



**Food and Agriculture  
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**General Fisheries  
Commission for  
the Mediterranean**

## Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC)

GFCM expert group on European eel in the Mediterranean (EGEMed)\*

FAO HQ, Rome, Italy, 8–9 June 2023 (hybrid)

## Background and Provisional Agenda

\*Integrating the Working group on the management of European eel (WGMEASURES-EEL)

### PREMISE

Following the recommendation of the 45<sup>th</sup> GFCM to form a permanent GFCM Expert Group on European eel in the Mediterranean (EGEMed) covering several aspects related to the fisheries and management of European eel (ToRs in Appendix 1) and considering the fact that the workplan of the GFCM called for meetings of both EGEMed and WGMEASURES-EEL, the WGMEASURES-EEL 2023 has been incorporated under one single meeting of the GFCM Expert Group on European eel in the Mediterranean (EGEMed).

### BACKGROUND

Based on the work carried out under the first phase of the GFCM Research programme on European eel in the Mediterranean and the advice of the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the Scientific Advisory Committee for Fisheries (SAC), the 45<sup>th</sup> session of the GFCM adopted Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/1 on a multiannual management plan for European eel in the Mediterranean Sea, amending Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/1.

Rec. GFCM/45/2022/1 established some additional provisions for the management of European eel fisheries:

- New options for the closure period to eel fisheries:
  - Option 1: an annual fishing closure of six consecutive months, during which landings of European eel at all stages (glass eel, yellow eel and silver eel) shall be prohibited
  - Option 2: an annual fishing closure consisting of three consecutive months, from 1 January to 31 March, as well as three additional months to be chosen between 1 April and 30 November, during which landings of European eel at all stages (glass eel, yellow eel and silver eel) shall be prohibited
- A ban on recreational fisheries in all habitats

In addition, the 45<sup>th</sup> session of the GFCM recommended to:

- Implement a second phase of the GFCM research programme on European eel, including a socioeconomic study on eel fisheries in the Mediterranean and stakeholder awareness activities (complete ToRs in Appendix 2);
- Revise DCRF TASK VII.6-EEL in line with SAC advice



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## Objectives

According to the requests of the 45<sup>th</sup> GFCM and Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/1, the GFCM Expert Group on European eel in the Mediterranean in 2023 foresees a first day to discuss the next steps of the GFCM research programme on European eel and a second day to discuss relevant available information to further evaluate the possibility of implementing additional measures addressing glass eel, inter alia a total ban, catch limitations or determining key habitats, towards the possible implementation of new long-term measures in 2024.



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## PROVISIONAL AGENDA

### THURSDAY 8 JUNE

**Morning: 09:30 – 13:00**

**Afternoon: 14:30 – 17:30**

1. **Opening and arrangements of the meeting**
  - *Welcome addresses and introduction of participants*
  - *Adoption of the agenda and appointment of the chair*
  - *Introduction of the meeting objectives and expected outputs, including a recap on the outcomes of the 23<sup>rd</sup> SAC and 45<sup>th</sup> Commission*
2. **Planning and operationalization of the second phase of the Research Programme**
  - *Identification and selection of the key habitats and sites to be sampled as part of the second phase of the research programme*
  - *Development and implementation of a common monitoring scheme for each life stage*
  - *Discussion and way forward to guide future work*

### FRIDAY 9 JUNE

**Morning: 09:30 – 13:00**

**Afternoon: 14:30 – 17:30**

3. **Introduction and state of implementation of Recommendations GFCM/42/2022/1**
  - *Recall of Recommendation GFCM/45/2022/1 on a multiannual management plan for European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) in the Mediterranean*
  - *Summary, by CPC, of the implementation of GFCM/45/2022/1*
4. **Advice from the 2022 Joint EIFAAC/GFCM/ICES Working Group on European Eels (WGEEL)**
5. **Summary of stakeholder views emerging from the SSF Forum on eel (Orbetello, February 2023)**
6. **Methodology and preliminary outcomes of a socioeconomic study**
7. **Implementation of the proposed amendments to the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework to address shortcomings identified during the Research Programme**
8. **Way forward**
9. **Closing of the meeting**
  - *Conclusions and recommendations*



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## Appendix 1

### Terms of reference of the GFCM expert group on European eel in the Mediterranean (EGEMed)

The creation of the GFCM expert group on eel in the Mediterranean (EGEMed) will address the following issues:

- Consolidate and expand the network of scientists and focal points fostered by the GFCM research programme on European eel in the Mediterranean.
- Coordinate all work to be done on eel at the Mediterranean level towards addressing common priorities, including the revision of the Data Collection Reference Framework, the contribution of the Mediterranean to the Joint European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission/International Council for the Exploration of the Sea/General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean Working Group on Eels (EIFAAC/ICES/GFCM WGEEL) and the direction to be taken during a potential second phase of the research programme.
- Identify and address the needs of countries with regards to technical assistance.
- The EGEMed should be composed of eel experts, both scientific and administrative, from the research programme as well as experts from various countries. The detailed composition of the EGEMed, and the roles of the different experts, should be further discussed and agreed upon at its first meeting.
- The EGEMed should provide a forum to ensure the further development and inclusion of the junior scientists involved in the research programme in the aim of ensuring the consolidation of expertise into the future.



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## Appendix 2

### Terms of reference for the second phase of the research programme on European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) in the Mediterranean

The twenty-third session of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (FAO headquarters, Rome, Italy, June 2022) agreed on the implementation of a second phase of the research programme on European eel in the Mediterranean according to the following preliminary terms of reference:

- I. Based on the consistent amount of information gathered by the research programme, postulating that Mediterranean lagoons are the most important habitat for eel, the second stage of the research programme should aim at validating the data collected in the first phase and improve some aspects to better understand the drivers of the population, by doing field work on the three stages of the life cycle at specific key sites, with the involvement of fishers:
  - i. Identify and select the key habitats and sites to be sampled as part of the second phase of the research programme.
  - ii. Develop and implement a common monitoring scheme for each life stage or alternative schemes to be evaluated on a comparative basis, foreseeing a standardized procedure for this field work and future monitoring, also taking into account the efforts being done in the area of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea.
  - iii. Carry out work in the field in selected key sites to gather data for the validation of statistical and management models.
  - iv. Analyse emerging information towards identifying potential future management strategies, e.g. total allowable catch.
- II. Perform a socioeconomic study on eel fisheries in the Mediterranean.
- III. Conduct stakeholder awareness activities.
- IV. Work on modalities for compensation schemes for fishers.



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