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منظمة
الأغذية والزراعة
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EUROPEAN INLAND FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE ADVISORY COMMISSION

Thirty-first Session

Killarney, Ireland, 22 – 24 June 2022

Report from the Management Committee (MC) on decisions taken since the 30th Session of EIFAAC

Executive Summary

This document provides information on the actions and decisions that the Management Committee of EIFAAC has taken since the 30th Session of EIFAAC in Dresden, Germany in September 2019.

1. The overarching mission of EIFAAC is to promote the long-term sustainable development, utilization, conservation, restoration and responsible management of European inland fisheries and aquaculture resources and to support sustainable economic, social and recreational activities towards these goals. The Commission goals are to be achieved through:

- providing advice, information and coordination;
- encouraging enhanced stakeholder participation and communication; and
- through the delivery of effective research.

2. The Commission currently operates under a project-oriented structure that was approved by EIFAAC 27 (2012), which is a more efficient structure for delivery of EIFAAC goals. The current goals of EIFAAC were revised by EIFAAC 30, held in Dresden, Germany, in September 2019 (EIFAAC/2022/inf.2):

- EIFAAC is a leading Pan-European Organization providing policy advice in Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture consistent with the objectives and principles of the FAO (strategic objectives, regional initiatives, UN SDGs) and other relevant international instruments.

- EIFAAC delivers technical and managerial advice, information and coordination on matters related to Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture to its members and serves as an international network of organizations, stakeholders, communities and intergovernmental organizations.
- EIFAAC via its structures, processes and procedures implements efficient delivery of its organizations and Members' objectives in accordance with FAO principles and best international practices.

3. The restructuring has proven to have advantages, namely EIFAAC projects are more accessible to country participation by a wide array of stakeholders from operational focal points, research institutes, academics, NGOs and IGOs. The project format is also more flexible for collaboration with FAO technical projects and national projects that can provide funding for specific topics. The launching of six new regional projects in 2021 is evidence of the effectiveness of the project-oriented structure which focuses on addressing current challenges facing inland fisheries and freshwater aquaculture of Europe. The disadvantage is the effort needed to recruit project participants as compared to the old working group format and the recurring issue of limited funding for EIFAAC activities.

4. One of the main challenges facing the Management Committee (MC) during the intersessional period was the COVID-19 pandemic and related travel restrictions. The MC held its last annual physical meeting in Budapest in 2019. The MC scheduled an annual physical meeting for Rome in July 2020 and Brussels in September 2021, however both meetings were cancelled due to travel restrictions. Finally, the MC was able to hold a virtual meeting in December 2021 in lieu of the annual physical meetings. The regular monthly MC meetings (virtual) continued without interruption during the intersessional period.

5. One of the main challenges facing the MC has been the weak participation by EIFAAC Members in the Sessions. For example, the last three Sessions (28th in Lillehammer, Norway, 29th in Stare Jablonki, Poland and 30th in Dresden, Germany) did not reach the quorum necessary to validate elections and the Final Report of the Session on the spot. This situation has been a point of discussion for the MC Members on ways to raise interest of member states in the work of EIFAAC, especially as a source of evidence-based policymaking related to European inland waterbodies and freshwater aquaculture. This problem is exacerbated by the lack of nominated Operational Focal Points (OFPs) for EIFAAC in many member countries. Especially when an OFP retires or moves to another job, the EIFAAC Secretariat is often not informed. In April 2022 a letter was circulated to all EIFAAC members to confirm their operational focal points (EIFAAC/2022/Inf.10). To date (end of April), about half of the EIFAAC membership has confirmed or nominated new operational focal points.

6. The work of Technical and Scientific Committee (TSC) has been effective and fruitful as is seen in the productive outputs of the projects and in development of the new projects. However, the difficulties in managing the financial support for the projects are something still to be resolved. As an Article VI statutory body of FAO, there are no member fees and FAO allocation of regular programme funds is limited, primarily for EIFAAC Sessions and the Secretariat. There is also the need to develop the practices for presenting the advice from the projects in a better way to the member countries and stakeholders.

7. EIFAAC 30 approved the new Communication Strategy as part of the Strategy 2020-2024. The MC and Secretariat undertook a number of steps to raise the visibility of EIFAAC within the framework of this new communication strategy. These included an update of the EIFAAC website, development of an EIFAAC brochure and preparation of a mailing list.

8. The Chair of the Management Committee (MC) would like to report on the progress of the Committee during the intersessional period 2019-2022:

- Monthly MC meetings held virtually during 2019-2022 intersessional period, with meeting minutes prepared by the FAO Secretariat and circulated among the MC members;
- One special meeting was organized between MC and TSC members (virtual) to discuss overlapping topics of new projects and EIFAAC Symposium 2022, on 26th October 2021;
- One annual meeting of the MC (virtual) was held on 11 December 2021;
- Chair of EIFAAC / MC participated in the 32nd Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe in virtual mode, November 2020;
- Chair and Vice-Chair of EIFAAC / MC participated in the GSA Virtual Regional Consultation on Development of Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture (GSA) for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 29-31 March 2021 and Europe and North America, 13-15 April 2021.
- Chair of EIFAAC / MC participated (virtually) in a session on Regional Fisheries Bodies organized by FAO at the International Seafood Expo, St Petersburg, Republic of Russia, September 2021;
- Chair of EIFAAC / MC participated in the 33rd Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe in hybrid modality 10-13 May 2022 in Łódź, Poland.
- MC members, FAO Secretariat and Irish Government prepared for the 31st EIFAAC Session, 22-24 June, to be held physically in Killarney, Ireland.
- MC and TSC members and Secretariat with Irish Government and research organizations prepared the EIFAAC International Symposium on “Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture - Advances in Technology, Stock Assessment and Citizen Science in an Era of Climate Change”, 20-21 June 2022, Killarney, Ireland.