

Resolution GFCM/44/2021/4

on a pilot project for the control and inspection of common dolphinfish fisheries

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

CONSIDERING 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 marine living resources in the GFCM area of application;

RECALLING that, in giving effect to the objective of the GFCM Agreement, the GFCM shall adopt recommendations on conservation and management measures aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing activities, in order to preserve marine living resources and the economic and social viability of fisheries and that, in adopting such recommendations, the GFCM shall give particular attention to measures to prevent overfishing and minimize discards as well as to the potential impacts on small-scale fisheries and local communities;

FURTHER RECALLING the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in particular its Output 2.3 “Monitoring, control and surveillance centralized at the regional level;

CONSIDERING Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/8 on an international joint inspection and surveillance scheme outside the waters under national jurisdiction in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas 12 to 16);

FURTHERING the objectives established under Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/2 on the establishment of a closed season for common dolphinfish fisheries using fish aggregating devices and Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/1 on a set of management measures for the use of anchored fish aggregating devices in common dolphinfish fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea;

CONSIDERING the possible interactions of fish aggregating devices (FADs) with other fisheries and the ensuing need to monitor and control these interactions;

ADOPTS, in conformity with Article 5 and 8 of the GFCM Agreement, the following resolution:

PART I Objectives and scope

1. This resolution establishes a voluntary pilot project (pilot project) for the control and inspection of common dolphinfish fisheries in the GFCM area of application, in accordance with the objectives established under Recommendation GFCM/30/2006/2 and Recommendation GFCM/43/2019/1.
2. The GFCM Secretariat should establish the pilot project with a view to facilitating the voluntary exchange of inspection personnel engaged in inspection activities of the fishing vessels of GFCM contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) exploiting common dolphinfish in the GFCM area of application.
3. The pilot project should apply to vessels in areas beyond national jurisdiction exploiting common dolphinfish in the GFCM area of application.

PART II

Voluntary participation

4. The CPCs interested in participating in the pilot project should inform the GFCM Secretariat and transmit the following information without delay:
 - a) national authority responsible for at-sea inspections and other supporting maritime agencies as may be appropriate; and
 - b) designated contact point(s) within the authority responsible for the implementation of the pilot project, including name and contact details.
5. The GFCM Secretariat should make the information referred to in paragraph 4 available on the public section of the GFCM online platforms, taking into consideration national personal data protection rules and consistent with GFCM data confidentiality policy and procedures.
6. Participating CPCs should invite their inspection personnel engaged in inspection activities of fishing vessels exploiting common dolphinfish in the GFCM area of application to:
 - a) participate as inspectors or as observing members of the inspection party in boarding and inspection activities conducted by the CPCs; and
 - b) facilitate exchanges to allow the sharing of necessary information, best practices and expertise to strengthen at-sea inspections and related control activities as well as capabilities and capacities, and enhance cooperation and collaboration amongst CPCs to inform future GFCM discussions and decisions.

PART III

Pilot project procedures

7. The CPCs that have communicated their intention to participate in the pilot project should communicate among themselves in order to identify opportunities for the exchange of inspectors and ascertain when their inspection activities will be carried out.
8. Participating CPCs should provide relevant information to other participating CPCs, as appropriate, in order to determine their interest in exchanging inspectors or observers for a particular patrol or period of time.
9. Participating CPCs deploying patrol vessels in fisheries managed by the GFCM should develop patrol plans and strive, where possible, to arrange inspection patrols that can accommodate one or more inspection personnel from other CPCs.
10. Participating CPCs wanting to place inspectors or observers on another CPC's inspection vessels should communicate their interest to the contact point of the CPC that has provided information under paragraph 4.
11. When a participating CPC has notified its interest in an exchange of personnel under paragraph 10, the concerned CPC(s) should consult among themselves to determine whether such an exchange could be accommodated, taking into consideration operational and administrative limitations as well as training, expertise, operations and information on safety, security, medical and physical requirements, authorizations for the venue of the inspections and inspection capacities.
12. Participating CPCs deploying inspection vessel(s) should make special efforts to accommodate requests from developing CPCs in particular.

13. Participating CPCs that have chosen to establish an exchange of inspection personnel under this pilot project should enter into a bilateral agreement to address the relevant details of the deployment of the exchange, including :

- a) the dates and duration of the deployment(s);
- b) the areas of operational and inspection activities;
- c) the operational procedures to follow, including, but not limited to, the inspection report to be used, reporting and the composition of the boarding party/parties; and
- d) the information that will be exchanged as well as follow-up actions.

14. The bilateral agreement referred to in paragraph 13 should also determine the role of the inspection personnel deployed under such agreement as well as further provisions for the cooperative deployment of inspectors or observers, for the use of vessels, aircraft or other resources for fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance purposes and for the protection of law enforcement sensitive or otherwise confidential or protected information from inappropriate disclosure.

15. The participating CPC of the inspection personnel deployed should be responsible for all aspects associated to safety, medical and physical requirements during the deployment on the exchange.

PART IV

Pilot project reporting and review

16. Participating CPCs should report on any activities carried out under the pilot project to the GFCM Secretariat, on an annual basis, at least 30 days before the session of the Compliance Committee.

17. The pilot project should be evaluated by the Compliance Committee at its fifteenth session and used for future GFCM decisions in this regard.