



منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food  
and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
of  
the  
United  
Nations

Organisation  
des  
Nations  
Unies  
pour  
l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная  
организация  
Объединенных  
Наций

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

**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 (TORs) for the WECAFC working groups (WGs) were reviewed at the 11<sup>th</sup> Session of the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG XI). After consideration, the SAG identified there had been some confusion regarding submission of updated TORs. WGs had been provided on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2021 a template for updating those TORs agreed electronically a month earlier within the Commission. Thereafter, a presentation was made to the conveners by the Secretariat in a meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021, with specific request made to make changes tailored 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. They were asked to make submissions within 15 days of receiving guidance from SAGXI. This document presents the subsequent revised tailored Terms of Reference.

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**I. Tailored terms of reference for the moored fishery aggregating devices working group**

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 17<sup>th</sup> 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.

## **TAILORED TERMS OF REVERENCE 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 a 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.

**II. 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 \(established since the 17<sup>th</sup> Session of WECAFC as the flyingfish- Dolphinfinh WG\)](#)
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.

### 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 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.

#### **IV. 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

#### **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, 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.

#### **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 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**

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 17<sup>th</sup> 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 management 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:

- IV. **COORDINATING ACTIVITIES OF THE WORKING GROUP, AMONG WECAFC AND NON-WECAFC MEMBERS, AT THE WIDER REGIONAL LEVEL (INCLUDING FACILITATE PROCUREMENT OF FUNDING);**
- V. **ASSISTING WITH LOGISTICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CONVENING OF MEETINGS OF THE WORKING GROUP;**
- VI. **PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, SUCH AS A TECHNICAL SECRETARY OR RESEARCH SUPPORT, IF NEEDED AND AS RESOURCES PERMIT;**
- VII. **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;**
- VIII. **LIAISING WITH OTHER RELEVANT REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AS APPROPRIATE, SUCH AS THE SARGASSO SEA COMMISSION, SPAW PROTOCOL, ETC;**
- IX. **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;**
- X. **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;**
- XI. **FACILITATING TRAINING AND COLLABORATION OF WECAFC MEMBER STATES AND SUB-REGIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTIONS AS APPROPRIATE AND BASED ON AVAILABLE RESOURCES.**

- a. 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.

## **XII. 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

## **XIII. 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.

## **XIV. 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.

## **XV. 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.

## **XVI. 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

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

#### 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.

**IV. 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 \(established since the 17<sup>th</sup> Session of WECAFC as the flyingfish- Dolphinfish WG\)](#)
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 fulfilment 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 in 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 WG s 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 WG s 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. ]



V. 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:

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



## **VI. Tailored Terms of Reverence for the Shrimp & Groundfish**

## VII. 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.

VIII. Working groups terms of reference draft template tailored terms of reference for the LOBSTER [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 17<sup>th</sup> Session of WECAFC as the flyingfish- Dolphinfinh 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.

## IX. 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:

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

**8. Tailored Terms of Reference for the Recreational Fisheries**

The Recreational WG did not meet during the intersession.

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

This WG did not meet during the intersession.

