in the area of competence of WECAFC. This includes the development and support to national and regional plans of action in order to regulate target and bycatch fisheries, as well as manage existing populations within the region. Using a multidisciplinary approach, the working group will contribute to the sustainable management by providing management advice to Members of WECAFC based on the best available scientific knowledge/evidence and traditional/local ecological knowledge. In pursuing this goal, the Working Group will contribute to the fulfilment of national and regional responsibilities for the marine environment and for the management of **all living aquatic species and resources under the mandate of the WECAFC and related or interacting species or fisheries in the WECAFC Region.**

B. GOAL

The goal of each Working Group is to inform and provide guidance for the management of living marine resources in WECAFC members in such a manner as to promote responsible fisheries that provide economic opportunities, secure social wellbeing while ensuring the conservation of living marine resources and the protection of marine biodiversity. .

C. TASKS/ FUNCTIONS

The Working Group will):

- Identify issues (gaps, deficiencies), challenges and best practices in data collection at national level in the region, and provide recommendations on how to address issues and challenges, and implementing best practices.
- Formulate recommendations and guidelines for data collection and statistics.
- Develop standardized data collection formats and templates to be collectively considered for coordinated national and regional implementation.
- Collect, review and share the existing (past and present) data and information on the fishery in the WECAFC area, involving the fishers and private sector, in addition to identifying the potential for development of such fisheries in the region.
- Analyze the data and information collected from capture fisheries and aquaculture production and make recommendations for the sustainability of the fisheries in the WECAFC region.
- Monitor changes in distribution and abundance of all living aquatic species and resources of relevance to the mandate of WECAFC in the WECAFC region
- Develop common methodologies for assessment and monitoring of the fish stocks
- Seek partnerships with other institutions that could provide assistance in the monitoring, evaluation, and recommendations for management for protection and conservation of the resources.
- Monitor and provide advice on the management and implementation of regional strategies, regulations and management plans to protect the fish resources.
- Establish communication between the members of the Working Group, other Working Groups and relevant parties on issues of common interest in order to strengthen regional collaboration in the assessment and management of living marine resources.
- Report to the Commission and contribute to communication and visibility of the deliverables of the Working Group as may be needed

D. MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Working Group shall consist of all Member States of CRFM and WECAFC, OSPESCA, including overseas territories and Departments.

Specifically, Member representatives will be national Officers responsible of Fishery Statistics and Data in WECAFC Member Countries (e.g., statisticians, data managers, directors of fisheries statistics, or fisheries offices, etc.) with activities related to the following domains: statistical analyses of fisheries data, data collection, designing data collection systems, analyzing statistics for statistical bulletins, report preparation, organizing and managing data collection, storage and dissemination according to a variety of needs (e.g., RFMO reporting, departmental, scientific meetings, etc.).

III. Mode of Operation:

A. ROLE OF COUNTRIES

The members of the Working Group will play a leading role in its activities through the following activities and commitments, and through a data and statistics perspective:

- Participate in agreed activities of the Working Group, and ensure the participation of appropriate experts;
- Implement, at the National level, the work identified in the WECAFC endorsed work plan (as appropriate);
- Report on implementation of agreed conservation and management measures

- Assist with mobilization of resources for the activities of the Working Group;
- Facilitate the organization of Working Group meetings in the languages of the Commission
- Host Working Group meetings on a rotational basis.
- Facilitate the identification of the Convener of the Working Group

B. ROLE OF CONVENER

The Convener of the Working Group will play a leading role during the organization of the meetings and subsequent follow up with the Secretariat of WECAFC by coordinating the inputs of the members of the Working Group. The Convener should:

- Seek experts from among the WECAFC Members, contact potential partner organizations, and solicit their interest to join in the Working Group;
- Call for meetings as appropriate;
- Ensure that technical contributions are received in a timely manner and in the appropriate format;
- Ensure that outputs are delivered as agreed during each meeting
- Collaborate closely with FAO-WECAFC and other sub-regional and regional organizations as appropriate;
- Assist in the preparation and publication process of the proceedings of the Working Group meeting;
- Participate (in person or virtually) at the SAG meetings to present the draft working documents and provide any clarifications as required;
- Facilitate the review by the Working Group membership within a reasonable period of time (max. 15 days) on suggested edits or modifications as considered necessary to address the comments of the SAG and the return of the revised document to the WECAFC Secretariat for distribution and consideration by the Commission;
- Participate in the Commission's sessions (physically or virtually) if required, to support the Secretariat in clarifying or substantiating some points of the draft working documents;
- Assist in the relevant processes to gather information in support of seeking funds to implement priority activities of the Working Group.

C. ELECTION AND ROLE OF CONVENER OF THE WORKING GROUP

- The Working Group shall elect a Convener from among its Members to serve over a two-year period. The term of office of the Convener may be extended as determined appropriate. In the case where another qualified Convener is not available, the Convener's term may be renewed for an additional two-year term until another Convener is selected.

D. ROLE OF THE FAO/WECAFC SECRETARIAT

The FAO/WECAFC Secretariat will play a supporting role in the activities of the Working Group by assisting in:

- Coordinating activities of the Working Group, among WECAFC and Non-WECAFC Members, at the wider regional level (including facilitate procurement of funding);
- Assisting with logistical arrangements for the convening of meetings of the Working Group;
- Providing technical assistance, such as a technical secretary or research support, if needed and as resources permit
- Liaising with other Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) active in the Wider Caribbean Region and neighboring areas for their engagement as much as possible in the work of the Working Group;

these RFBs include amongst others OSPESCA, CRFM, CFMC, ICCAT, NAFO, NEAFC, CECAF, COPPESAALC, etc..

- Liaising with other relevant regional and international organizations as appropriate, such as the Sargasso Sea Commission, SPAW Protocol, etc.
- Coordinating the formulation and adoption of recommendations and/or resolutions and reports/documents by the Working Group so as to facilitate the decision-making process by the Commission
- Ensuring the strategic linkage between the work of the Working Group and programmes and projects hosted to support the fisheries and healthy ecosystems framework of the CLME+ and any future phase of this project.
- Facilitating training and collaboration of WECAFC Member States and sub-regional training institutions as appropriate and based on available resources.

E. ROLES OF OTHER SUBREGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (E.G. CFMC, CRFM, ICCAT, OSPESCA, UNEP-CEP, IFREMER, NOAA, CARICOM, OECS, ETC.)

Sub-regional organizations have an important role to play in assisting their member countries to participate fully in the activities of the Working Group. Therefore, they may be invited to:

- Provide expertise, technical assistance and support;
- Facilitate procurement of funding when possible; Collaborate in implementing the activities of the Working Group;
- Collaborate with the WECAFC Secretariat and sub-regional organizations in coordinating the activities of the Working Group
- Facilitate the decision-making process at the Sub-regional level.

IV. Outputs

In discharging its duties, the WG will deliver the following outputs, from a data and statistics perspective:

- Biennial Work Plans including providing performance of projects on a routine schedule;
- Reports on assessment and monitoring of the status of fish stocks;
- Draft Fisheries Management Plans;
- Draft Regional Plans of Actions;
- Proposed Recommendations and Resolutions to the Commission,
- Revised TORs as needed

V. Communication

A mechanism for on-going communication among Working Group members (video conference, Skype, zoom meeting and email), is essential to ensure that the work of the group is sustained between meetings. It must include all Working Group members and the communication tools must be accessible to all Working Group members.

The successful functioning of the Working Group also requires that each member country and organization/ agency identify a national node or focal point who will be contacted through the WECAFC National Focal Point and technically coordinate at national level all matters pertinent to the WG. The outputs of the Working Group will be communicated through working group reports to WECAFC, OSPESCA, CFMC, CRFM, CITES, UNEP-CEP, ICCAT, IFREMER, and national fishery administrations via the WECAFC Secretariat.

VI. Working Group meetings and cost

The Working Group should meet physically or virtually on a regular basis, the timing of which is decided by the members, but at a minimum once every two years. The meetings should be of 2-5 days' duration. The meetings should use cost effective accommodations and institutional facilities and where possible take advantage of other meetings in the region. Meetings shall be chaired by the Convener of the Working Group. The reports of the meetings will be formally submitted to OSPESCA, WECAFC, CFMC and CRFM, ICCAT, CITES, UNEP-CEP, IFREMER, Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute Network, etc.

VII. Amendments to the Terms of Reference

Amendment of these terms of reference may be done at each biennial meeting of the Commission for implementation by the working groups in the subsequent intersessional period.

VIII. Templates for Recommendations and Resolutions

[Standardized templates will ensure a common understanding of what should be included in draft recommendations and resolutions, ease the reporting of deliverables as well as facilitate their review by other WECAFC bodies, as appropriate. Working Groups should include the following elements when preparing draft recommendations and resolutions to be presented to the WECAFC membership or other WECAFC bodies (e.g. the Scientific Advisory Group or other WECAFC Working Groups).

Recommendations and Resolutions

Draft recommendations and resolutions for review by other WECAFC bodies and the WECAFC membership should include the following elements:

- Cover Note: A brief cover note for draft recommendations and/or resolutions should be provided to assist reviewers. The cover note should include a clear, candid, and transparent explanation of:
 - g. why the action was developed,
 - h. at which Working Group meeting it was discussed,
 - i. a brief overview of how the Working Group arrived at its decision to put the action forward;
 - j. how the action will impact future WECAFC activities, including, where relevant any possible changes in resource or workload requirements for Members or the WECAFC Secretariat;
 - k. the ramifications of *not* approving the recommended action;
 - l. the full picture of the context for the recommended action.

- Preambular Text: This should provide essential elements to highlight the context and intent of the proposed action in a concise bulleted format. The preambular text should include only the core historical elements and should include references to related decisions or measures.
- Action Text: This should indicate clearly what action(s) the Working Group is taking, or is asking the WECAFC Membership to take, at a national, subregional, and/or regional level, including specific timelines to which the action(s) will adhere.

Considering that each Working Group can have more than one meeting, and more than one issue to address during each intersessional period, the Working Groups can produce several reports/documents or draft resolutions/recommendations. In order to facilitate analysis by the Commission, each Working Group shall prepare a single set of recommendations and/or resolutions organized by fishery or by theme, including all the topics addressed in the intersessional meetings. In this regard, the Commission would consider a single set of draft recommendations and/or resolutions for spiny lobster, queen conch, flying fish and dolphinfish, FADs, FDS, etc.

The Working Groups shall refer relevant recommendations and resolutions of a scientific nature to the SAG for scientific review at least one month before the meeting of SAG, in order to provide adequate time to the Secretariat and SAG members to review them before the meeting. This will improve the efficiency of the reviews during the SAG sessions.

6. Tailored Terms of Relevance for the Shrimp & Groundfish

7. **Tailored Terms of Reference for the Sharks WG**

[Items modified as follows]

Terms of Reference for the ECAFC/CITES/OSPESCA/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Shark Conservation and Management (Sharks Working Group)

ROLE OF THE WORKING GROUP

This Working Group, with the support of FAO, WECAFC Secretariat, CFMC, CRFM and OSPESCA, will provide, among others, a platform for supporting the conservation and sustainable management of shark fisheries in the Wider Caribbean region.

Until an RPOA is adopted, the actions of the Working Group will be guided by the guidelines laid out in the FAO IPOA-Sharks.

8. Tailored Terms of Reference for the Lobster

WORKING GROUPS TERMS OF REFERENCE DRAFT TEMPLATE

[OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Caribbean Spiny Lobster]

[insert date of endorsement of ToRs by Commission]

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I. Background and justification

Fishery management advice and recommendations, based on the best available scientific information, are provided to WECAFC member countries for their implementation by dedicated Working Groups, established by the Commission.

The Working Groups that were established or confirmed in the subsequent sessions since the 14th session of the Commission in 2012 are the following:

1. [OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Caribbean Spiny Lobster](#)
2. [CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES Working Group on Queen Conch](#)
3. [WECAFC Working Group on the Management of Deep-Sea Fisheries](#)
4. [WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Recreational Fisheries](#)
5. [CRFM/WECAFC/JICA/IFREMER Working Group on Fisheries Using fish aggregating devices \(FADS\)](#)
6. [CRFM/WECAFC Working Group on Flyingfish in the Eastern Caribbean \(established since the 17th Session of WECAFC as the flyingfish- Dolphinfish WG\)](#)
7. [WECAFC/CRFM/IFREMER Working Group on Shrimp and Groundfish in the Northern Brazil-Guianas Shelf](#)
8. [CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM Working Group on Spawning Aggregations](#)
9. [Regional Working Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing \(RWG-IUU\)](#)
10. [WECAFC Working Group for the Conservation And Management of Sharks in the Wider Caribbean Region](#)
11. [WECAFC/CRFM/OSPESCA Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group \(FDS-WG\)](#)

Most Working Groups are joint working groups with other regional partner institutions, such as the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), the Organization of Fisheries for the Central American Isthmus (OSPESCA), the Caribbean Fishery Management Council (CFMC), the French Research Institute for Exploration of the Sea (IFREMER), etc. Fishery scientists, experts, managers and decision-makers of member countries, Regional partner organizations including academia and NGOs participate in the Working Groups, which have specific terms of reference that are time bound. The data used by the Working Groups to assess the status of stocks of **harvested species**, to conduct fishery assessments and to generate fishery management advice and recommendations to the Commission are collected by the participating countries and NGOs.

The key drivers behind the establishment of these working groups are the need to collaborate and cooperate in the assessment and management of shared resources; need to standardize data collection and reporting systems to enable assessment of stock status using data and information from a range of countries that target the stock/species/resources throughout their distribution range; need to standardize conservation and management measures for effective management, need for training and capacity building to improve data collection and assessment of the status of fisheries/fish stocks; etc.

In undertaking its work, the Working Group will pay due attention to the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and its related guidelines, including the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries especially in regards to livelihoods and food security of communities and value chain stakeholders dependent on sustainable management of these natural resources, as well as their contribution to achieving the targets of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, namely SDG 1 and 2; 5, 8; 12, 13 and 14, as well as any other agreed international or regional instruments for the conservation and management of fisheries, and the principles of precautionary, participatory and ecosystem approaches to fisheries management. The activities of the WG are also guided by any specific

regional or international fisheries management or related obligations and initiatives or instruments of relevance to the respective resources associated with the specific WG – e.g. any FMPs, Declarations, agreed CMMs, regional strategies, regulations, etc.

II. Role of the Working Group

A) SCOPE OF THE WORK

The scope of each Working Group is to provide scientific and management advice for the sustainable management, conservation and development of living marine resources in the area of competence of WECAFC. This includes the development and support to national and regional plans of action in order to regulate target and bycatch fisheries, as well as manage existing populations within the region. Using a multidisciplinary approach, the working group will contribute to the sustainable management by providing management advice to Members of WECAFC based on the best available scientific knowledge/evidence and traditional/local ecological knowledge

In pursuing this goal, the Working Group will contribute to the fulfilment of national and regional responsibilities for the marine environment and for the management of the **Caribbean spiny lobster** and related or interacting species or fisheries in the WECAFC Region.

B) GOAL

The goal of each Working Group is to inform and provide guidance for the management of living marine resources to WECAFC members in such a manner as to promote transformation to responsible fisheries that provide economic opportunities, food security and human nutrition, secure social wellbeing while ensuring the conservation of living marine resources and the protection of marine biodiversity.

C) TASKS/ FUNCTIONS

The Working Group will:

- Collect, review and share the existing (past and present) data and information on the fishery in the WECAFC area, involving the fishers and private sector, especially women and youth, in addition to identifying the potential for sustainable management and development of such fisheries in the region.
- Analyze the data and information collected from **Caribbean spiny lobster** fisheries and aquaculture production and make recommendations for the sustainability of the fisheries in the WECAFC region.
- Monitor changes in distribution and abundance of the **Caribbean spiny lobster** in the WECAFC region.
- Develop common and feasible methodologies for the assessment and monitoring of the **status of Caribbean spiny lobster stocks, taking into account the different levels of exploitation (industrial and artisanal) in the member countries.**
- Seek partnerships with other institutions that could provide assistance in the monitoring, evaluation, and recommendations for management for sustainable use, protection and conservation of the resources.
- Monitor and provide advice on the management and implementation of regional strategies, regulations and management plans to protect the fish resources.
- Establish communication between the members of the Working Group, other Working Groups and relevant parties on issues of common interest in order to strengthen regional collaboration in the assessment and management of living marine resources.
- Report to the Commission and contribute to communication and visibility of the deliverables of the Working Group as may be needed.

- Identify needs of communities dependent on the fishery resources and investigate alternative livelihoods from fisheries and aquaculture (recreational fishing, hospitality and tourism, etc.).
- Develop and propose improved and coordinated management measures in the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.
- Assess and define the most sustainable and resource and ecosystem-friendly fishing gear to catch Caribbean spiny lobster.
- Inform OSPESCA, WECAFC, CFMC and CRFM about the outcome of each session.

D) MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Working Group shall consist of all Member States of CRFM and WECAFC, OSPESCA, including overseas territories and Departments.

These members shall be national officials of fisheries authorities, offices or institutes, in charge of the collection and management of fisheries data and statistics. They shall have experience with the Caribbean spiny lobster. They shall be involved in/related to data collection and processing and/or assessment of this fishery. They shall have knowledge of fisheries biology and stock assessments.

III. Mode of Operation

A) ROLE OF COUNTRIES

The members of the Working Group will play a leading role in its activities through the following activities and commitments:

- Participate in agreed activities of the Working Group, and ensure the participation of appropriate experts;
- Implement, at the national level, the work identified in the WECAFC endorsed work plan (as appropriate);
- Report on implementation of agreed conservation and management measures
- Assist with mobilization of resources for the activities of the Working Group;
- Facilitate the organization of Working Group meetings in the languages of the Commission
- Host Working Group meetings on a rotational basis;
- Facilitate the identification of the Convener of the Working Group.

B) ROLE OF CONVENER

The Convener of the Working Group will play a leading role during the organization of the meetings and subsequent follow up with the Secretariat of WECAFC by coordinating the inputs of the members of the Working Group. The Convener should:

- Seek experts from among the WECAFC Members, contact potential partner organizations, and solicit their interest to join in the Working Group;
- Call for meetings as appropriate;
- Ensure that technical contributions are received in a timely manner and in the appropriate format;
- Ensure that outputs are delivered as agreed during each meeting;
- Collaborate closely with FAO-WECAFC and other sub-regional and regional organizations as appropriate;
- Assist in the preparation and publication process of the proceedings of the Working Group meeting;

- Participate (in person or virtually) at the SAG meetings to present the draft working documents and provide any clarifications as required;
- Facilitate the review by the Working Group membership within a reasonable period of time (max. 15 days) on suggested edits or modifications as considered necessary to address the comments of the SAG and the return of the revised document to the WECAFC Secretariat for distribution and consideration by the Commission;
- Participate in the Commission's sessions (physically or virtually) if required, to support the Secretariat in clarifying or substantiating some points of the draft working documents;
- Assist in the relevant processes to gather information in support of seeking funds to implement priority activities of the Working Group.

C) ELECTION AND ROLE OF CONVENER OF THE WORKING GROUP

- The Working Group shall elect a Convener from among its Members to serve over a two-year period. The term of office of the Convener may be extended as determined appropriate. In the case where another qualified Convener is not available, the Convener's term may be renewed for an additional two-year term until another Convener is selected.

D) ROLES OF THE FAO/WECAFC SECRETARIAT

The FAO/WECAFC Secretariat will play a supporting role in the activities of the Working Group by assisting in:

- Coordinating activities of the Working Group, among WECAFC and Non-WECAFC Members, at the wider regional level (including facilitate procurement of funding);
- Assisting with logistical arrangements for the convening of meetings of the Working Group;
- Providing technical assistance, such as a technical secretary or research support, if needed and as resources permit;
- Liaising with other Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) active in the Wider Caribbean Region and neighboring areas for their engagement as much as possible in the work of the Working Group; these RFBs include amongst others OSPESCA, CRFM, CFMC, ICCAT, NAFO, NEAFC, CECAF, COPPESAALC, etc;
- Liaising with other relevant regional organizations as appropriate, such as the Sargasso Sea Commission, SPAW Protocol, etc;
- Coordinating the formulation and adoption of recommendations and/or resolutions and reports/documents by the Working Group so as to facilitate the decision-making process by the Commission;
- Ensuring the strategic linkage between the work of the Working Group and programmes and projects hosted to support the fisheries and healthy ecosystems framework of the CLME+ and any future phase of this project;
- Facilitating training and collaboration of WECAFC Member States and sub-regional training institutions as appropriate and based on available resources.

E) ROLES OF OTHER SUBREGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (E.G. CFMC, CRFM, ICCAT, OSPESCA, UNEP-CEP, IFREMER, NOAA, CARICOM, OECS, ETC.)

Sub-regional organizations have an important role to play in assisting their member countries to participate fully in the activities of the Working Group. Therefore, they may be invited to:

- Provide expertise, technical assistance and support;
- Facilitate procurement of funding when possible;
- Collaborate in **the implementation** of the activities of the Working Group;
- Collaborate with the WECAFC Secretariat and sub-regional organizations in coordinating the activities of the Working Group;
- Facilitate the decision-making process at the Sub-regional level.

IV. Outputs

In discharging its duties, the Working Group will deliver the following outputs:

- Biennial Work Plans;
- Reports on assessment of the status of fish stocks;
- Draft Fisheries Management Plans;
- Draft Regional Plans of Actions;
- Proposed Recommendations and Resolutions to the Commission,
- Revised TORs as needed

V. Communication

A mechanism for on-going communication among Working Group members (video conference, Skype, zoom meeting and email), is essential to ensure that the work of the group is sustained between meetings. It must include all Working Group members and the communication tools must be accessible to all Working Group members.

The successful functioning of the Working Group also requires that each member country and organization/ agency identify a national node or focal point who will be contacted through the WECAFC National Focal Point and technically coordinate at national level all matters pertinent to the WG. The outputs of the Working Group will be communicated through working group reports to WECAFC, OSPESCA, CFMC, CRFM, CITES, UNEP-CEP, ICCAT, IFREMER, and national fishery administrations via the WECAFC Secretariat.

VI. Working Group meetings and cost

The Working Group should meet physically or virtually on a regular basis, the timing of which is decided by the members, but at a minimum once every two years. The meetings should be of 2-5 days' duration. The meetings should use cost effective accommodations and institutional facilities and where possible take advantage of other meetings in the region. Meetings shall be chaired by the Convener of the Working Group. The reports of the meetings will be formally submitted to OSPESCA, WECAFC, CFMC and CRFM, ICCAT, CITES, UNEP-CEP, IFREMER, Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute Network, etc.

VII. Amendments to the Terms of Reference

Amendment of these terms of reference may be done at each biennial meeting of the Commission for implementation by the working groups in the subsequent intersessional period.

VIII. Templates for Recommendations and Resolutions

[Standardized templates will ensure a common understanding of what should be included in draft recommendations and resolutions, ease the reporting of deliverables as well as facilitate their review by other WECAFC bodies, as appropriate. Working Groups should include the following elements when preparing draft recommendations and resolutions to be presented to the WECAFC membership or other WECAFC bodies (e.g. the Scientific Advisory Group or other WECAFC Working Groups).

Recommendations and Resolutions

Draft recommendations and resolutions for review by other WECAFC bodies and the WECAFC membership should include the following elements:

- **Cover Note**: A brief cover note for draft recommendations and/or resolutions should be provided to assist reviewers. The cover note should include a clear, candid, and transparent explanation of:
 - a. why the action was developed;
 - b. at which Working Group meeting it was discussed;
 - c. a brief overview of how the Working Group arrived at its decision to put the action forward;
 - d. how the action will impact future WECAFC activities, including, where relevant any possible changes in resource or workload requirements for Members or the WECAFC Secretariat;
 - e. the ramifications of *not* approving the recommended action;
 - f. the full picture of the context for the recommended action.
- **Preambular Text**: This should provide essential elements to highlight the context and intent of the proposed action in a concise bulleted format. The preambular text should include only the core historical elements and should include references to related decisions or measures.
- **Action Text**: This should indicate clearly what action(s) the Working Group is taking, or is asking the WECAFC Membership to take, at a national, subregional, and/or regional level, including specific timelines to which the action(s) will adhere.

Considering that each Working Group can have more than one meeting, and more than one issue to address during each intersessional period, the Working Groups can produce several reports/documents or draft resolutions/recommendations. In order to facilitate analysis by the Commission, each Working Group shall prepare a single set of recommendations and/or resolutions organized by fishery or by theme, including all the topics addressed in the intersessional meetings. In this regard, the Commission would consider a single set of draft recommendations and/or resolutions for spiny lobster, queen conch, flying fish and dolphinfish, FADs, FDS, etc.

The Working Groups shall refer relevant recommendations and resolutions of a scientific nature to the SAG for scientific review at least one month before the meeting of SAG, in order to provide adequate time to the Secretariat and SAG members to review them before the meeting. This will improve the efficiency of the reviews during the SAG sessions.

9. Tailored Terms of Reference for the Deep-sea

WORKING GROUPS TERMS OF REFERENCE TEMPLATE

Working Group on the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries

[insert date of endorsement of ToRs by Commission]

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I. Background and justification

Fishery management advice and recommendations, based on the best available scientific information, are provided to WECAFC member countries for their implementation by dedicated Working Groups, established by the Commission.

The Working Groups that were established or confirmed in the subsequent sessions since the 14th session of the Commission in 2012 are the following:

- XXIII. OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Caribbean Spiny Lobster**
- XXIV. CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES Working Group on Queen Conch**
- XXV. WECAFC Working Group on the Management of Deep-Sea Fisheries**
- XXVI. WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Recreational Fisheries**
- XXVII. CRFM/WECAFC/JICA/IFREMER Working Group on Fisheries Using fish aggregating devices (FADS)**
- XXVIII. CRFM/WECAFC Working Group on Flyingfish in the Eastern Caribbean (established since the 17th Session of WECAFC as the flyingfish- Dolphinfish WG)**
- XXIX. WECAFC/CRFM/IFREMER Working Group on Shrimp and Groundfish in the Northern Brazil-Guianas Shelf**
- XXX. CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM Working Group on Spawning Aggregations**
- XXXI. Regional Working Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (RWG-IUU)**
- XXXII. WECAFC Working Group for the Conservation And Management of Sharks in the Wider Caribbean Region**
- XXXIII. WECAFC/CRFM/OSPESCA Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group (FDS-WG)**

Most Working Groups are joint working groups with other regional partner institutions, such as the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), the Organization of Fisheries for the Central American Isthmus (OSPESCA), the Caribbean Fishery Management Council (CFMC), the French Research Institute for Exploration of the Sea (IFREMER), etc. Fishery scientists, experts, managers and decision-makers of member countries, Regional partner organizations including academia and NGOs participate in the Working Groups, which have specific terms of reference that are time bound. The data used by the Working Groups to assess the status of fish stocks, to conduct fishery assessments and to generate fishery management advice and recommendations to the Commission are collected by the participating countries and NGOs.

The key drivers behind the establishment of these working groups are the need to collaborate and cooperate in the assessment and management of shared resources; need to standardize data collection and reporting systems to enable assessment of stock status using data and information from a range of countries that target the stock/species/resources throughout their distribution range; need to standardize conservation and management measures for effective management, need for training and capacity building to improve data collection and assessment of the status of fisheries/fish stocks; etc.

In undertaking its work, the Working Group will pay due attention to the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and its related guidelines, including the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries especially in regards to livelihoods and food security of communities and value chain stakeholders dependent on sustainable management of these natural resources, as well as their contribution to achieving the targets of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, namely SDG 1 and 2; 5, 8; 12, 13 and 14, as well as any other agreed international or regional instruments for the conservation and management of fisheries, and the principles of precautionary, participatory and ecosystem approaches to fisheries management. The activities of the WG are also guided by any specific regional or international fisheries management or related obligations and initiatives or instruments of relevance to the respective resources associated with the specific WG – e.g. any FMPs, Declarations, agreed CMMs, regional strategies, regulations, etc.

II. Role of the Working Group

A. SCOPE OF THE WORK

The scope of each Working Group is to provide scientific and management advice for the sustainable management, conservation and development of living marine resources in the area of competence of WECAFC. This includes the development and support to national and regional plans of action in order to regulate target and bycatch fisheries, as well as manage existing populations within the region. Using a multidisciplinary approach, the working group will contribute to the sustainable management by providing management advice to Members of WECAFC based on the best available scientific knowledge/evidence and traditional/local ecological knowledge

In pursuing this goal, the Working Group will contribute to the fulfilment of national and regional responsibilities for the marine environment and for the management of Deep-sea fisheries and related or interacting species or fisheries in the WECAFC Region.

B. GOAL

The goal of each Working Group is to inform and provide guidance for the management of living marine resources in WECAFC members in such a manner as to promote transformation to responsible fisheries that provide economic opportunities, food security and human nutrition, secure social wellbeing while ensuring the conservation of living marine resources and the protection of marine biodiversity.

C. TASKS/ FUNCTIONS

The Working Group will:

- Collect, review and share the existing (past and present) data and information on the fishery in the WECAFC area, involving the fishers and private sector, especially women and youth, in addition to identifying the potential for sustainable management and development of such fisheries in the region.
- Analyze the data and information collected from capture fisheries and aquaculture production and make recommendations for the sustainability of the fisheries in the WECAFC region.
- Monitor changes in distribution and abundance of species of Deep-sea Fisheries in the WECAFC region.
- Develop common and feasible methodologies for assessment and monitoring of the fish stock especially in data poor fisheries.
- Seek partnerships with other institutions that could provide assistance in the monitoring, evaluation, and recommendations for management for sustainable use, protection and conservation of the resources.
- Monitor and provide advice on the management and implementation of regional strategies, regulations and management plans to protect the fish resources.
- Establish communication between the members of the Working Group, other Working Groups and relevant parties on issues of common interest in order to strengthen regional collaboration in the assessment and management of living marine resources.
- Report to the Commission and contribute to communication and visibility of the deliverables of the Working Group as may be needed.
- Identify needs of communities dependent on the fishery resources and investigate alternative livelihoods from fisheries and aquaculture (recreational fishing, hospitality and tourism, etc.)
- Carry out research on conservation of fishing resources both commercial and non-commercial fish and crustaceans which are found between 200 and 1000 m of depth which comprise highly complex and dynamic assemblages and diversity of the WECAFC countries.
- Contribute towards the conservation of deep sea communities and their habitats which supply resources for fishing by considering these the focal point of exportation of materials and energy towards neighboring ecosystems.
- Favor the conservation of the deep sea resources considering their individual conditions of low resistance and high vulnerability (for example: deep-sea Chondrichthyes due to the extremely low resilience to fishing exploitation)
- Do not allow fishing of any kind beyond 600 m depth to protect the reproductive adult population and biodiversity.
- Carry out research on the reproductive biology of commercially important deep-sea crustacean species in the WECAFC countries for management and sustainable use.

- Promote the use and training of marine robotic technologies for ecological monitoring: Cameras, underwater Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROV), integrated Optic-Acoustics studies of deep-sea ecosystems.
- Carry out research on biodiversity conservation and assessment of the fishing potential of fisheries resources in the deep waters of the WECAFC countries based on an ecosystem approach (for example to identify Marine Protected Areas).
- Promote the use of gear and fishing methods that do not alter the habitat, with the active participation of fishermen from the design and construction of the fishing gear: traps (traps) for the selective capture of crustaceans and fish, and artisanal longlines with curved hooks to avoid bycatch of non-target species, fishing methods with a low impact on underwater life and ecosystems.
- To get funding for a Project about "Biodiversity conservation and assessment of the fishing potential of fisheries resources in the deep waters of the countries of The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) based on an ecosystem approach"

D. MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Working Group shall consist of all Member States of CRFM and WECAFC, OSPESCA, including overseas territories and Departments.

III. Mode of Operation:

A. ROLE OF COUNTRIES

The members of the Working Group will play a leading role in its activities through the following activities and commitments:

- Participate in agreed activities of the Working Group, and ensure the participation of appropriate experts;
- Implement, at the National level, the work identified in the WECAFC endorsed work plan (as appropriate);
- Report on implementation of agreed conservation and management measures
- Assist with mobilization of resources for the activities of the Working Group;
- Facilitate the organization of Working Group meetings in the languages of the Commission
- Host Working Group meetings on a rotational basis;
- Facilitate the identification of the Convener of the Working Group.

B. ROLE OF CONVENER

The Convener of the Working Group will play a leading role during the organization of the meetings and subsequent follow up with the Secretariat of WECAFC by coordinating the inputs of the members of the Working Group. The Convener should:

- Seek experts from among the WECAFC Members, contact potential partner organizations, and solicit their interest to join in the Working Group;
- Call for meetings as appropriate;
- Ensure that technical contributions are received in a timely manner and in the appropriate format;
- Ensure that outputs are delivered as agreed during each meeting;

- Collaborate closely with FAO-WECAFC and other sub-regional and regional organizations as appropriate;
- Assist in the preparation and publication process of the proceedings of the Working Group meeting;
- Participate (in person or virtually) at the SAG meetings to present the draft working documents and provide any clarifications as required;
- Facilitate the review by the Working Group membership within a reasonable period of time (max. 15 days) on suggested edits or modifications as considered necessary to address the comments of the SAG and the return of the revised document to the WECAFC Secretariat for distribution and consideration by the Commission;
- Participate in the Commission's sessions (physically or virtually) if required, to support the Secretariat in clarifying or substantiating some points of the draft working documents;
- Assist in the relevant processes to gather information in support of seeking funds to implement priority activities of the Working Group.

C. ELECTION AND ROLE OF CONVENER OF THE WORKING GROUP

- The Working Group shall elect a Convener from among its Members to serve over a two-year period. The term of office of the Convener may be extended as determined appropriate. In the case where another qualified Convener is not available, the Convener's term may be renewed for an additional two-year term until another Convener is selected.

D. ROLES OF THE FAO/WECAFC SECRETARIAT

The FAO/WECAFC Secretariat will play a supporting role in the activities of the Working Group by assisting in:

- Coordinating activities of the Working Group, among WECAFC and Non-WECAFC Members, at the wider regional level (including facilitate procurement of funding);
- Assisting with logistical arrangements for the convening of meetings of the Working Group;
- Providing technical assistance, such as a technical secretary or research support, if needed and as resources permit;
- Liaising with other Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) active in the Wider Caribbean Region and neighboring areas for their engagement as much as possible in the work of the Working Group; these RFBs include amongst others OSPESCA, CRFM, CFMC, ICCAT, NAFO, NEAFC, CECAF, COPPESAALC, etc;
- Liaising with other relevant regional organizations as appropriate, such as the Sargasso Sea Commission, SPAW Protocol, etc;
- Coordinating the formulation and adoption of recommendations and/or resolutions and reports/documents by the Working Group so as to facilitate the decision-making process by the Commission;
- Ensuring the strategic linkage between the work of the Working Group and programmes and projects hosted to support the fisheries and healthy ecosystems framework of the CLME+ and any future phase of this project;
- Facilitating training and collaboration of WECAFC Member States and sub-regional training institutions as appropriate and based on available resources.

E. ROLES OF OTHER SUBREGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (E.G. CFMC, CRFM, ICCAT, OSPESCA, UNEP-CEP, IFREMER, NOAA, CARICOM, OECS, ETC.)

Sub-regional organizations have an important role to play in assisting their member countries to participate fully in the activities of the Working Group. Therefore, they may be invited to:

- Provide expertise, technical assistance and support;
- Facilitate procurement of funding when possible;
- Collaborate in implementing the activities of the Working Group;
- Collaborate with the WECAFC Secretariat and sub-regional organizations in coordinating the activities of the Working Group;
- Facilitate the decision-making process at the Sub-regional level.

IV. Outputs

In discharging its duties, the Working Group will deliver the following outputs:

- Biennial Work Plans;
- Reports on assessment of the status of fish stocks;
- Draft Fisheries Management Plans;
- Draft Regional Plans of Actions;
- Proposed Recommendations and Resolutions to the Commission,
- Revised TORs as needed

V. Communication

A mechanism for on-going communication among Working Group members (video conference, Skype, zoom meeting and email), is essential to ensure that the work of the group is sustained between meetings. It must include all Working Group members and the communication tools must be accessible to all Working Group members.

The successful functioning of the Working Group also requires that each member country and organization/ agency identify a national node or focal point who will be contacted through the WECAFC National Focal Point and technically coordinate at national level all matters pertinent to the WG. The outputs of the Working Group will be communicated through working group reports to WECAFC, OSPESCA, CFMC, CRFM, CITES, UNEP-CEP, ICCAT, IFREMER, and national fishery administrations via the WECAFC Secretariat.

VI. Working Group meetings and cost

The Working Group should meet physically or virtually on a regular basis, the timing of which is decided by the members, but at a minimum once every two years. The meetings should be of 2-5 days' duration. The meetings should use cost effective accommodations and institutional facilities and where possible take advantage of other meetings in the region. Meetings shall be chaired by the Convener of the Working Group. The reports of the meetings will be formally submitted to OSPESCA, WECAFC, CFMC and CRFM, ICCAT, CITES, UNEP-CEP, IFREMER, Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute Network, etc.

In the WECAFC area there are currently no deep-water fisheries, but there are some studies carried out in Colombia that show the potential of deep-water crustaceans and fishes for the beginning of new fisheries. However, it is necessary to have knowledge about management and conservation strategies and generate ecosystem indicators for new fisheries in the WECAF area under an ecosystem approach. Additionally,

we must study the life cycle: growth, recruitment, mortality, areas and seasons of spawning, nursery regions, and associated biodiversity, before the beginning of a new commercial fishery. For this reason, during the next two years it is intended to carry out activities that lead to obtaining information to collect, analyze, monitor, carry out research on the conservation and sustainable use of deep-sea fishing resources. In this way, it is intended to hold a first workshop (Table 1) in July 2022, with experts from the WECAFC area, to prepare a regional project on "Biodiversity conservation and assessment of the fishing potential of fisheries resources in the deep waters of the countries of The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) based on an ecosystem approach" and seek funding sources. In the second workshop to be held in April 2023, information that may exist on potential fishery resources in the WECAFC area will be analyzed and monitoring, management and conservation strategies recommended (Table 1). A very important aspect to carry out research and monitoring in deep water resources is to use state-of-the-art technologies, for which it is intended to carry out two training courses on: 1) Fisheries stock assessment with data-poor, 2) Use of marine robotic technologies for ecological monitoring (Table 1). The budget to carry out these activities are listed in Table 2.

VII. Amendments to the Terms of Reference

Amendment of these terms of reference may be done at each biennial meeting of the Commission for implementation by the working groups in the subsequent intersessional period.

VIII. Templates for Recommendations and Resolutions

[Standardized templates will ensure a common understanding of what should be included in draft recommendations and resolutions, ease the reporting of deliverables as well as facilitate their review by other WECAFC bodies, as appropriate. Working Groups should include the following elements when preparing draft recommendations and resolutions to be presented to the WECAFC membership or other WECAFC bodies (e.g. the Scientific Advisory Group or other WECAFC Working Groups).

Recommendations and Resolutions

Draft recommendations and resolutions for review by other WECAFC bodies and the WECAFC membership should include the following elements:

- **Cover Note**: A brief cover note for draft recommendations and/or resolutions should be provided to assist reviewers. The cover note should include a clear, candid, and transparent explanation of:
 - g. why the action was developed;
 - h. at which Working Group meeting it was discussed;
 - i. a brief overview of how the Working Group arrived at its decision to put the action forward;
 - j. how the action will impact future WECAFC activities, including, where relevant any possible changes in resource or workload requirements for Members or the WECAFC Secretariat;
 - k. the ramifications of *not* approving the recommended action;
 - l. the full picture of the context for the recommended action.

- **Preambular Text**: This should provide essential elements to highlight the context and intent of the proposed action in a concise bulleted format. The preambular text should include only the core historical elements and should include references to related decisions or measures.
- **Action Text**: This should indicate clearly what action(s) the Working Group is taking, or is asking the WECAFC Membership to take, at a national, subregional, and/or regional level, including specific timelines to which the action(s) will adhere.

Considering that each Working Group can have more than one meeting, and more than one issue to address during each intersessional period, the Working Groups can produce several reports/documents or

draft resolutions/recommendations. In order to facilitate analysis by the Commission, each Working Group shall prepare a single set of recommendations and/or resolutions organized by fishery or by theme, including all the topics addressed in the intersessional meetings. In this regard, the Commission would consider a single set of draft recommendations and/or resolutions for spiny lobster, queen conch, flying fish and dolphinfish, FADs, FDS, etc.

The Working Groups shall refer relevant recommendations and resolutions of a scientific nature to the SAG for scientific review at least one month before the meeting of SAG, in order to provide adequate time to the Secretariat and SAG members to review them before the meeting. This will improve the efficiency of the reviews during the SAG sessions.

10. Tailored Terms of Reference for the Recreational

The Recreational WG did not meet during the intersession.

11. Tailored Terms of Reference for the Joint Flying fish – Dolphin fish WG

This WG did not meet during the intersession.

12. Tailored Terms of Reference for the Flyingfish-Dolphinfish WG

Appendix F. Work Plans of the WECAFC Working Groups

Work Plans for the individual joint working groups of the Commission were reviewed at the SAG XI session. Upon review, WGs were requested by SAG to liaise with WG members after the session and revise the work plans in the context of prioritizing activities (e.g., short, medium, long term) and to indicate linkages of individual elements of the work plans in the context of the Strategic Plan of the Commission. Additionally, WGs were requested to provide where possible estimates of costs associated with the work plan elements. Revisions were requested to be submitted to SAG within 15 days of receiving written guidance from SAG after the session on expected additions to the work plans.

The individual Work Plans follow.

2. Work Plan for the Moored Fishery Aggregating Devices Working Group (MFADS)

Draft Work Plan 2022-2024 Intersession Period for WECAFC/SAG/XI

Activity	Timetable	Responsible Entity
1. To review data on MFAD fisheries and conduct analyses of pelagic fish resources including through collaboration with the Fisheries Data and Statistics Working		<i>Convener with CRFM, OSPESCA, WECAFC Secretariat, and IFREMER</i>
2. To provide technical advice and guidance based on the outputs of the JICA-CARIFICO Project and the Billfish Project		<i>WECAFC Members, CRFM, and OSPESCA</i>
3. To collaborate with IFREMER, academia, and other research institutions on the use of technology on MFADs (e.g. satellite-linked echosounders) for improved assessment of abundance of key fish stocks associated with MFAD fisheries		<i>Convener with CRFM, OSPESCA, WECAFC Secretariat, and IFREMER</i>
4. To develop and finalize manuals on best practices on (1) fishing and business strategies for sustainable MFAD fisheries, (2) safety and working conditions of MFAD fishers, and (3) governance of MFAD fisheries. These manuals should be presented during training sessions with fishers		<i>Convener with CRFM, OSPESCA, WECAFC Secretariat, and IFREMER</i>
5. To promote the reporting of MFADs fisheries statistics to ICCAT		<i>CRFM, WECAFC Secretariat, and IFREMER</i>
6. To develop and finalize manuals on best practices on (1) fishing and business strategies for sustainable MFAD fisheries, (2) safety and working conditions of MFAD fishers, and (3) governance of MFAD fisheries. These manuals should be presented during training sessions with fishers		<i>WECAFC Members</i>
7. To promote the reporting of MFADs fisheries statistics to ICCAT		<i>OSPESCA, CRFM, and WECAFC Secretariat</i>
8. To collaborate on co-management within MFADs fisheries, noting the successful examples in Grenada, Dominica, and Bonaire,		<i>CRFM with assistance of CFMC, OSPESCA, and relevant fisherfolk</i>

and strengthen ties with the Recreational Fisheries Working Group		<i>organizations and National Fishery Authorities</i>
9. To collaborate on use of low-cost Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for improved monitoring of MFAD fisheries, noting the promising examples of Dominica and Monserrat and strengthen ties with Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group		<i>WECAFC Secretariat and Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group</i>
10. To facilitate the sharing of data, information, and experiences related to MFAD fisheries in the region in collaboration with the Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group		<i>CRFM with assistance of CFMC, OSPESCA, and relevant fisherfolk organizations and National Fishery Authorities</i>
11. To facilitate the sharing of information and experiences related to MFAD designs in the region and outside the region		<i>WECAFC Secretariat and Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group</i>
12. To review and finalize the Regional Management Plan for MFAD Fisheries in the Caribbean, the guide for improved monitoring of MFADs, and the guide for implementation of local MFAD fishery management plans		<i>WECAFC Secretariat</i>
13. To support Members' efforts to develop (sub-) national FAD (co-)management plans and improved monitoring systems for MFADs		<i>OSPESCA, CRFM, and WECAFC Secretariat, WECAFC members</i>

3. Work Plan for the Regional Working Group on Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing (RWG-IUU WG)

2.A. Activity Plan

#	Activity	Responsible	Status	Proposed activity end date	Priority (importance x urgency x practicality)	Notes/Linkages (including to elements of the Strategic plan)
1	Design and carry out a review study to assess the nature and extent of IUU fishing in the WECAFC region (USD152,500)	Convener + WG members	Had previously been postponed pending development[/finalization]] of FAO methodological guidelines	Mid-2023	Medium	In coordination with NFIO's work towards methodology to estimate the extent of IUU fishing. (FA1)
2	Develop NPOAs - IUU based on the RPOA-IUU and inform FAO/WEC AFC after adoption (USD19,060)	WG members	Ongoing. 5 (CRFM) Member States have commenced development of NPOAs-IUU	End-2024	High	Also to be informed by the ongoing work on NPOA-IUU development guidance and the findings of the members Readiness study. (FA1)
3	Finalization of the study	Convener + CRFM	Concept note developed; develop and finalise	Mid-2023	High	Postponed Achievem

#	Activity	Responsible	Status	Proposed activity end date	Priority (importance x urgency x practicality)	Notes/Linkages (including to elements of the Strategic plan)
	proposal Determining cost effective measures to combat IUU fishing, and approaching of potential resource partners (USD2,500)		proposal			ent based on relevant info from the study to assess the nature and extent of IUU fishing (FA1; FA2)
4	Encourage /support increased national regulations, to ensure effective monitoring and control of transshipment activities (USD38,000)	WECAFC Secretariat; WG Members	ongoing	2024	Medium	In progress in national support activities (FA1; FA2)
5	Identify information that should be shared at regional	Coordination Mechanism for Sustainable	To commence in 2022	Mid-2023	High	Important for the work to be done to raise awareness

#	Activity	Responsible	Status	Proposed activity end date	Priority (importance x urgency x practicality)	Notes/Linkages (including to elements of the Strategic plan)
	level to facilitate enforcement of national transshipment regulations (USD25,000)	Fisheries; WG Members				on transshipment contributing to laundering IUU catch into the supply chain and improve the monitoring, control and regulation of transshipment activities (FA1; FA2)
6	Encourage /support alignment of national regulations, with voluntary guidelines for marking of fishing gear. (USD25,000)	Coordination Mechanism for Sustainable Fisheries; WG Members	ongoing	Mid-2024	Medium	In progress in national support activities (FA1; FA2)
7	Develop an IUU	WG Members	t.b.d.	Guidance to be	Medium	Probable review of

#	Activity	Responsible	Status	Proposed activity end date	Priority (importance x urgency x practicality)	Notes/Linkages (including to elements of the Strategic plan)
	Vessel List for the region, using internationally applied criteria and procedures, and arrange with TM Tracking for maintaining the list (57,180)	with WECAFC, CRFM, OSPESCA and TM Tracking		sought from WECAFC 18/ End-2024		the FAO Standard Specifications for the Marking and Identification of Fishing Vessels (FA2; FA3)
8	Develop protocols for “cooperation in monitoring, control and surveillance to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing” under the Caribbean Community Common Fishery	CRFM, OSPESCA plus relevant WG members ; supported by WECAFC Secretariat	ongoing	Mid-2024	Medium	(FA1)

#	Activity	Responsible	Status	Proposed activity end date	Priority (importance x urgency x practicality)	Notes/Linkages (including to elements of the Strategic plan)
	Policy and OSPESCA, respectively (USD47,650)					
9	Organize exchange of information and study tours for WG members to learn about successful and best-practice approaches in MCS and fisheries inspection in general (WG members, facilitated by the CRFM, OSPESCA and WECAFC Secretariats	Ongoing	2024	Low	Needs to be strengthened, with more collaboration, information generation by WG members or WECAFC focal points then coordination by WECAFC Secretariat (FA1; FA4)
10	Develop new draft recommendation for regional vessel record for WECAFC region	WECAFC Secretariat together with FAO HQ, in consultation with WG	To be commenced	In time for WECAFC 19 (2024)	Medium	(FA1; FA2)

#	Activity	Responsible	Status	Proposed activity end date	Priority (importance x urgency x practicality)	Notes/Linkages (including to elements of the Strategic plan)
	(USD19,130)	Members				
11	Guidance document for the development of NPOA-IUU (USD20,000)	CLME+ project together with FAO HQ and WECAFC Secretariat	Ongoing	December 2022	Medium	(FA1)
12	Engage in the ongoing process coming up to COFI 34 for the possible development of guidelines for regulating, monitoring and controlling transshipment operations (USD19,130)	WG Members	Recommendation endorsed by SAG XI	COFI 35	Medium	(FA1; FA2; FA3)
13	Development of a GEF proposal to combat IUU	CLME+ project together with FAO HQ and WECAFC	Concept Note was presented at the 4 th WG Meeting for expression of interest by WECAFC members	End-2022	High	(FA1; FA2; FA3; FA4)

#	Activity	Responsible	Status	Proposed activity end date	Priority (importance x urgency x practicality)	Notes/Linkages (including to elements of the Strategic plan)
	fishing in selected countries in the WECAFC area (USD 22,140)	Secretariat				
14	Development of an implementation plan of the RPOA-IUU (USD30,340)	WECAFC Secretariat and FAO HQ colleagues	Readiness study report includes the elements of an implementation plan	5 th RWG-IUU (mid 2023)	High	(FA1; FA2)
15	Presentation of deliverables (recommendations and resolutions) to the 11 th Session of the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) of WECAFC (USD2,500)	WECAFC Secretariat and Convener of the RWG-IUU	Report presented to SAG XI	April 2022	High	As per WECAFC17 instructions, WG convener presented recommendations to SAG and is on hold for the Commission's deliberations (FA1; FA2; FA3; FA4)
16	Report on the work of the RWG-IUU	SAG and WECAFC Secretariat in	Report presented to SAG XI	April 2022	High	As per WECAFC17 instructio

#	Activity	Responsible	Status	Proposed activity end date	Priority (importance x urgency x practicality)	Notes/Linkages (including to elements of the Strategic plan)
	and eventual support to SAG for the submission of recommendations to WECAFC18 (USD2,500)	consultation with WG Convenor				ns WG convenor presented recommendations to SAG and is on hold for the Commission's deliberations (FA1; FA3; FA4)
17	Organise the 5 th RWG-IUU and publication of the proceedings (USD 5,750)	RWG-IUU	To commence	Mid-2023	Medium	(FA1; FA3; FA4)

2.B. Gantt chart showing Time frame for the RWG-IUU Proposed 2022-2024 work schedule

#	Activity	Year											
		2022				2023				2024			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1	Design and carry out a review study to assess the nature and extent of IUU fishing in the WECAFC region												
2	Develop NPOAs -IUU based on the RPOA-IUU and inform FAO/WECAFC after adoption												
3	Finalization of the study proposal Determining cost effective measures to combat IUU fishing, and approaching of potential resource partners												
4	Encourage/support increased national regulations, to ensure effective monitoring and control of transshipment activities												
5	Identify information that should be shared at regional level to facilitate enforcement of national transshipment regulations												
6	Encourage/support alignment of national regulations, with voluntary guidelines for marking of fishing gear.												
7	Develop an IUU Vessel List for the region, using internationally applied criteria and procedures, and arrange with TM Tracking for maintaining the list												
8	Develop protocols for “cooperation in monitoring, control and surveillance to combat illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing” under the Caribbean Community Common Fishery Policy and OSPESCA, respectively												

#	Activity	Year											
		2022				2023				2024			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
9	Organize exchange of information and study tours for WG members to learn about successful and best-practice approaches in MCS and fisheries inspection in general												
10	Develop new draft recommendation for regional vessel record for WECAFC region												
11	Guidance document for the development of NPOA-IUU												
12	Engage in the ongoing process coming up to COFI 35 for the possible development of guidelines for regulating, monitoring and controlling transshipment operations												
13	Development of a GEF proposal to combat IUU fishing in selected countries in the WECAFC area												
14	Development of an implementation plan of the RPOA-IUU												
15	Presentation of deliverables (recommendations and resolutions) to the 11 th Session of the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) of WECAFC												
16	Report on the work of the RWG-IUU and eventual support to SAG for the submission of recommendations to WECAFC18												
17	Organise the 5 th RWG-IUU and publication of the proceedings												

3. Work Plan for the CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES Working Group on Queen conch WG

Activity	Timetable	Responsible Entity	Group/Theme	Budget	Activity Linkages	Strategic Linkages	Plan
1. Address any gaps in implementation of the management measures in the <i>Regional Queen Conch Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan</i> (endorsed by WECAFC 17, CRFM, OSPESCA and CFMC), and continue to monitor implementation of the plan.	January 2022 onwards	CFMC, WECAFC, and CRFM, OSPESCA and the WG members	Technical/Scientific Advisory/Collaboration	\$5k (at least two online workshops and active communication with country representatives)	3	1;2;3	
2. Finalize, publish and disseminate the report of the hybrid WG meeting hosted in Puerto Rico (in hard copies and on-line on http://www.strombusgigas.com/index.htm and at www.	March 2022	CFMC and FAO with inputs from meeting participants	Communication/Dissemination		4	2	

WECAFC.org; including the national summary reports).						
3. Provide technical and scientific advice to national governments, and support national consultations as needed in the region, to advance implementation of the <i>Regional Queen Conch Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan</i> and relevant decisions and recommendations adopted by CITES and WECAFC.	January 2022 onwards	WG members (national fisheries and CITES authorities), CRFM, OSPESCA, CITES, CFMC, FAO/WECAFC, SSTAG	Technical/Scientific Advisory/Collaboration	\$15K (for expert consultation to conduct regional analysis)	1&4	1;2;3
4. Report on progress with the implementation of relevant CITES and WECAFC decisions and the outcomes of the Working Group – at the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18th session of WECAFC, July 	In advance of deadlines for reporting required	CITES/Fisheries authorities of QC range States attending these meetings (as appropriate); CITES and WECAFC Secretariats	Communication/Dissemination/Collaboration		1;3	1;2;3

<p>2022;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, November 2022; and consider the possibility of organizing a side-event ● 32nd meeting of the Animals Committee, 2023 						
<p>5. Support fishers and fisheries administrations in addressing the decent work, employment, and safety-at-sea problems in the queen conch fisheries, in particular; fisher organizations should be engaged as much as possible for these activities.</p>	<p>January 2022 onwards</p>	<p>NOAA Fisheries/CFMC and FAO with the fisheries authorities in the region</p>	<p>Capacity Building</p>		<p>1;3</p>	<p>1;2;3;4</p>
<p>6. Prepare a recommendation on the promotion of decent work,</p>	<p>January 2022 – February 2022</p>	<p>WECAFC/FAO with CRFM and OSPESCA</p>	<p>Technical/Scientific Advisory/Collaboration</p>		<p>1;3;5</p>	<p>1;2;3</p>

health, and safety in the fisheries sector for potential endorsement by the Commission at WECAFC18.						
7. Support publication of the health and safety study and proposed project.	January – September 2022		Communication/Dissemination		1;3;5;6	2
8. Continue the review and consideration of options for the development of a transparent “chain of custody” procedure to track catches from their harvest location to their eventual destination.	January 2022 onwards	OSPESCA, CRFM, NOAA Fisheries/CFMC with CITES, WECAFC/FAO and the fisheries authorities in the region	Technical/Scientific Advisory/Collaboration	Not sure if this has been initiated for QC at the regional level. Biotrade project?	1;3	1;2;3
9. Advance research to determine genetic connectivity of queen conch across the Caribbean, identify stocks, and design/implement a protocol to trace	January 2022 onwards	SSTAG with support of WECAFC/FAO and CITES	Technical/Scientific Advisory/Collaboration	\$200 - 250k (cost has increase this year.. inflation high) Need update from CITES on progress?	1;3;8	1;2;3

illegally harvested queen conch in trade. Engage countries to identify points of contact to assist with sample collection and participation in this research.						
10. Create a Task Force – comprised of members from the QCWG and Regional Working Group on IUU fishing – to intersessionally draft a recommendation prioritizing genetic identification of queen conch to improve traceability and combat IUU fishing in the region for the QCWG to consider for potential endorsement by the Commission at WECAFC 18.	January 2022 – February 2022	SSTAG, WECAFC, CFMC, CRFM, OSPESCA	Technical/Scientific Advisory/Collaboration	\$15-20K One in person workshop plus online follow-up?)	1;3;8;9	1;2;3

11. Expand the collection of socio-economic information to analyze contribution of queen conch fisheries to income, livelihoods, and trade.	January 2022 onwards	CFMC, WECAFC, and CRFM, OSPESCA and the WG members	Technical/Scientific Advisory/Collaboration	\$ 15-20K (for compiling existing information and plan to collect new and standardized info)	1;3	1;2;3
12. Provide training on the use of modules for the assessment of queen conch stocks through a regional conference.	January 2022 onwards	SSTAG with support from CFMC, WECAFC/FAO	Technical/Scientific Advisory/Collaboration/Capacity Building	\$15-25K (Pilots already covered, need funding for higher coverage, values depending on level of the expansion)	1;3	2;3
13. Conduct two pilot studies for determination of fishery production as the basis for further analysis of the long-term sustainability of the species and its associated fisheries.	January 2022	SSTAG with support from CFMC, WECAFC/FAO	Technical/Scientific Advisory/Collaboration	\$35-50K (Pilots already covered, need funding for higher coverage, values depending on level of the expansion)	1;3;12	1;2;3
14. Investigate and consider the	January 2022 onwards	WG members with support from	Technical/Scientific	\$35-50K (Research on QC	1;3	3

impacts of climate change on the queen conch resources and the fishery.		CFMC, WECAFC/FAO	Advisory/Collaboration	reproduction dynamics and changes at the regional level)		
15. Investigate the ecological and biological impacts of pollution on queen conch resources.	January 2022 onwards	WG members with support from CFMC, WECAFC/FAO	Technical/Scientific Advisory/Collaboration	\$35-45K (Microplastic pilots covered, need to expand at the regional level or inclusion of other pollutants)	1;3	3
16. Continue / expand the scientific support to apply updated conversion factors by all countries with a queen conch fishery. For this purpose, the Scientific and Statistical Sub-Group (SST Sub-group) has: Elaborated a series of technical documents on conversion factors that need to be applied and updated when reporting conch production / trade	Work in progress initiated in 2019 and will continue over the next two years.	CFMC/WECAFC, SST Sub-group membership, CITES	Technical/Scientific Advisory/Collaboration	\$20-35K (Linked with act. 12, need add funding for field work and expert support, depending on level of expansion and secure matching funds)	1;3;12;13	1;2;3

data across the region.						
17. Continue review of existing queen conch NDFs and guidance in order to develop a simplified template for making non-detriment findings for queen conch, in consultation with the CITES Animals Committee, dissemination of the template to the Working Group membership for their consideration, and supporting selected countries in applying the templates and sharing the results at the regional level.	Work in progress initiated in 2019 and will continue over the next two years.	CFMC/WECAFC , SST Sub-group membership, CITES	Technical/Scientific Advisory/Collaboration/Capacity Building	\$15-20K (Need a task force with country representatives for final agreements)	1;3	1;2;3
18. Determine priority next steps	January 2022 onwards	CFMC/WECAFC Secretariat and	Communication/Collaboration/Educ		1;3	1;2;3

to implement education and outreach as stated in the <i>Regional Queen Conch Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan</i> .		the Working Group	ation and Outreach				
19. Consult with the PROCARIBE+ project to identify potential areas for improving the sustainability of the queen conch fishery including contributions to the State of the Marine Environment and Associated Economies (SOMEE) reporting mechanism, habitat impacts/restoration and an updated Strategic Action Program Monitoring and Evaluation framework.	January onwards	2022	CFMC, the WECAFC Secretariat too and/or the relevant sub-regional partners (CRFM, OSPESCA, Coordination Mechanism for Integrated Ocean Governance in the Wider Caribbean)	Monitoring/Evaluation/Collaboration		1;3	1;2;3

20. Collaborate with the Blue BioTrade Project regarding improved trade and value-chain activities.	January 2022 onwards	CFMC/WECAFC Secretariat and the Working Group	Collaboration	(Linked with activ. 8)	1;3	1;2;3
21. Continue support to the development of the WECAFC Strategic Plan 2021-2027	January 2022-February 2022	CFMC/WECAFC Secretariat and the Working Group	Collaboration		1;3	1;2;3;4
22. Review and finalize the new TORs for the QCWG	January 2022-February 2022	CFMC/WECAFC Secretariat and the Working Group	Collaboration		1;3	1;2;3;4

4. Updated Draft Work Plan 2022-2025 for the CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM Working Group on Spawning Aggregations (SAWG) Convener: Myles Phillips

The Working Group will carry out the following activities in 2022-2025 period:

Activity	Timetable	Responsible Entity	Group/Theme	Indicative Cost	Linkages to other Activities	Strategic Plan Focus Area
1. Present Fishery Management Plan (FSAMP) to WECAFC Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) to review the recommendations	Spring 2022	WECAFC Secretariat	Technical/Scientific Advisory	No cost	Prerequisite to (3)	1,2,3
2. Convene the 5 th meeting of the SAWG (Panama)	January 2023	WECAFC + CFMC as coordinator ; meeting supported by NOAA Fisheries <i>Deferred</i>	Coordination/ Collaboration	TBD	Prerequisite to (4)	1,2,3
3. Submit Fishery Management Plan (FSAMP) to WECAFC 18 (Nicaragua)	Summer 2022	Spawning Aggregations Working Group	Technical/Scientific Advisory	No cost	Subsequent to (1)	1, 2, 3
4. Publish and distribute Report of 5 th SAWG meeting (2022)	Fall 2022	WECAFC + CFMC supported by NOAA Fisheries	Coordination/ Collaboration	No cost	Subsequent to (2)	1,2,3
5. Maintain the SAWG network intersessional communications by regularly posting FSA news and events to the GCFI, CAMPAM, and other lists	2021 – 2025	FWRI (Acosta) <i>Ongoing – ListServe established ; postings ongoing</i>	Education and Outreach	No cost		2

6. Final cooperative monitoring program and database	Not started	WECAFC, CFMC, NOAA Fisheries, SAWG members and researchers, and others <i>Requires funding</i>	Technical/ Scientific Advisory	USD\$ USD\$ 70,000	Dependent upon (7)	2,3
7. Develop a FSA Protocol to: 1) report on the status of spawning aggregations and associated environmental factors, and 2) evaluate local management initiatives. Identify lessons learned and apply positive outcomes.	Present draft at 6 th SAWG meeting; adopt at 7 th SAWG meeting	FSAMP Team <i>Funding application submitted (applicable to all relevant countries)</i>	Technical/ Scientific Advisory	USD\$25,000	Informed by (9)	1,2
8. Conduct a regional and national status and needs assessment of FSA sites in the WECAFC region	Not started	WECAFC, CFMC, NOAA Fisheries, SAWG members and researchers, and others <i>Requires funding</i>	Technical/ Scientific Advisory	USD\$100,960	Informed by (9)	1,2
9. Establish clear and simple guidance to: 1) update and/or verify the status (timing and location, fish numbers, catches)	2022 – 2023	FSAMP Team <i>Funding application submitted (applicable</i>	Technical/ Scientific Advisory	USD\$87,300	Will inform (7), (8) Dependent upon (10)	1,2

of known spawning aggregations at the national level, and 2) facilitate prioritization of those spawning aggregations most urgently needing protective action.		<i>to three pilot countries)</i>				
10. Mobilize resources from bilateral and international agencies to assist with Activities called for in SAWG Work Plan	2021 - 2025	WECAFC, CFMC, NOAA Fisheries, SAWG members, and others <i>Initiated summer 2021</i>	Coordination/ Collaboration			4
11. Secure financial support to develop Digital Hub in support of Communication Plan with downloadable resources and resource library	2022-2023	CFMC (support to A. Salceda, BelugaSmile) <i>Requires additional funding</i>	Education and Outreach	USD\$100,000.00 (\$40,000 - design \$5800 - translator)	Content will include (13)	4
12. Production of one-hour film for International Broadcast	Jan-Sept 2022	Ana Salceda, BelugaSmile Productions, supported by The Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI), Terra Mater and PBS	Education and Outreach	Externally funded		4

<p>13. Develop materials for Citizen Science Program aimed at fishers and enforcement officials: 1) Produce & distribute radio kits in Spanish and French; 2) Produce & distribute two short films: a) a 30-minute “call to action” film aimed at fishing communities to stop decline of mutton snapper; and b) a film that calls on the general public to protect FSAs by not consuming grouper and snapper during spawning periods</p>	<p>2022-2023</p>	<p>CFMC (support to A. Salceda, BelugaSmile)</p>	<p>Education and Outreach</p>	<p>1) <i>Radio kits require \$32,000</i> 2) <i>Short films require \$38,00</i></p>		<p>4</p>
<p>14. Share technical capacity to identify FSAs in regions where FSAs have not been documented or characterized (e.g. Eastern Caribbean)</p>	<p>2021-2025</p>	<p><i>WECAFC</i> <i>Requires funding</i></p>	<p>Technical/Scientific Advisory</p>	<p>USD\$20,000</p>	<p>Informed by (8)</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>15. Implementation of 1) Public Broadcasting Service’s Outreach plan and 2) The Howard Hughes Medical Institute’s (HHMI) Science Outreach Plan.</p>	<p>2022 - 2023</p>	<p>Ana Salceda will coordinate with HHMI & PBS.</p>	<p>Education and Outreach</p>	<p>Externally funded</p>		<p>4</p>
<p>16. Secure support to assist WECAFC members with</p>	<p>2022 – 2023</p>	<p>FSAMP Team, CFMC,</p>	<p>Coordination/ Collaboration</p>	<p>USD\$278,550</p>	<p>Dependent on (8)</p>	<p>1,2,3,4</p>

<p>FSAMP Implementation for most urgent actions needed</p>		<p>NOAA Fisheries, WECAFC</p> <p><i>Funding application submitted</i></p>	<p>n</p>		<p>Supported by (10)</p>	
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5. Work Plan for the **WECAFC/CRFM/OSPESCA Working Group on Fishery, Data and Statistics**

Revised Work Plan for 2022-2024 Intersession Period for the WECAFC-CRFM-OSPESCA Fishery Data and Statistics Working Group

The Working Group will carry out the following activities in 2022-2024 period.

[Highlighted text indicates minor editorial change since March 2022 FDS-WG2 Conclusion meeting.]
 Cost estimates not available at this point in time as much of the work is dependent on continued co-funding and in-kind contributions from CRFM/OSPESCA and NOAA.

Activity	Timeframe	Responsible Entity	Group/Theme	Link to other activities	Link to Strategic Objective Focus Area
1. Vessel mapping Content	2022-2024	WECAFC-FIRMS and member countries	Technical	Needed for 6	1, 2
a. Liaise with FDS WG focal points for additional submissions					
b. Review submission from WECAFC Members and highlight where revisions are needed					
c. Implementations in the Regional Database with corresponding metadata					
d. Discussion of adding vessel type information into FIRMS tables, including vessels images when available					
2. WECAFC Subarea Boundaries	2022-2024	FDS-WG and member countries	Technical / Coordination	Needed for 6	1, 2
a. Finalize the					

proposal in the Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala sub-region under the OSPESCA umbrella					
b. Review feedback from member countries on sub-areas related to area 31 and 41, and if the case appears feasible, prepare for presentation at CWP					
c. Discuss a recommendation for SAG and the Commission, or any other plan to move forward					
d. Conduct intersession discussions on Venezuela sub area delimitations					
3. FIRMS Inventories	2022-2024	WECAFC-FIRMS and member countries	Technical/Collaborative	Needed for 6	1, 2
a. Summarize inputs by member countries, highlight latest submissions, discuss/elaborate specific FIRMS services for the region (delivered through WECAFC map viewer)					
b. Discuss/identify/implement a path for updating inventories in OSPESCA region- e.g., consultant to further inventory development on a					

country by country basis possibly, considerations of focus groups working with fleet segments (across multiple member countries) to enrich inventories					
c. Also noting that FIRMS Secretariat may develop a pilot demonstrating how a possible future addition of FIRMS fishery Ids (optional) in certain Tasks of the DCRF can be exploited, for presentation at next FDS-WG					
4. Small Scale Fisheries Matrix	2022-2024	FAO and FDS-WG	Technical/Collaboration		1, 2
a. Summarize list of member countries which submitted highlighting latest submissions and new pilot testing					
b. Present a synthesis of the level of adaption of the SSF matrix to the WECAFC region and what would need to be changed in the SSF matrix for it to be of practical application for the region					
c. Discuss a recommendation for submitting to FAO for					

consideration WECAFC iDCRF					
5. WECAFC Reference list of aquatic species, annotation of important Subareas by species and DCRF tasks	2022-2024	FDS-WG and member countries		Needed for 6	1, 2
a.					

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6. iDCRF	2022-2024	FDS-WG and member countries	Technical		1, 2
a. A revised DCRF document will be made available early December for review by Members, WGs and ICCAT by end January 2021, for consolidation in February and final review in March for adoption at the extended session of FDS-WG2 (end March/early April) of a recommendation for SAG and the Commission, or any other plan to move forward					
b. Further proofing DCRF (post extended session of FDS-WG2) with:					
i. pilot testing starting with Data preparatory workshop and initial country submissions that will follow					
ii. two proposed e-TWGs:					
a. for elaboration on measures of fishing effort per Fleet segment or					

	Gear type					
	b. for refinement of Biological tasks – member countries with experience invited to be part of this WG					
	I. Operationalization of the DCRF (DCRF) and Contributions to RDB (RDB-1)- post Q2 2021, initiate June 2021	2022-2024	FDS-WG and member countries	Technical/Collaboration		1, 2
	a. Finalize the Maps viewer (through e-TWG?) for public release as soon as possible					
	b. Identifying member countries willing to commit in the intersession, to populate the RDB using local statistics in 2020 and 2021. Local statistics uploaded to RDB. Identification of local country data manager.					/
	c. Liaising with and identifying Regional species WGs to combine their expectations for data with the member countries contribution (Shrimp and Groundfish, Lobster, ...), and organize joint activities					
	d. Identifying issues/challenges					

with member countries committing data to RDB during pilot tests					
e. Developing road map including pilot data sets for implementing data uploads to RDB by end of 2021					
(*) [Consider communication of OSPESCA Director of 12 June 2020 on topic of collaborating on pilot data sets to test for RDB that currently are already capturing statistics]					
II. Discussion of how the RDB information can contribute to informing SDG 14.4.1 (initiate Q1 2021 through the work of the FDS-WG via the DCRF? Has any progress been made yet, what is needed to begin to make progress (individual member countries operationalizing the DCRF through committing to contribute to the RDB). Develop some time tables and a path (roadmap)-	2022-2024	FAO and FDS-WG	Technical/scientific advisory		1, 2
1. Consider if a sub-committee needed-perhaps focus on one of the pilots (e.g., OSPESCA					

lobster)					
III. Fostering Growth of FDS-WG throughout region -this work is ongoing	2022-2024	FDS-WG	Communication / Outreach		1, 2
a. Co-convener shadow training to develop leadership in WG					
IV. How can this WG interact or begin to interact with other regional/international WGs (species, topical, RFMOs) to further improve the regional statistics and information on fisheries	2022-2024	FDS-WG//	Collaboration/Coordination/Outreach		1, 2
1. Under MoU with ICCAT- contribute to the planned joint ICCAT-WECAFC working group where respective species list might be examined					1, 2
2. Should this WG contact ICCAT re' participating in ICCAT statistics WG as observer to learn how ICCAT develops/prioritizes and carries out its tasks/intersessional work on the topic of statistics (a question to ask to the participants? would anyone volunteer)					
V. Review Logbooks	2022-2024	FDS-WG	Technical		1, 2

guidelines and revisit FDS-WG 2 (LOG-1) Begin Q3 2021					
Review work done during FDS-WG 1 intersession- discuss LOG-1 (two pilot surveys) and LOG-2 (historical experiences) survey instruments in context of best practices in logbook implementation in region and identify needed revisions for survey instruments LOG-1, LOG-2.					
VI. Capacity building- other needs- this work is ongoing	2022-2024	FDS-WG, WECAFC-FIRMS, FAO-FIRMS	Communication/C coordination/Collaboration		1, 2
a. Finalize the list of selection criteria and propose a short list of WECAFC Members meeting these criteria for final selection					
b. For the selected WECAFC member(s), define the work plan and related budget for support					
c. Seek for co-funding from other regional projects and agree on the shared investments					
7. Convene 3 rd Meeting of the FDS-WG	2023-2024	FDS-WG, WECAFC-FIRMS, FAO-FIRMS	Communication/C coordination/Collaboration	Depends on all above	1,2

6. Work Plan for the for the Shrimp & Groundfish WG

6.A. The Working Group will carry out the following activities in 2022-2023 period

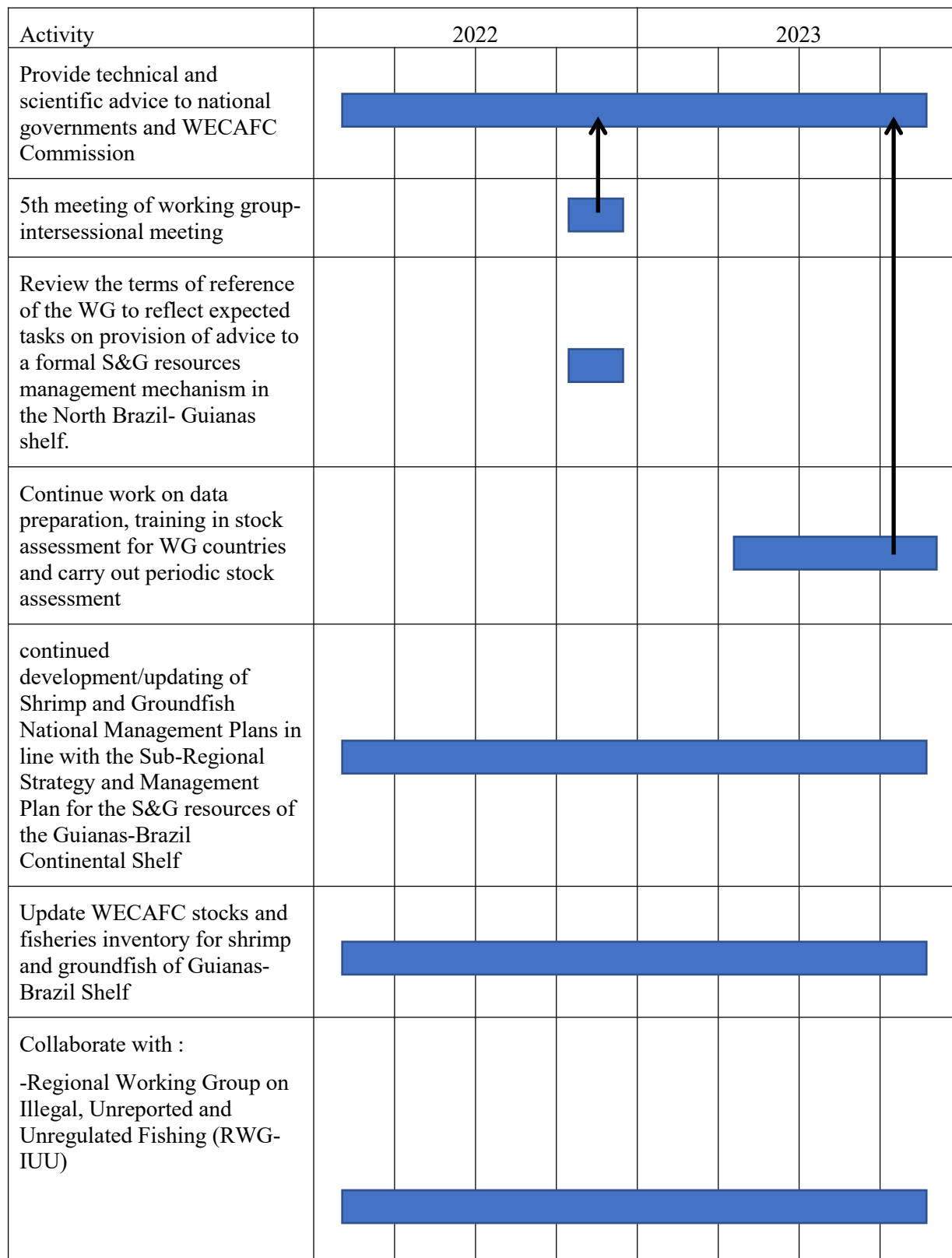
Priority level	Activity	Timetable	Responsible Entity	WECAFC Strategic Plan	Costs
1	Provide technical and scientific advice to national governments and WECAFC Commission	2022- 2023	WG members	Focus area 1 (Improve regional fisheries governance) point 4 Focus area 2 (increase regional information exchange) point 1, 4, 5	
1	5th meeting of working group- intersessional meeting	November 2022	WECAFC, IFREMER, EAF4SG		?
1	Review the terms of reference of the WG to reflect expected tasks on provision of advice to a formal S&G resources management mechanism in the North Brazil- Guianas shelf.	5 th meeting of the WG in 2022	IFREMER/CRFM/WECAFC, WG members with support from the new project EAF4SG		
1	Continue work on data preparation, training in stock assessment for WG countries and carry out periodic stock assessment	2023	IFREMER/CRFM/WECAFC in collaboration with NOAA, FIRMS and potential funders	Focus area 1 (Improve regional fisheries governance) point 4 Focus area 2 (increase regional information exchange) point 1, 4, 5	80kUS dollar (3 meetings, 2 people by country and one expert)

1	continued development/updating of Shrimp and Groundfish National Management Plans in line with the Sub-Regional Strategy and Management Plan for the S&G resources of the Guianas-Brazil Continental Shelf	2022-2023	WG members with support from new GEF EAF4SG project	Focus area 2 (increase regional information exchange) point 3 Focus area 3 (strengthen regional fisheries management)	
2	Update WECAFC stocks and fisheries inventory for shrimp and groundfish of Guianas-Brazil Shelf	2022-2023	FIRMS secretariat and working group members	Focus area 2 (increase regional information exchange) point 4, 6,	
2	Collaborate with : -Regional Working Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (RWG-IUU) - WECAFC/CRFM/OSP ESCA Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group (FDS-WG)	2022-2023	WECAFC Secretariat primarily and Working group members	Focus area 1 (Improve regional fisheries governance) point 3, 8 Focus area 3 (strengthen regional fisheries management) Focus area 2 (increase regional information exchange) point 4,	
3	Further studies on mainstreaming human well-being (including gender and working conditions) in fisheries policies	2022-2023	Member countries	Focus area 1 (Improve regional fisheries governance) point 11, 13, 14 Focus area 3 (strengthen regional	

				fisheries management	
3	Search resources for collaborative research to complement and refine results on stock identification and extend research to additional shrimp and groundfish species	2022-2023	Working group members	Focus area 2 (increase regional information exchange) point 4, 18	
	Report to the 19 th session of WCAFC 12 meeting of the WECAFC SAG	As deadlines for reporting require	WECAFC Secretariat	Focus area 4 (Fostering a conducive environment within the WECAFC secretariat) point 1	

6.B. Gantt chart of the showing linkages in the Work Pan of the Shrimp and Groundfish WG

The Working Group will carry out the following activities in 2022-2023 period



<p>-WECAFC/CRFM/OSPESCA Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group (FDS-WG)</p>								
<p>Further studies on mainstreaming human well-being (including gender and working conditions) in fisheries policies</p>								
<p>Search resources for collaborative research to complement and refine results on stock identification and extend research to additional shrimp and groundfish species</p>								
<p>Report to the 19th session of WCAFC 12 meeting of the WECAFC SAG</p>								

**8. Draft Work Plan 2022-2023 WECAF/CITES/OSPESCA/CRFM/CFMC
Working Group on Shark Conservation and Management**

The Working Group will carry out the following activities in 2022-2023 period:

Activity	Timetable	Responsible Entity	Group/Theme
1. Collection of scientific and empirical information on relevant species' biology and ecology, including life history characteristics, behavior, feeding, identification.	S/M	WECAFC	Technical/Scientific Advisory
Collection of scientific and empirical information on population dynamics, distribution, spatial-temporal and/or migratory patterns of relevant species. Delineation of pupping and nursery areas and critical habitats, etc.	M	WECAFC	Technical/Scientific Advisory
Implementation of long-term fisheries data collection, verification and monitoring programs to collect commercial and recreational fisheries data, including total catches and effort, age/length compositions etc. at species level.	O/S	WECAFC	Technical/Scientific Advisory
Ensure a scientifically appropriate level of observer coverage onboard fishing vessels to collect species-specific biological information and fisheries information for relevant targeted and/or incidentally caught sharks.	O/M	WECAFC	Coordination/ Collaboration
Development and/or implementation of existing standardised methodologies, such as abundance indices, quantitative or semi-quantitative stock assessments, or other appropriate approaches (e.g., data-poor methods, genetic methods etc.).	M	WECAFC	Education and Outreach

Collection of available trade data and market chain information for shark products at lowest possible taxonomic level, ideally species level.	M	WECAFC <i>Requires funding</i>	Technical/Scientific Advisory
Implementation of appropriate labelling and custom coding for priority/relevant sharks species and products thereof.	M/L	WECAFC	Technical/Scientific Advisory
Collection of information about social and cultural practices related to sharks.	S/M	WECAFC	Technical/ Scientific Advisory
Reduction of shark by-catch in non-target fisheries and limiting directed catch and effort in target fisheries to sustainable levels.	S/M	Member States	Technical/ Scientific Advisory
For relevant shark stocks, development of conservation and management reference points that could serve as a basis for deriving stock status and evaluating the achievement of management objectives.	M/L	WECAFC, Shark WG members, and others <i>Initiated summer 2021</i>	Coordination/ Collaboration
Design, implementation and monitoring for compliance with appropriate, science-based conservation and management measures	O	WECAFC and Member States	Education and Outreach
Implementation of the precautionary approach in the absence of adequate scientific information, where appropriate.	S	WECAFC	Education and Outreach
Design and promotion of safe handling and release guidelines for shark species, appropriate.	M	WECAFC <i>Requires funding</i>	Education and Outreach
Exploration of regional fisheries sustainability initiatives (e.g. certification, FIPs, etc.).	L	<i>WECAFC</i> <i>Requires funding</i>	Technical/ Scientific Advisory
Development of national laws and policies in line with FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible	S/M	Member states	Education and Outreach

Fisheries			
2. Binding international obligations (primarily under Multilateral Environmental Agreements and Regional Fisheries Management Organisations) are codified into national law and regulations.	S/M	WECAFC	Coordination/ Collaboration

Full utilization is promoted and by-catch of sharks is reduced in other fisheries.	S/M/L	WECAFC	Education and Outreach
Development of Non-Detriment Findings for the exports of CITES-listed shark products.	S/M	Shark WG members, and others Funding is required	Technical/ Scientific Advisory
Implementation of effective monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) systems (properly staffed, trained, equipped, financed and supervised), including observers, VMS, electronic monitoring, etc. that specifically include monitoring of shark catch and bycatch.	S/M/L	WECAFC and Shark WG members Funding is required	Coordination/ Collaboration
Establishment/ improvement of institutional and legal frameworks for the implementation of shark conservation and management measures, implementation of the RPOA, regulation of surveillance and enforcement activities, empowerment of staff to carry them out, and protect their physical integrity.	S	WECAFC and Shark WG members	Coordination/ Collaboration

Combat IUU fishing activities	O	WECAFC and Shark WG members	Coordination/ Collaboration
Regional systematic sharing of information and data, including through the WECAFC Data Collection Reference Framework, with sub/regional organisations with a mandate for the conservation and/or management of sharks, in line with confidentiality rules.	S	WECAFC and Shark WG members	Technical/ Scientific Advisory
Harmonisation of data collection protocols and information exchange systems related to sharks	M	WECAFC and Shark WG members	Coordination/ Collaboration
Cooperate and coordinate on MCS activities and fighting IUU activities, including related to sharks, at bilateral, subregional and regional levels	S	WECAFC and Shark WG members	Coordination/ Collaboration
Coordination of research priorities and activities related to the conservation and management of sharks	O	WECAFC and Shark WG members	Coordination/ Collaboration
Development and coordination of capacity building activities related to sharks (e.g., training workshops, practical trainings etc.) by consolidating available resources and fostering expertise at subregional and regional levels.	O/M	WECAFC and Shark WG members	Coordination/ Collaboration

Identification of policy, conservation and management issues related to sharks that require subregional/ regional cooperation to be effectively addressed.	O	WECAFC and Shark WG members	Coordination/ Collaboration
Ensure transparency and inclusiveness through the participation of relevant stakeholders (e.g., fishermen, fishers' organisations, fisheries managers, scientists, civil society/NGOs etc.) in the proceedings of subregional, regional fora addressing sharks-related issues.	O	WECAFC and Shark WG members	Coordination/ Collaboration
Development/ strengthening of collaborative arrangements between subregional/ regional/ international organisations involved in the conservation and management of sharks	O	WECAFC and Shark WG members	Coordination/ Collaboration
Development/update of appropriate ToRs, methodologies (including indicators and metrics), to enable the assessment of progress towards RPOA objectives, identifying successes, shortcomings, gaps etc.	O	WECAFC Secretariat and Sharks WG Convener	Coordination/ Collaboration
Assess progress towards the RPOA-sharks implementation, including through annual reports	S	WECAFC and Shark WG members	Coordination/ Collaboration
Participation in deliberations relevant to sharks (e.g., SPAW Protocol, CITES, CMS).	O	WECAFC and Shark WG members	Education and Outreach

<p>3.</p> <p>Stakeholder meetings organized, as appropriate, on specific issues related to shark conservation and management.</p>	S	WECAFC and Shark WG members	Education and Outreach
<p>Processes for regular stakeholder feedback on the decision-making process on conservation and management measures</p>	S	WECAFC and Shark WG members	Education and Outreach
<p>Use existing and, if needed, develop appropriate communication tools for raising awareness about sharks adapted to the targeted audience.</p>	S	WECAFC and Shark WG members	Education and Outreach
<p>Environmental education activities including surveys, information and awareness raising campaigns etc. to raise public awareness about shark conservation and management</p>	S	WECAFC and Shark WG members	Education and Outreach
<p>4.</p> <p>Elaboration of a strategy for ensuring that adequate financial resources are made available for RPOA implementation at national level</p>	S	WECAFC Secretariat	Coordination/ Collaboration
<p>Identify and seek commitment of potential donor agencies and organizations for supporting the implementation of the RPOA</p>	S	WECAFC Secretariat	Coordination/ Collaboration
<p>Organise regular training workshops and courses in shark biology, ecology, data collection, identification, stock assessments methods, management, etc. for</p>	S	WECAFC Secretariat	Coordination/ Collaboration

targeted audience including fisheries observers, researchers, fisheries managers, civil society and other relevant NGOs			
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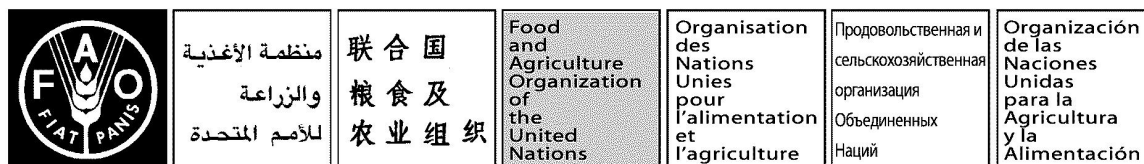
8. Draft WG Work Plan and associated budget for the intersessional period 2022-2023 for the OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Caribbean Spiny Lobster

This section presents the activities that have been identified as priorities, based on the review of the WG track record and previous work plans. As the WG could not meet during the current intersessional period, it has not been possible to draft a more comprehensive Work Plan.

8.A. The WG-CSL will carry out the following activities in 2022-2023:

Activity	Focus area of the SP (2022-2027)	Timeframe	Responsible	Group/ Subject
Organize and hold the third meeting of the WG-CSL	Improve regional fisheries governance	December 2022 at the latest	WECAFC and OSPESCA	Follow-up of the implementation of the regional management plan in the countries. Presentation of the PROCARIBE+ project and role of WG-CSL and WECAFC.
Prepare and endorse the WG-CSL Work Plan	Improve regional fisheries governance	December 2022	WG-CSL	Produce a comprehensive Work Plan endorsed by the WG-CSL.
Conduct sampling to assess the potential presence of the spiny lobster virus PaV1 in selected countries of the region	Increase regional information and collaboration in fisheries	July-December 2023	Interim Coordination Mechanism FAO/OSPESCA/CRFM with support from CFMC	Search for funding to develop the sampling plan for the selected countries.

July 2022



9. Work Plan and Budget for the Working Group on the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries

Schedule of the Working Group on the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries

Description	2022							2023												
	Ju n	J ul	A ug	Se pt	O ct	N ov	D ec	Ja n	Fe b	Mar ch	Ap ril	M ay	Ju n	J ul	A ug	Se pt	O ct	N ov	D ec	
Workshop1: prepare a regional project																				
Project preparation																				
Report Workshop1																				
Workshop2: monitoring, management and conservation strategies																				
Report Workshop2																				
Training 1: Marine robotic technologies for ecological monitoring																				

9.B. Budget for the 2022-2023 Work Plan of the Deep Sea WG

Description		Amount	Unit (Person, vehicle, room)	Quantity	Unit (Months, days, trainings)	Total (US\$ Dollar)
Transportation/Travel costs	Link to strategic plan (Strategic Objectives of FAO)					
Workshop1: prepare a regional project	Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner.					
Tickets		\$1,500	Person	6		\$9,000
Travel expenses (5 days)		\$200	Person	6		\$6,000
Domestic transport (5 days)		\$100	Vehicle	1	Days	\$500
Catering (5 days, 15 persons)		\$500	coffee/snacks/lunch	5	Days	\$2,500
Simultaneous translations		\$2,000	Person	5	Days	\$10,000
Workshop2: monitoring, management and conservation strategies	Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner.					
Tickets		\$1,500	Person	6		\$9,000
Travel expenses (5 days)		\$200	Person	6		\$6,000
Domestic transport (5 days)		\$100	Vehicle	1	Days	\$500
Catering (5 days, 15 persons)		\$500	coffee/snacks/lunch	5	Days	\$2,500
Simultaneous translations		\$2,000	Person	5	Days	\$10,000

9.B. Budget continued

Training/Event costs						
Training 1: Marine robotic technologies for ecological monitoring	Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner.					
External expert		\$3,000	Person	1	Training	\$3,000
Tickets		\$1,500	Person	6		\$9,000
Travel expenses (five days)		\$200	Person	6		\$6,000
Domestic transport (5 days)		\$100	Vehicle	1	Days	\$500
Catering (5 days, 15 persons)		\$500	coffee/snacks/lunch	5	Days	\$2,500
Training 2: Fisheries Stocks assessment data-poor fisheries	Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner.					
External expert		\$3,000	Person	1	Training	\$3,000
Tickets		\$1,500	Person	6		\$9,000
Travel expenses (five days)		\$200	Person	6		\$6,000
Domestic transport (5 days)		\$100	Vehicle	1	Days	\$500
Catering (5 days, 15 persons)		\$500	coffee/snacks/lunch	5	Days	\$2,500
Other costs/Consumables						
Stationery (paper, pens, pencils, envelopes, banner, etc.)	Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner.	\$250		4		\$1,000
Documentary video		\$4,000		1		\$4,000
Technical report/publications		\$2,000		1		\$2,000
Total (US\$ Dolar)						\$105,000

10. Recreational Working Group Work Plan

The recreational WG did not meet during the intersession

11. Flyingfish-Dolphinfish Working Group Work Plan

At WECAFC 17 the flying-fish WG was expanded to include the dolphin fish stocks. The joint WG has not yet met.