



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

GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC)

Working Group on Stock Assessment of Demersal Species (WGSAD)
Working Group on Stock Assessment of Small Pelagic Species (WGSASP)

Information note

WGSA	Session	Date	Location	Notes
WGSASP	Plenary: all Mediterranean stocks	18-23 January 2021	Online (Teams)	Chair: Marianna GIANNOULAKI Assisted by: Claudia MUSUMECI
	Benchmark for ANE & PIL in GSAs 6 and 7	18-23 January 2021	Online (Teams)	Chair: Marianna GIANNOULAKI Assisted by: John Gabriel RAMIREZ External reviewer: Alexandra SILVA Data preparation: 16-18 December 2020
WGSAD	Plenary: Western Mediterranean stocks	18-23 January 2021	Online (Teams)	Chair: George TSERPES Assisted by: Alessandro LIGAS
	Plenary: Central, Eastern Mediterranean, and Adriatic Sea stocks	25-30 January 2021	Online (Teams)	Chair: George TSERPES Assisted by: Danai MANTOPOULOU

Objective

The main objective of the annual meetings of the two Working Groups on Stock Assessment (WGSAs) is to **provide advice on the status of main commercial stocks in the Mediterranean Sea**. In order to do this, the WGSAs shall compile basic information on the main stocks and fisheries (length frequency time series, age structures, commercial and surveys data, etc.) as provided by participants on standard formats, following the requirement of the Commission, run assessment models, agree on scientific advice for a given assessment and include, when possible, short-term simulations and the estimation of biological reference points (BRP). In cases where BRP cannot be obtained, the WGSAs should attempt to use empirical indicators. According to the most recent advice provided by 21st SAC and the decisions taken at the 43rd session of the GFCM, and when not enough information exists to provide advice for a given priority stock based on analytical models, the WGSAs are also requested to attempt to provide a tentative advice based on precautionary principles.

Details

WGSASP Plenary session

- Dates: 18-23 January 2021
- A brief summary of the benchmarks of anchovy and sardine in the Adriatic Sea will be presented for information; these assessments will be presented to the SRC-AS for further preparation of technical advice in relation to potential management measures as required by the GFCM.
- The WGSASP plenary will be conducted at the same time as the benchmark so that the results of the benchmark will be presented in plenary, making use of the full floor of experts

WGSASP benchmark session for anchovy and sardine GSAs 6 & 7

- Data preparation: 16-18 December 2020
- Benchmark: 18-23 January 2021 (with the possibility of continuing on 1-6 February 2021 if needed)
- External reviewer: Alexandra Silva (Instituto Português do Mar e da Atmosfera, IPMA, Portugal)
- The benchmark will be conducted at the same time as the WGSASP plenary so that:
 - Results will be presented in plenary, making use of the full floor of experts
 - Specific work/meetings will be conducted in break-out rooms

WGSAD Plenary sessions

- Session 1: Western Mediterranean: 18-23 January 2021
- Session 2: Central and Eastern Mediterranean, and Adriatic Sea: 25-30 January 2021

Stocks to be assessed

In addition to the benchmark session on anchovy and sardine in GSAs 6 and 7 (Appendix 1, Table 1), the number and details of the stocks to be assessed/discussed will be decided in consultation with experts, as always, and in advance of the meeting. Priority should be given to stocks covered by management plans (Appendix 1, Table 2), and assessments of other priority species (Appendix 1, Table 3 and Table 4). Additional benchmark sessions, for common sole in GSA 17 and for round sardinella in the eastern Mediterranean, will be carried out at later dates (Appendix 1, Table 1).

This will be the continuation of the new system for conducting assessments, foreseeing in-depth analysis during benchmark sessions and more routine evaluation of assessments during the WGSAs plenary sessions. Updates of benchmark assessments (Appendix 1, Table 3) will thus not foresee reopening of discussions on assumptions and models but will foresee a discussion of the issues to be addressed before the next benchmark (i.e. towards compiling a list of issues).

The generic Terms of Reference for benchmark assessments are provided as Appendix 2 of this Information Note.

In order to allow the Chairs of the WGSAs to best plan the meetings, we would like to ask you to kindly **indicate what stock assessments will be presented by emailing the GFCM Secretariat by 18 December 2020** (GFCM-Secretariat@fao.org and Elisabetta.Morello@fao.org).

Stock assessment data and SharePoint portal

For all stocks assessed **input data are required in advance** of the meetings. We will clarify the modalities for data submission soon.

As usual, **stock assessment forms** (SAFs - [small pelagic form](#) and [demersal species form](#)) as well as final input data and any used scripts will be required at the end of the WGSAs as the main output of the meetings and will be, as always, uploaded to the GFCM through the dedicated [SharePoint](#) meeting page. Feel free to start working on these in advance of the meeting.

Logistics and attendance

Meetings will all be carried out online via Microsoft TEAMS.

Online meetings will not entail full days online, but in principle will have two general discussion sessions per day (e.g. 2 hours in the morning and 1 hour after lunch), to be decided by the Chairs and flexible depending on requirements and the specific meeting.

In-between plenary sessions, experts will have time to work on requests from the group.

Given the exceptional online circumstances, the Chairs will be assisted by selected Secretariat consultants (see table above) in the coordination of the work before, during and after the meetings.

In order to ensure the quality of the advance provided by the WGSAs is not reduced owing to online meeting modalities, it will be extremely important for registered participants to attend all general discussion sessions.

Languages

The working language of the meeting will be English.

Registration

Kindly register your participation, **by Monday 11 January 2021**, on the GFCM website at the following LINKs:

- WGSAD: <http://www.fao.org/gfcm/meetings/info/en/c/1363301>
- WGSASP: <http://www.fao.org/gfcm/meetings/info/en/c/1363300>

Contacts

- For technical matters:
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TABLE 1: List of benchmark assessments foreseen for 2020/2021

WGSA	Session	Date	Location
WGSASP	Benchmark for ANE & PIL in GSAs 6 and 7	18-23 January 2021	Online (Teams)
	Benchmark for round sardinella in GSAs 24, 26, 27	24-27 May 2021	Online or in person
WGSAD	Benchmark for common sole in the Adriatic Sea	12-16 April 2021	Online or in person

TABLE 2: List of stocks covered by management plans

Relevant WG	Subregion	Species	GSA	GFCM Recommendation
WGSASP	<i>Adriatic Sea</i>	<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>	17-18	Rec. GFCM/42/2018/8
		<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>		
	<i>Whole Mediterranean</i>	<i>Coryphaena hippurus</i>	All	Rec. GFCM/43/2019/1
WGSAD	<i>Western</i>	<i>Pagellus bogaraveo</i>	01-03	Rec. GFCM/43/2019/2
	<i>Central</i>	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	12-16	Rec. GFCM/42/2018/5
		<i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i>		
		<i>Aristaeomorpha foliacea</i>		Rec. GFCM/43/2019/6
	<i>Eastern</i>	<i>Aristaeomorpha foliacea</i>	19, 20, 21 24, 25, 26, 27	Rec. GFCM/42/2018/3
		<i>Aristeus antennatus</i>	19, 20, 21 24, 25, 26, 27	Rec. GFCM/42/2018/4
	<i>Adriatic Sea</i>	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	17-18	Rec. GFCM/43/2019/5
		<i>Nephrops norvegicus</i>		
		<i>Solea solea</i>		
		<i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i>		
		<i>Mullus barbatus</i>		

TABLE 3: List of benchmarked stocks for which updates¹ only are required

Relevant WG	Subregion	Species	GSA
WGSASP	<i>Western</i>	<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	1
		<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	3
WGSAD	<i>Western</i>	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	08-09-10-11
		<i>Pagellus bogaraveo</i>	01-03
	<i>Central</i>	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	12-13-14-15-16, 19
		<i>Mullus barbatus</i>	12-14
		<i>Mullus barbatus</i>	15
		<i>Mullus barbatus</i>	16
		<i>Mullus barbatus</i>	19
<i>Adriatic Sea</i>	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	17-18	

¹ Updates of benchmark assessments *will not* foresee reopening of discussions on assumptions and models but *will* foresee a discussion of the issues to be addressed before the next benchmark (i.e. towards compiling a list of issues).

**TABLE 4: List of other desirable updated and new assessments of priority species
(based on 21st SAC and assessments performed in 2019)**

Relevant WG	Subregion	Species	GSA	Type of assessment
WGSASP	Western	<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>	1	Further development of 2019 assessment
		<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>	9	Further development of 2019 assessment
		<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>	5, 10, 11	Still to be performed
		<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	1	Updated assessment
		<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	9	Updated assessment
	Central	<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>	16	Updated assessment
		<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	12, 13, 14, 15	Still to be performed
		<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	16	Update assessment
	Eastern	<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>	22	Update assessment
		<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	22	Update assessment
		<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>	23, 24, 25, 26, 27	Still to be performed
		<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	23, 24, 25, 26, 27	Still to be performed
WGSAD	Western	<i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i>	01	Update assessment
		<i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i>	01-03-04	Update assessment
		<i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i>	05	Update assessment
		<i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i>	06	Update assessment
		<i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i>	09-10-11	Update assessment
		<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	01-05-06-07	Update assessment ²
		<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	01 - 03	Update assessment ¹
		<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	4	Update assessment
	Central	<i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i>	17-18-19	Update assessment
		<i>Mullus barbatus</i>	20	Update assessment
		<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	20	Update assessment
	Adriatic	<i>Aristaeomorpha foliacea</i>	18-19	Update assessment
	Eastern	<i>Mullus barbatus</i>	22	Update assessment
		<i>Mullus barbatus</i>	25	Update assessment
		<i>Mullus barbatus</i>	23, 24, 25, 26, 27	Still to be performed
		<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	22	Update assessment
		<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	23	Update assessment
		<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	24	Update assessment
		<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27	Still to be performed
		<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	26	Further development of 2019 assessment
<i>Aristaeomorpha foliacea</i>		22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27	Still to be performed	
<i>Saurida undosquamis</i>	27	Update assessment		

² Although European hake assessment in 01-05-06-07 were not considered benchmarked, WGSAD agreed to use them as a basis for advice until ongoing dedicated projects on stock units are concluded and further information on the matter is available. Complementary information on GSA 01 & 03 (and only available advice for GSA03), GSAs 05 and 06 were also provided in the last session

Generic ToRs for a benchmark assessment meeting

For the purpose of these ToRs, a benchmark assessment is defined as a full analysis and review of the information and methods used to provide advice on the status of a given stock, focusing on the consideration of old and new data sources as well as new or improved assessment models and assumptions. In particular, the benchmark process shall include:

- the identification of all problems associated to the assessment(s) of a resource (including on data, assumptions and methodologies),
- the identification and provision of extra data required to address the above problems
- the revision and agreement of data, assumptions (including all biological parameters) and assessment methods proposed for the assessment
- the performance of the assessment,
- the estimation of adequate reference point as well as their robustness
- the provision of advice on the status of the stocks based on the outcomes of the chosen models with respect to the estimated reference points

The benchmark session shall be attended by stock experts as well as methodological experts, both from the area/subregion and outside, thus providing a framework for ensuring the quality of the advice. Following the benchmark assessment, all historical data, assumptions and models will be fixed for the successive 3 – 4 years and assessments presented in this time period will simply provide updates incorporating data from the most recent year(s).