



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



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

# Overview of GFCM work on the management of European eel

## Second Meeting of Range States for the European Eel

*Malmö, Sweden, 15-16 May 2018*

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General Fisheries Commission for the  
Mediterranean (GFCM)*

# GFCM: The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean

## ○ Year of establishment

1949 (Agreement amended in 2014 to incorporate new elements such as focus on subregional aspects and multiannual management plans)

## ○ Objectives

Ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of living marine resources

Ensure the sustainable development of aquaculture

## ○ Area of application

The Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea

## ○ Membership

**24 Contracting Parties:** 19 Mediterranean States, 3 Black Sea States, EU and Japan

**4 Cooperating non-Contracting Parties:**

Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine

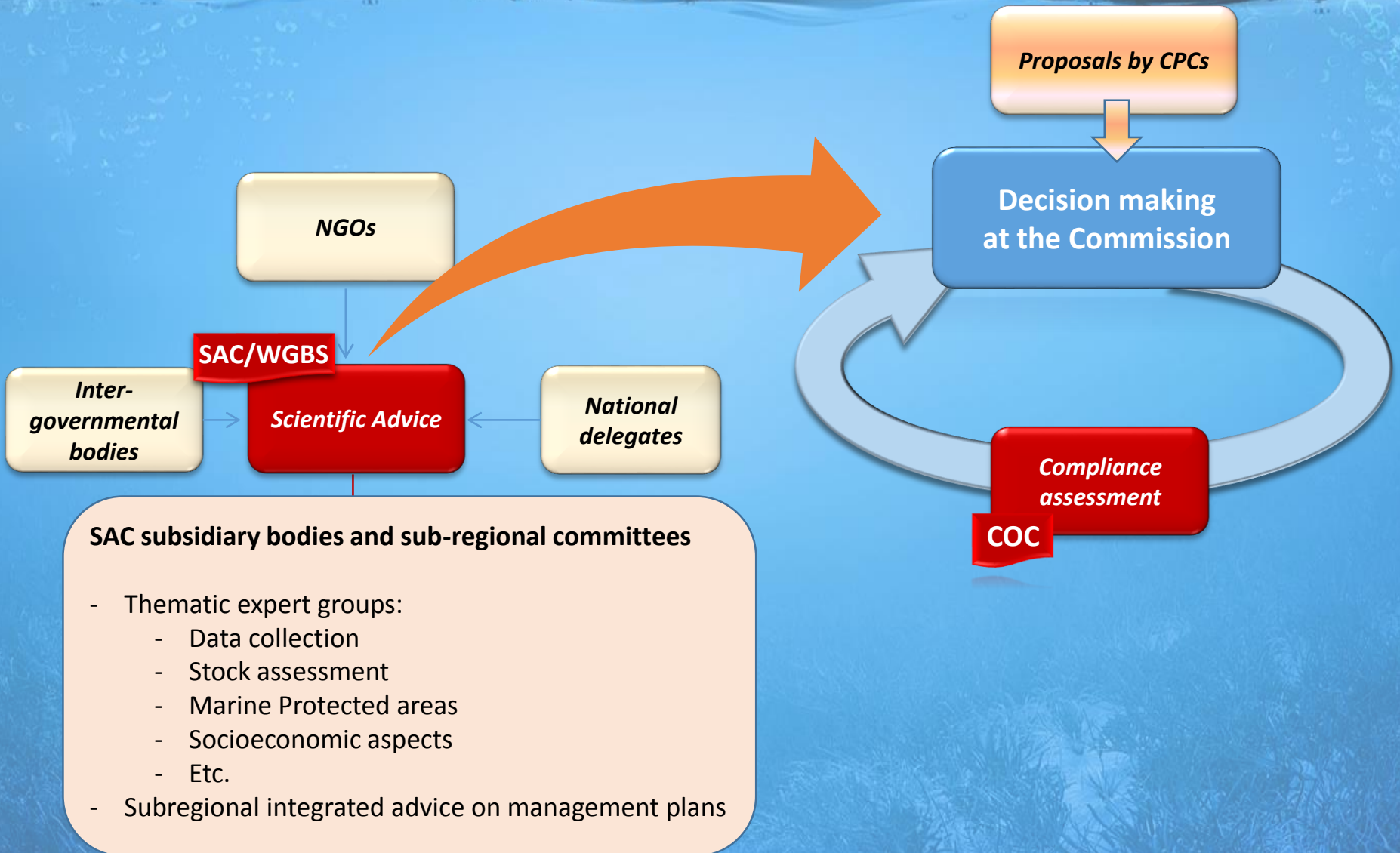
## ○ Key functions

Adopts binding recommendations

Contributes to marine spatial planning, **blue growth** and level playing field



# Decision making within the GFCM





# Background: Technical discussion on Mediterranean eel fisheries

- **GFCM Transversal Workshop on European Eels** (Salammbô, Tunisia, 23 -25 September 2010):
  - recommended the development of management plans for the European eel covering all sub-regions of the Mediterranean.
  - recommended the engagement of GFCM in the Joint EIFAAC/ICES Working Group on Eels.
- The creation of a Joint **ICES/ EIFAAC/GFCM Working Group on European Eel** was subsequently approved by the 14<sup>th</sup> session of SAC and the 36th Session the GFCM in 2012. **Active since 2014.**
- At its 37<sup>th</sup> session (2013), the GFCM agreed to support an **Eel Pilot Action**, in order to give a contribution towards the participation of Med countries to the actions for the eel stock at the global level.

# Background: Technical discussion on Mediterranean eel fisheries

- Preparation of a Background Technical Document towards the management of European eel (2014)
  - Identification of management priorities
    - Development of management plans at the national level, focusing particularly on coastal lagoons;
    - Conservation of coastal lagoons;
    - Integrating eel management plans into legal and administrative instruments for integrated coastal zone management (ICZM);
    - Undertaking habitat restoration actions;
    - Improving traceability of catches;
  - Identification of research priorities
    - Improve fisheries monitoring and data collection;
    - Improve knowledge on biology/ecology (migration, etc.)
    - Improve advice on **stock status**

# Background: Technical discussion on Mediterranean eel fisheries

**41<sup>st</sup> session of the GFCM (2017)**



The critical status of the European eel stock in the Mediterranean was acknowledged as was the need to take action to improve the status of the stock. In this respect, the delegate of the EU, jointly with Tunisia, expressed the intention of **proposing a management plan for European eel in 2018**. This management plan should be based on the findings summarized within the framework of a **dedicated working group on European eel**



# Summary of elements for the management plan of European eel

## **Scope:**

All Mediterranean, addressing all fishing activities, including recreational fisheries, carried out in all habitats inhabited by the species (sea, estuaries, coastal lagoons, lakes, rivers and reservoirs, etc.)

## **Objectives:**

Recovery of the stock, and restoration, in the long term, the stock size to levels which can enable exploitation of the resource while ensuring its conservation

## **Operational objectives**

### *On a precautionary basis:*

- Minimize IUU.
- Reduce fishing pressure
- Increase escapement rates (qualitatively)

### *Based on improved scientific advice:*

- Increase escapement rates (quantitatively)
- To maintain the biomass above agreed precautionary targets
- To maintain indicators of stock status and fishing pressure at levels which allows the long term exploitation of the resource while ensuring its conservation.

# Summary of elements for the management plan of European eel

Management measures	Examples
Participatory restrictions	Specific fishing authorization (with specific requirements)
Reporting obligations	Establishment of a reporting protocol including catches, location of landing points, origin and destination of catches towards ensuring traceability
Spatial restrictions	Establishment of closed areas (e.g. FRAs)
Temporal restrictions	Closed seasons, by life stage, including a minimum of three months for the different life stages.
Gear restrictions	<p>Authorised gear types, by life stage</p> <p>Traps and static nets, including fyke nets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum mesh size of cod-ends, and gathering panels</li> <li>• Gear dimensions</li> <li>• Number of fishing gears per fishing licence</li> <li>• Fishing operations (e.g. spacing between gear, number of cod-ends per fyke net)</li> </ul> <p>Longlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and size of hooks for longlines</li> </ul> <p>Fish barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management so to allow escapement of a % of silver eels</li> </ul> <p>Improve the selectivity of the gear to reduce the capture of immature individuals</p>
Restocking	<p>Amount and source of eels below 20cm used for restocking</p> <p>Aim and destination of restocking</p>
Catch restrictions	Establishing catch restrictions for all life stages (glass eel, yellow eel and silver eel)





**Thank you for your attention**

***GFCM Secretariat***  
*General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)*