

REC.CM-GFCM/40/2016/7

**concerning the authorization of the use of remotely operated vehicles
within the framework of national scientific research programmes on red
coral**

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that the objective of the Agreement for the Establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use, at the biological, social, economic and environmental level, of living marine resources in the area of application;

RECALLING Recommendation GFCM/35/2011/2 on the exploitation of red coral in the GFCM area of application, and particularly paragraph 2, as well as the work of the GFCM aiming to ensure the protection of this species;

CONSIDERING the need, for certain Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-contracting Parties (CPCs), to pursue research programmes on red coral with the aim of reaching the adoption of a management plan for red coral in the shortest time possible;

ADOPTS, in conformity with the provisions of Articles 5 b), 8 b) and 13 of the GFCM Agreement, that:

1. The use of remotely operated vehicles (ROV) shall be strictly limited to observation for scientific purposes and shall only be authorized by the CPCs in the context of research programmes led by national scientific institutions until 31 December 2017. Such authorization shall be without prejudice to stricter measures adopted or maintained by the CPCs.
2. The commercialisation of red coral harvested within research programmes led by national scientific institutions shall be strictly forbidden.
3. Each CPC intending to use ROV pursuant to paragraph 1 shall submit the following information to the GFCM Secretariat, at least 20 days before the start of the campaign based on the use of ROV. The GFCM Secretariat shall, in turn, communicate such information without delay to all CPCs:
 - list of research vessels authorized to use ROV;
 - duration of the research campaign mission implicating the use of ROV; and
 - identification of the areas where ROV will be used for research purposes.
4. The scientific outcomes of these research studies should be presented to the twentieth session of the GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) for review and advice.
5. The GFCM, based on the advice provided by the SAC, should pronounce itself, where necessary, regarding the possible extension of the use of ROV for scientific purposes.
6. A Working Group on red coral should be organised in December 2016 with the aim to examine all data collected by the CPCs within the framework of their national research programmes, including in relation to the use of ROV for scientific purposes. The CPCs should ensure the submission to the GFCM Secretariat of an interim report on their research activities before 30 November 2016.