

Informal Meeting on SAC and Sub-Committee Agendas and Operational Units Definition
Barcelona, 25-27th January 2000

Introduction

The SAC President called this meeting to:

- Review the agendas for the forthcoming meetings of the Scientific Advisory Committee and its Sub-Committees and Working Groups, as well as
- Discuss the concept of “Operational Units” within the Management Units as GFCM has defined.

The latter subject follows on from previous informal meetings, which were held in Barcelona and Mazara (September 1999) and at FAO headquarters in Rome (December 1999). It is also closely linked to the work being carried out by three experts working for the Sub-Committees whose work is being supported by COPEMED. The GFCM Secretariat acknowledged this meeting.

General considerations

The President brought to the attention of the Sub-Committee Coordinators, the necessity for the revision and the preparation of annotated Agendas in order to facilitate the compilation of documents in various countries and the discussions during the forthcoming meetings.

In this respect, it was deemed important that annotations would be made in such a way as to indicate which of the items on the agenda would require the input of national documentation.

Experts / delegates of the different Sub-Committees and Working Groups are invited to send documents. A summary of which should be sent to the Co-ordinators who will link them accordingly to the Agenda items. The authors should provide 30 copies of each document in order to be distributed during the meetings of the Working Groups and Sub-Committees.

The annotated agendas should be sent to the SAC President as soon as possible so as to be distributed amongst the country delegates through the official channel.

Due to the lack of some nationally recognised experts in the various Sub-Committee lists, it was agreed that the Chairman of the SAC would send another letter of invitation, through the GFCM President to those country delegates who are not currently represented in the SAC and its Sub-Committees.

It was also highlighted that the Sub-Committee Co-ordinators should be granted the power to execute all matters pertaining to their own Sub-Committee and that the members of a particular Sub-Committee should feel free to contribute to the different Sub-Committees.

Sub-Committee on Statistics and Information

The provisional annotated agenda was reviewed and the role of this Sub-Committee and the others was discussed. It was suggested that it should receive information from the other Sub-Committees in order to deliver reliable outputs related to their requirements.

The need for the collation of scientific statistics and official statistics was addressed. It was agreed that management strategies could only be formulated on predefined required information, which should be collected in “grid format”. In this way, scattered data from various marine science disciplines could be aggregated in a structured manner for the use of the GFCM.

It was noted that a number of fisheries statistics collection systems have recently been developed in a few Mediterranean countries with the support of COPEMED and that the European Union has also recently defined regulations to improve its scientific data collection. Whilst it is perfectly reasonable to have different systems which are suited to the needs of different countries, it was stressed that they should be compatible and hence deliver common outputs useful for the GFCM. In this respect, it was

suggested that financial support should be found by GFCM in order to promote compatible systems in all Mediterranean countries. Finally, it was agreed that a number of presentations on fisheries statistics systems would be delivered at the next Sub-Committee meeting at the request of the Co-ordinator.

Sub-Committee on Economics and Social Sciences

Following the review of the agenda for this Sub-Committee the discussion mainly focused on the development of a network of socio-economic fisheries experts. To facilitate the network was agreed that the use of the database developed under the framework of COPEMED is a starting point that can be completed with additional information from the Sub-Committee participants. The group suggested that new information on experts and publications be compiled in the same format that the previously mentioned COPEMED database.

Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment

The agenda for this Sub-Committee and its two Working Group were annotated further.

Sub-Committee on the Environment

In the absence of the Sub-Committee Co-ordinator, the SAC President reviewed the Agenda. The participants present at this meeting formulated some suggestions:

- The importance in informing the CIESM on the contents of the Sub-Committee meeting and Agenda.
- Considering the EU as a GFCM contracting party, the convenience in that experts from DG11 and DG 12 could participate in this Sub-Committee.

The group participants formulated also some annotations to the Sub Committee Agenda:

- To include the subject of MAP data and results, and the GEF Black Sea Programme, within item 5 (“status of the existing information”). Such data and information are considered to be very useful for the Sub-Committee .
- To include some comments for discussion during the Sub-Committee meeting on statistics and information related to water quality indicators and environmental data directly connected to fisheries resources.

The Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) Agenda.

The group decided to include a new item on national scientific reports in the SAC agenda. According to paragraph 42, (Report of the SAC second session (FAO Fisheries Report N.º 602), “reports of national scientific activities of each country should be presented to SAC”.

The SAC President indicated that the GFCM Secretary proposed inclusion of the “Red Coral” issue as an item for discussion at the next SAC meeting and commented on the necessity to have more information before including this new subject in the Agenda.

Definition on the Operational Units concept.

The discussion on the operational units was opened by means of the presentation of three works in progress prepared by experts working for the Stock Assessment, Statistics and Information and Economic and Social Sciences Sub-Committees, whose work is being supported by the COPEMED Project. Two other documents were prepared by an expert group in FAO and by the SAC President.

A very intense and constructive discussion developed. Following this, a draft document was prepared and reviewed by the group. The final agreed definition is annexed to the meeting report.

The President proposed that the Co-ordinators would inform to the Sub-Committees members of such a document. The SAC President will send the definition document to the SAC Members before the next SAC meeting for further improvement.

About the Sub-Committees and SAC meeting dates

An interesting discussion on the Sub-Committees meeting dates the next April and the SAC meeting in May was open. The group suggested the convenience to concentrate the several meeting date as much as possible although at the present year it is very difficult to changes it.

Suggestion on the convenience to facilitate the participation of the experts in more than one Sub-Committee were presents, mainly taking into account the countries with limited economic resources. Discussion on pros and contras of both suggestions finally were left open to new discussion during the Sub-Committees and SAC meetings in order to agree in the dates for the future meetings before to inform to the Commission.

SAC Web site

At the present stage of the SAC and its Sub-Committees organisation the opportunity to have an open discussion on a SAC or GFCM web site was considered premature. The group agrees on the necessity to have such discussion in futures meeting under the SAC framework.

Annex

- Participants list.
- Operational Units definition document.
- Agendas.