

2. (Revised) TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES WORKING GROUP ON QUEEN CONCH (Period 2019-2021)

1. Scope

The purpose of the Working Group is to support the sustainable management and conservation of Queen Conch (*Strombus gigas*) resources and its fisheries in the WECAFC Region. In undertaking its work, the working group will pay due attention to FAO's Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries' Article 6.4 of the general principles¹.

2. The goal of the Working Group

Using a multidisciplinary approach, the working group will contribute to the sustainable conservation and management of the Queen Conch fisheries and trade. In pursuing this goal, the working group will contribute to the fulfillment of national, regional and international responsibilities and commitments for the management and conservation of and trade in Queen conch and related or interacting species or fisheries in the WECAFC Region under the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and in accordance with agreed, documented management goals including ensuring the livelihoods of the people depending on these resources.

In particular, the Working Group will aim to support with technical and scientific advice the implementation of Decisions adopted at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES on "Regional cooperation and management of and trade in queen conch (*Strombus gigas*)" (South Africa, 2016), and WECAFC 16 Recommendation (WECAFC/16/2016/1) "on the Regional Plan for the management and conservation of Queen Conch in the WECAFC area" (Guadeloupe, 2016) and any relevant decisions that are adopted at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES and WECAFC 17.

3. Terms of Reference (TORs)

Queen Conch is a transboundary resource with commercial and economic, as well as ecological, importance for most countries in the Wider Caribbean region. Therefore, these TORs apply at regional and/or national levels as appropriate. The working group, with the support of FAO, WECAFC, CFMC, CITES, CRFM and OSPESCA, will act in an advisory capacity to guide and facilitate the sustainable management and conservation of queen conch.

The Working Group will carry out the following general tasks:

1. Compile, analyze and share interdisciplinary available data and information on queen conch, in thematic areas such as: biology, management of this fishery, socio-economics and trade, fishing technology, environmental factors, and other relevant areas needed to provide advice for policy and decision-making processes.
2. Develop common and modern methodologies for data and information collection for monitoring of queen conch stocks and promote the involvement of the private sector in data collection.
3. Monitor changes in abundance/density of queen conch stocks and populations in the Caribbean region.

¹ Conservation and management decisions for fisheries should be based on the best scientific evidence available, also taking into account traditional knowledge of the resources and their habitat, relevant regional and international agreements, as well as relevant environmental, economic and social factors. States should assign priority to undertake research and data collection in order to improve scientific and technical knowledge of fisheries including their interaction with the ecosystem. In recognizing the transboundary nature of many aquatic ecosystems, States should encourage bilateral and multilateral cooperation in research, as appropriate.

4. Review data from the countries and other sources on queen conch catch and effort and aquaculture production in the range states and monitor changes as appropriate.
5. Provide advice on the implementation of national and regional management measures and regulations for queen conch to countries and regional organizations.
6. Establish communication between the members of the working group and interested parties and stakeholders, including the private sector.
7. Develop and implement a work plan that will be monitored and evaluated by the WECAFC SAG and Commission.
8. Report to CFMC, OSPESCA, WECAFC and CRFM at each of their sessions (on the outcome of each Working Group meeting).
9. Further advance and monitor the implementation of the Regional Queen Conch Management and Conservation Plan that was adopted by WECAFC 16, CRFM, OSPESCA and CFMC at appropriate levels.
10. Invite selected experts to participate in the Working Group, ensuring that they have the necessary expertise, know-how and experience in areas relevant to the operation of the Working Group and the implementation of these Terms of Reference.

Mode of Operation

1. Role of WECAFC Member Countries

The members of the Working Group are to play a leading role in the Working Group activities through the following activities and commitments: • Participate in agreed activities of the working group, and ensure the participation of appropriate experts; • Ensure involvement of both CITES and Fisheries Authorities in the work of the Group; • Implement, at the National level, the work identified in the agreed work plan of the Group; • Host working group meetings on a rotational basis.

2. Role of the FAO/WECAFC Secretariat

The FAO Subregional Office for the Caribbean and the WECAFC Secretariat will facilitate and support the activities of the working group by collaborating actively with the partner agencies CFMC, OSPESCA, CRFM and CITES in: • Co-coordinating the activities of the working group (including securing funding for its operation); • Providing a technical secretary; • Providing technical assistance and support to research; • Facilitating training (as appropriate); • Communicate outcomes to WECAFC, CITES, UNEP-SPAW and countries (as appropriate); • Ensure the participation of appropriate experts and other stakeholders in Working Group Activities.

3. Roles of other Subregional organizations (e.g. CFMC, OSPESCA, CRFM)

Subregional organizations have an important role to play in assisting their member countries to participate fully in the activities of the working group by: 1. Providing technical assistance and support; 2. Facilitating procurement of funding for working group activities; 3. Coordination of the activities of the working group; 4. Facilitating the decision-making process at the Subregional level.

Role of the Convener

The Convener, in consultation with the Working Group, will: • formally convene the meetings of the group, • technically guide the group work and determine subjects to be discussed, • represent the group in regional and international meetings (as appropriate), • invite new members and ad hoc experts to participate in working group meeting, • review and approve publications and messages produced by the working group, and • take a leading role in securing funding for working group meetings.

Communication

A mechanism for on-going communication among Working Group members (Video conference, Skype and email), is essential to ensure that the work of the group is sustained between meetings. It must include all Working Group members.

The successful functioning of the Working Group also requires that each member country of WECAFC and organization/ agency identify a national focal point/expert through which communications will be directed. The outputs of the Working Group will be communicated through Working Group reports to WECAFC, OSPESCA, CFMC, CRFM, CITES, UNEP-SPAW and national fishery and CITES administrations and other relevant entities via the WECAFC Secretariat.

Working Group Meetings

The Working Group should meet physically at least once every two years or as needed. The meetings should be of two to five days duration. Meetings should use cost effective accommodations and institutional facilities and where possible take advantage of other meetings in the region.

WORK PLAN OF THE CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES WORKING GROUP ON QUEEN CONCH (QCWG)

The QCWG will carry out the following activities in 2019–2021 period:

ACTIVITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE
1. Finalization, publication and dissemination of the Report of the WG meeting in Panama (in hard copies and on-line on http://www.strombusgigas.com/index.htm and at www.WECAFC.org ; including the national summary reports)	February 2019	CFMC and FAO with inputs from meeting participants
2. Provide technical and scientific advice to national governments in the region to support the implementation of CITES COP 17 Decisions and WECAFC 16 recommendation WECAFC/16/2016/1 and any relevant decisions that are adopted at the 18 th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES and WECAFC 17	January 2019 – December 2021	WG members
3. Report on progress with the implementation of relevant CITES and WECAFC decisions, and the outcomes of the Working Group – at the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • next meeting of the WECAFC Scientific Advisory Group (SAG), November 2018; - • 17th session of WECAFC, April/May 2019; • 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, May/June 2019; • 31st meeting of the Animals Committee, January 2020 	In advance of deadlines for reporting required	CITES/Fisheries authorities of QC range States attending these meetings (as appropriate); CITES and WECAFC Secretariats
4. Translate the <i>Regional Queen Conch Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan</i> that was adopted at WECAFC 16 into French and Spanish, disseminate for review, and publish upon completion	January 2019	WECAFC Secretariat
5. Continue increasing awareness and building capacity among fishers on Safety-at-Sea, in particular addressing risk management in compressed air diving for Queen Conch; fisher organizations should be engaged as much as possible for these activities	January 2019 onwards	NOAA Fisheries/CFMC and FAO with the fisheries authorities in the region
6. Continue review and consideration of options for the development of a transparent "chain of custody" procedure to track catches from their catch location to their eventual destination	January 2019 onwards	NOAA Fisheries/CFMC with CITES, WECAFC/FAO and the authorities in the region

ACTIVITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE
7. Further advance and monitor the implementation of the <i>Regional Queen Conch Management and Conservation Plan</i> that was adopted by WECAFC 16, CRFM, OSPESCA and CFMC at appropriate levels	January 2019 onwards	CFMC, WECAFC, and CRFM, OSPESCA and the WG members
8. Encourage countries to implement the <i>Regional Queen Conch Management and Conservation Plan</i> as called for by WECAFC 16	January 2019 – December 2021	CFMC, WECAFC, CRFM, OSPESCA and WG members (national fisheries and CITES authorities)
9. Support national level consultations as needed to discuss Working Group proposed management and conservation measures for building awareness, increasing buy-in and contributing to compliance	January 2019 onwards	WG members (national fisheries and CITES authorities)
10. Support national authorities and fisherfolk organizations to implement the <i>Regional Queen Conch Management and Conservation Plan</i>	January 2019-December 2021	WG members (national fisheries and CITES authorities), CRFM, OSPESCA, CITES, CFMC, FAO/WECAFC
11. Operationalize the Scientific and Statistical Sub-Group (SS Sub-group) established in the <i>Regional Queen Conch Management and Conservation Plan</i> that will be responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying countries that lack national conversion factors for queen conch meat, analyzing available data, assisting with development of national conversion factors for these countries, and reporting back to the Working Group on these factors for their consideration. Review of existing queen conch NDFs and guidance in order to develop a simplified template for making non-detriment findings for queen conch, in consultation with the CITES Animals Committee, dissemination of the template to the Working Group membership for their consideration, and supporting selected countries in applying the templates and sharing the results at the regional level. 	Draft template: November 2018 - March 2019 Results and application of template: June 2019 and onwards	CFMC/WECAFC, SS Sub-group membership, CITES
12. The CFMC will hire a consultant to compile existing information and educational resources, with the appropriate authorization and permission, that	January-December 2019	CFMC/WECAFC Secretariat

ACTIVITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE
could be used to meet the objectives of the Working Group		
13. Consult with the CLME+ project to identify queen conch fishery needs that can be incorporated into a possible next phase of the CLME+ project and explore potential opportunities for collaboration specifically with respect to contributions to the State of the Marine Environment and Associated Economies (SOME) reporting mechanism and the Strategic Action Program Monitoring and Evaluation framework	November 2018 – December 2019	CFMC, the WECAFC Secretariat too and/or the relevant sub-regional partners (CRFM, OSPESCA)