

## **10. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE WECAFC WORKING GROUP FOR THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF SHARKS IN THE WIDER CARIBBEAN REGION**

### **1. ROLE OF THE WORKING GROUP**

More than 150 species of sharks and rays are present within the WECAFC region. There is currently limited information regarding their stocks and more needs to be done to protect and manage shark and ray populations. 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. Sharks are a transboundary resource and as such, the TORs may apply at regional and/or national levels as appropriate.

#### **1.1 Scope**

The scope of the working group is to provide advice on the management and conservation of sharks in the Wider Caribbean Region. This includes the development of national and regional plans of action in order to regulate target and bycatch fisheries, as well as manage existing populations within the region.

#### **1.2 The goal of the Working Group**

The objective of the Working Group is to provide a basis for the conservation and sustainable management of shark populations in WECAFC member countries. In pursuing this goal, the Working Group will be supporting the members in fulfilling the national and regional responsibilities for the conservation and management of sharks as specified by WECAFC.

#### **1.3 Terms of Reference (TOR)**

Specifically, the Working Group will:

- (a) Facilitate the sharing of available data and information on shark and ray stocks within the Wider Caribbean Region;
- (b) Provide support to the development National POAs for member states and the Regional POA;
- (c) Provide technical inputs to support the implementation of actions as defined in the RPOA.
- (d) Develop and implement a biennial work plan that will be monitored and evaluated;
- (e) Establish communication between the members of the working group, and between the working group and interested parties including the private sector;

The TOR may be amended as required by the members at the level of the WECAFC, following each two-year period coinciding with the meetings of the WECAFC

#### **1.4 Mode of Operation**

##### *1.4.1 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;
- Promote the implementation, at the National level, the work identified in the WECAFC endorsed work plan (as appropriate);
- Assist with mobilization of resources for the activities of the Working Group;
- Provide assistance and facilitate the organization of Working Group meetings in the languages of the Commission (to the extent possible);
- Host working group meetings on a rotational basis.

#### *1.4.2 Roles of the FAO/WECAFC Secretariat*

To coordinate activities of the Working Group, among WECAFC and Non-WECAFC Members, at the wider regional level;

- To assist with convening of meetings of the Working Group;
- To liaise with other Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) active in the Wider Caribbean Region and neighbouring areas will be involved as much as possible in the work of the group; these RFBs include amongst others OSPESCA, CRFM, CFMC, ICCAT, NAFO, NEAFC and CECAF.
- To coordinate the formulation and adoption of recommendations by the Working Group so as to facilitate the decision-making process at the level of WECAFC Area 31.

#### *1.4.3 Roles of other Subregional organizations (e.g. CFMC, CRFM, OSPESCA)*

Subregional organisations have an important role to play in assisting their member countries to participate fully in the activities of the working group by:

- Providing technical assistance and support;
- Facilitating procurement of funding when possible;
- Co-coordinating the activities of the working group;
- Facilitating the decision-making process at the Subregional level.

#### *1.4.4 Election and role of Convener of the Working Group*

The Working Group shall elect a Convener from among its Members to serve over the two-year period.

The first task of the convener will be to seek for experts among the WECAFC Members on sharks and rays, their fisheries and conservation. The convener should also contact potential partner organizations and solicit their interest to join in this Working Group.

### **1.5 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 and organization/ agency identify a national node or focal point through which communications will be directed. The outputs of the working group will be communicated through working group reports to WECAFC, OSPESCA, CFMC, CRFM, and national fishery administrations via the WECAFC Secretariat.

### **1.6 Working Group meetings**

The working group should meet physically at a minimum once every two years. 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.

**UPDATED WORK PLAN OF THE WECAFC/CITES/OSPESCA/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Shark Conservation and Management in the Caribbean Region (WGSCM)**

The joint Working Group intends to carry out the following activities over the period 2019 - 2020:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
Workshop (3-days) to review and prepare final draft of WECAFC/CITES/OSPESCA/CRFM/CFMC Regional Shark Conservation and Management Plan (RPOA- Sharks). (Miami, USA. August, 2019)	August 2019	WECAFC Secretariat, WGSCM convener and FAO
Preparation, publication and dissemination of WECAFC/CITES/OSPESCA/CRFM/CFMC Regional Shark Conservation and Management Workshop Report	September - October, 2019	WECAFC Secretariat, WGSCM convener and FAO
WECAC members countries review of final draft RPOA – Sharks fisheries management and conservation recommendations	October – November, 2019	The recommendations will pass through the Fisheries ICM process (CRFM, OSPESCA, WECAFC) for review before adoption by WECAFC 17
Finalization, publication and dissemination of the Regional Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks and Rays (RPOA – Sharks)	December 2019 – January 2020	FAO WECAFC Secretariat with inputs from WG
Conduct evaluation (survey) of implementation of RSMCP in WECAFC member countries	April – May, 2020	FAO WECAFC Secretariat
Organize and execute in WECAFC member countries training workshops for preparation of National Plans of Action for Conservation and Management of Sharks and Rays	June – December 2020	WECAFC Secretariat/CITES/FAO with support from WGSCM
Inform/Report to the: – 9 <sup>th</sup> meeting of the WECAFC Scientific Advisory Group (SAG), 2020. -18th session of WECAFC in 2020	As deadlines for reporting require	WECAFC Secretariat, WGSCM convener and FAO
Organize and execute shark and fins identification training workshop in selected WECAFC member countries	September – December, 2020	WECAFC Secretariat/CITES/FAO with support from WGSCM

<p>Prepare for WECAFC Regional Shark Stock Assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Training in stock assessment for WG Countries</li> <li>- Carry out planned selected stock assessments</li> </ul>	<p>December, 2020 onwards</p>	<p>WECAFC/FAO/CITES/CRFM/OSPESCA/CFMC with technical support from WGSCM and funding from regional and international shark conservation organizations</p>
<p>Increase collaboration with other partners (RFMOs) and other organizations (CITES, CMS, SPAW) on shark conservation and management</p>	<p>August, 2019 onwards</p>	<p>WGSCM supported by Shark Conservation Organizations through WECAFC and partners</p>