



General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean Commission générale des pêches pour la Méditerranée

GFCM contribution to the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP) - 24th session (Feb 2013)

GFCM IN BRIEF

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) is the Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) which aims at guaranteeing the sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea area of competence (FAO Major Fishing Area 37) and contributing to the preservation of the marine environment and ecosystems in this region. Founded in Rome 61 years ago¹, GFCM is a concrete response to the need to keep the exploitation of fish stocks sustainable, to enhance aquaculture and to make fisheries and aquaculture activities compatible with the proper functioning of Mediterranean and Black Sea sensitive ecosystems. In cooperation with other RFMOs, the GFCM is instrumental in coordinating governments' efforts to effectively manage fisheries at the regional level following the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF). The GFCM has the authority to adopt binding recommendations for fisheries conservation and management in its area of convention and plays a critical role in fisheries governance in the region. The GFCM holds its regular sessions annually. It implements its policies and activities through the Secretariat and operates during the intersessional period by means of its committees, namely the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), the Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ), the Compliance Committee (CoC), the Committee of Administration and Finance (CAF) and their respective subsidiaries. The GFCM also benefits from the support of cooperation projects at sub-regional and regional levels which enhance, in particular, scientific cooperation and capacity-building in participating countries, in line with the GFCM priorities and strategies. Additionally, the Commission closely cooperates with other international organizations in matters of mutual interest. The GFCM currently has 24 Members: 22 Mediterranean and Black Sea States, Japan and the European Union. The GFCM official languages are Arabic, English, French and Spanish.

GFCM DATA COLLECTION - CAPTURE FISHERIES

The current GFCM data collection framework is composed of the following eight main components (in alphabetical order): dolphinfish fisheries; illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU) vessel list; ports state measures; red coral; STATLANT 37A; TASK 1 operational units (economic data, fishing activities, resources targeted, catch and effort, biological data), vessel records (fleet and fishing capacity) and vessel monitoring system (VMS). With the exception of STATLANT 37A, which is an FAO commitment, all of these components derive from GFCM binding recommendations, implying obligations for GFCM member countries to submit data according to information requirements, formats and protocols laid down in such decisions. In addition to them and within its mandate, GFCM regularly assesses the status of stocks and collects data and methods used by the scientists. Results including stock status and advice are produced in a set of files called "Stock Assessment Forms" (SAFs). The information gathered in the SAFs is reviewed annually by the GFCM-SAC through its Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment (SCSA). A new type of SAFs, completed and gathered through a collaborative cloud-based environment supported by

¹ The Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), under the provisions of Article XIV of the FAO Constitution, was approved by the FAO Conference in 1949 and entered into force in 1952

SharePoint, has been recently developed by the Secretariat. Such shared environment allows tracking and classifying information according to specific metadata which are automatically extracted from the document. As a complementary activity, a new set of summary sheets on stock status are currently being developed following a similar methodology, to be submitted for consideration to the GFCM-SAC. Upon clearance, these information sets might be identified as a potential information source to generate data exports to Fishery Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS). In designing its information systems to collect, validate, analyze and disseminate data, GFCM pays particular attention to the use of international codifications and standards (e.g.: fishing gear, species, fishing areas, etc.) and to all the aspects related to data security and confidentiality (resolution GFCM/35/2011/2 on data confidentiality policy and procedures).

GFCM DATA COLLECTION – AQUACULTURE

GFCM collects data and information on aquaculture production statistics and other data relevant to the function of the Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ) through the Information System for the Promotion of Aquaculture in the Mediterranean (SIPAM), one of its subsidiary bodies. GFCM Members have an obligation to provide such information to the GFCM Secretariat and, for this reason, the SIPAM web portal has recently become the official aquaculture information system of the GFCM. Features such as web-based data submission, statistical analysis (production statistics data analysis tool) and dissemination of data/information are continuously updated and improved, in line with the activities identified at the SIPAM annual meeting and CAQ biannual sessions. An important milestone towards a consolidated set of aquaculture definitions and key requirements for the SIPAM data-entry system was achieved at the “Workshop on harmonization of standards for Mediterranean aquaculture data collection” (2009). Acknowledging that standards in aquaculture data collection and statistics should be established in line with the guidelines set by the FAO Coordinating Working Party on Aquaculture Statistics, the GFCM adopted two specific recommendations on reporting aquaculture data and information, namely Rec. GFCM/33/2009/4 and its subsequent amendment and Rec. GFCM/35/2011/6, through which the following data are collected: a) PRODUCTION STATISTICS (by CWP statistical areas; culture environment; cultured species; system of culture; type of culture; capture-based aquaculture input production quantity; production value), b) PRODUCTION CENTRES (unit/segment of production; number of production centres per unit/segment; cultured species per unit; total volume (m³) of facilities of production centres per segment; destination of product per segment), c) MARKET (feed, fishmeal and fish oil: domestic production, feed prices for major farmed species, domestic prices; trade and consumption: import and export of aquatic products, import and export of major farmed species, main export destination for farmed species, national per capita consumption of aquatic products).