



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



GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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**REVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY THE COMMITTEE
DURING THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This document summarises the activities of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) covering the 2008 intersessional period. It especially describes the work of SAC performed through its Sub-Committees, their Working groups and Workshops as well as other activities conducted upon guidance from the GFCM.

2. The actions carried out through the FAO regional projects, namely: AdriaMed, MedSudMed and COPEMED II (since its inception in May 2008) are presented in document GFCM:SAC11/2008/Inf.18. Additional information on activities of relevance to SAC that are carried out by other national or regional projects are expected to be presented under agenda item four dealing with the integrated review of the national reports of SAC Members (document GFCM:SAC11/2008/Inf.11).

II. ACTIVITIES OF THE SAC DURING THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD

Overview of SAC achievements

3. At its Thirty-second Session (February 2008), GFCM agreed upon the Programme of work of SAC for the intersession¹. SAC had eight (8) months within which to implement its programme. All the **meetings** (18, including SAC) approved by the Commission were convened (see table below).

Meeting	Date and venue
First meeting of the CMSC	FAO HQs, Rome/11 March 2008
SCSI Ad Hoc Workshop on regional fleet register	Rome/12-14 May 2008
2nd Working Group on Stock Assessment Methodologies , on basic methods and protocols to undertake assessments with direct methods	Libya/2-4 June 2008
8th session of the Joint GFCM/ICCAT Working Group on large pelagic species	Malaga, Spain/5-9 May 2008
SCSA Training courses on methodologies for stock assessment	Cairo, Egypt/22-26 June 2008
SCMEE/SCSA/CESS Transversal Working Group on selectivity	Sète, France/2-4 July 2008
SCMEE/SCSA transversal Working Group on by catch/incidental catches	Rome/15-16 September 2008
SCMEE meeting of ByCBAMS project (jointly with ACCOBAMS)	Rome, Italy/17-18 September 2008.
SCSA Working Group on Demersal Species , including joint stocks assessments	Izmir, Turkey/15-19 Sept. 2008
SCSA Working Group on Small Pelagic Species , including joint stocks assessments	Izmir, Turkey/22-26 Sept. 2008
Session of the SCSA	Antalya, Turkey/13-16 Oct. 2008
Session of the CESS	Antalya, Turkey/13-16 Oct. 2008
CESS/SCSA Working Group on Recreational Fisheries (back to back to the CESS session)	Antalya, Turkey/during 13-16 Oct. 2008

¹ Report of the 32nd Session, paragraphs 107-109.

Meeting	Date and venue
Session of the SCSI	Antalya, Turkey/13-16 Oct. 2008
SCSI/SCESS/SCSA Workshop to refine the fleet segmentation (back to back with the SCSI)	Antalya, Turkey/during 13-16 Oct. 2008
Session of the SCMEE	Antalya, Turkey/13-16 Oct. 2008
Second meeting of the CMSC	Antalya, Turkey/17 Oct 2008

Sub-Committees, Working groups and Workshops

4. During the 2008 intersession, the Working groups and Workshops were held independently from the relevant Sub-Committee sessions and the related reports, with some exceptions, were provided separately from the respective parent Sub-Committee. The reports of all intersessional meetings (see the table above) are reproduced as documents GFCM:SAC11/2008/Inf.5 to Inf.10 and Inf.12 to Inf. 17.

5. During the intersession, the Sub-Committees focused respectively on main areas, as follows;

- The Sub-Committee on Statistics and Information (SCSI) continued enhancing the GFCM Task 1 data entry tool through which 9 countries had submitted data. It elaborated guidelines for data reporting, developed interactive tools via the web for managing the outcome from Task 1 and other information such as the list of vessels authorized to fish in the GFCM area. The information was published as the first issue of GFCM Statistical Bulletin made available for the Sub-Committee Meetings. The Sub-committee addressed the implementation of GSA compatible STATLANT 37A form, which requires reporting by both FAO divisions and GFCM GSAs. A 3-year trial period was launched by the Secretariat in 2008. The SCSI also reviewed the GSA boundaries to make it consistent with those of the FAO divisions and illustrated the modifications in a map. The Sub-Committee contributed to a joint action to refine the fleet segmentation and addressed the issue of calibration of fishing effort and expanded on the definitions of the standard measurement parameters listed in GFCM Resolution 31/2007/1. Finally, the SCSI made a preliminary review of experiences regarding the implementation of the logbook system in some countries and, accordingly, suggested to hold in 2009, a workshop to set up a GFCM logbook, as requested by the Commission. The report of the SCSI is quoted GFCM:SAC11/2008/Inf.6.
- The Sub-Committee on Economic and Social Sciences (SCESS) concentrated its work to review the legislative and socio economic status of the recreational fisheries in the Mediterranean and on identifying the relevant information and data to be collected to improve the knowledge on this sub-sector. It contributed to the joint action aimed to refine the fleet segmentation as requested by the Commission and addressed the issue of socio economic impact of the implementation of 40 mm square mesh in bottom trawls. The Sub-committee underlined the lack of information and stressed the need to enhance this kind of works. It also reviewed contributions from the meeting on promoting the use of socioeconomic indicators in fisheries management and addressed some issues such as the update of the SAC glossary. The SCESS worked on the topic of fleet capacity, and identified the option to progress on it, through the holding of a transversal workshop on Assessment, Management and Monitoring

of Fishing Capacity in the GFCM Area. The report of SCESS is quoted GFCM:SAC11/2008/Inf.7.

- The Sub-Committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE) focused its work especially on issues related to ecosystems and essential habitats. In particular, the Sub-Committee reviewed options to identify criteria for the identification of essential habitats of relevance for the management of priority species by GSA. It agreed to prepare a draft set of criteria with the view of submitting them to the Eleventh session of SAC. It also agreed that the classification of habitats made by UNEP-RAC/SPA be used as working reference to identify habitats of importance for fishery management in the Mediterranean. The SCMEE reiterated the importance to implement the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) through national and regional case studies, possibly with the support of the FAO-regional projects and using the GEF project frame. The SCMEE reviewed and discussed a proposal for establishing a new GFCM Fishery Restricted Area (FRA), encompassing marine canyons in the Continental Slope of the Eastern Gulf of Lions (CoSEGoL). It was strongly recommended that the new proposed FRA be considered by the forthcoming SAC for possible adoption by the GFCM. The report of SCMEE is quoted GFCM:SAC11/2008/Inf.5.
- Concerning the Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment (SCSA), joint assessments of hake and associated species as well as of anchovy and sardine were performed, using both commercial and surveys at sea data, considering as well selected reference points and indicators. The new "Assessment Forms" were used. The Sub-Committee reviewed 32 assessments, covering ten (10) species, in twelve (12) GSAs and identified management advice for consideration by SAC. The methods to perform assessments by the use of surveys at sea data were identified and a GFCM framework to standardize the various protocols to undertake direct assessments was produced. In addition, the SCSA addressed the issue of updating the priority species list, as required by SAC, and suggested to complete the current list with the following new species: *Octopus vulgaris*, *Auxis rochei*, *Sarda sarda*, *Euthynnus alletteratus*, *Orcynopsis unicolor*, *Katsuwonus pelamis*. The report of the SCSA is quoted GFCM:SAC11/2008/Inf.8.

6. The relevant conclusions and suggestions of the Working groups and Workshops as endorsed by the respective Sub-Committee, as well as the advice and recommendations of each Sub-Committee are summarized in document GFCM:SAC11/2008/3. They are expected to be presented to SAC by the concerned Sub-Committee Coordinator. The detailed outcomes of the Sub-Committees are therefore not dealt with in this document.

Selected complementary issues

7. A meeting of **the Joint GFCM/ICCAT ad hoc Working group on Large pelagic species** in the Mediterranean was held in Spain, from 5 to 9 May 2008 with the aim to improve the knowledge on the biology and the exploitation of small tunas in the Mediterranean including the Black Sea. For this meeting, a GFCM regional study on small tunas was prepared; it was further submitted to the ICCAT Scientific Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) held in Madrid, from 29 September to 3 October 2008. This regional study was made available as document GFCM:SAC11/2008/Dma.1. The meeting as well as the above mentioned SCRS session clearly demonstrated how this collaboration between GFCM and ICCAT has improved the general knowledge on the small tunas fisheries in the Mediterranean. In addition to the workplan suggested by the joint Working Group with regard to small Tuna fisheries, the Committee may provide guidance on additional action required for the future activities of the Joint working group.

8. Regarding the **functioning of the Sub-Committees**, the SCSA suggested a new mechanism of work for its Working Groups. For demersal resources, it proposed the establishment of four (4) thematic sub-groups (Crustaceans, Hake, Red mullet, other demersal). The two Working Groups (demersal and small pelagic resources) would be dedicated only to undertake joint stock assessments, using data according to the standard format requested by the software utilized in the analysis. Required data would be sent to GFCM Secretariat at least 2 months before the meeting. In addition, the Sub-Committee also agreed to envisage some sub-regional level assessments under the coordination of the GFCM Secretariat, and with the support of the FAO regional projects. The assessments prepared in these sub regional meetings will be presented directly to the Sub-Committee. In this new context, it is suggested that the position of facilitators of the Working Groups will be replaced by a moderator under the umbrella of the Sub-Committee, subject that related budget implication be supported by SAC and endorsed by GFCM.

9. The **Coordination Meeting of the Sub-Committees (CMSC)** held two meetings: i) the first meeting was organized in March 2008, immediately after the 32nd Session of GFCM, with the aim to fine tune the 2008 workplan and to translate it in operative actions; and ii) the second meeting was organized in October 2008, back to back with the Sub-committees meeting (13-16 October 2008). It reviewed the main conclusions and recommendations emanating from the Sub-Committees and the transversal actions requiring joint work among the Sub-Committees. The two meetings reviewed relevant topics and suggested, among other, the following (reports available as documents GFCM:SAC11/2008/Inf.9 and Inf.10):

- It reviewed some priorities and reviewed the SAC meetings for 2008 with the aim to adjust the date and venue for some of them, in accordance with the Commission's decision requiring optimization of intersessional meetings including for the expected inputs from regional projects;
- The CMSC suggested that the transversal session be the opportunity to require specific comments from the associated Sub-Committees and that reporting on this joint session be ensured by the Sub-Committee which lead the transversal issue under discussion. The CMSC also agreed to maintain open the discussion on this matter for an eventual future improvement, if deemed necessary;
- According to the Commission's decision to avoid duplication of documents between the SAC Session and the meetings of its subsidiary bodies, the CMSC suggested that the coordinators ensure that rapporteur(s) be appointed for each meeting and that the report of each meeting be adopted together with an executive summary. This executive summary, to be supervised by the Sub-Committee coordinator, should focus on the key aspects and issues to be submitted for consideration to SAC (main conclusions, scientific advice and suggested workplan);
- It was agreed that Secretariat should examine the possibility to publish the completed GFCM Task 1 Statistical Bulletin, on annual basis;
- The CMSC reiterated the need for the Sub-committees to set priority activities for their respective workplan and referred to the GFCM rolling Reference Framework for the mandate of SAC, suggesting that it should be reconsidered to take into account the recent evolution of SAC and its priorities and to better reinforce the coherence and integration of activities through developing a medium-term strategic plan with the support of consultants;
- The CMSC discussed the issue of financial support for Sub-Committee coordinators and SAC bureau and agreed to maintain this practice which will secure the attendance of the bureau and Sub-committee coordinators to the relevant GFCM meetings;
- The CMSC stressed the need that a special effort be made in order to guarantee that the finalization and the formal adoption of the reports be made at meetings to ensure dissemination of reports in due time;

- The CMSC acknowledged that additional human and financial resources would be needed within the Secretariat to ensure the growing activities faced by SAC.

III. SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE

10. The Committee is invited to review the intersessional activities of its subsidiary bodies, as a whole, especially in relation with the need to further promote coordination of inputs and outputs and the production of integrated scientific and technical advice for fisheries management.

11. The Committee is also invited to provide guidance on pending issues highlighted above, as well as on complementary suggestions emanating from the CMSC.