



*Ministero delle politiche agricole
alimentari e forestali*

DIPARTIMENTO DELLE FILIERE AGRICOLE E AGROALIMENTARI
DIREZIONE GENERALE DELLA PESCA MARITTIMA
E DELL'ACQUACOLTURA

Ufficio PEMACQ VI

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Mr. Reinhard Priebe
Director Conservation Policy

DG Fisheries and Maritime Affairs
European Commission
1049 Brussels
Belgium
p.c. Antonio Cervantes Bolanos

Object: Technical amendment to the Data Collection National Program for 2008.

Dear Mr. Priebe,

according to the art. 8.1 of the Commission Regulation (EC) N°1639/01 of the 25 July 2001, this is to ask the authorization to introduce a technical amendment to the Data Collection National Program for 2008, that has been already evaluated by the SGRN.

The amendment regards, specifically, the replacement of the gear used during the GRUND scientific trawl-survey with that of the MEDITS scientific trawl-survey.

The scientific reason of the above amendment relies upon the following considerations.

Historically, trawl-survey data have mainly been used to estimate the distribution pattern of the fishery resources and to provide indices for the tuning of VPA in several advisory bodies. More recently, trawl surveys have gained more attention as a primary tool for providing useful information to the stock assessment process. Nowadays the challenge of scientific trawl-surveys is to provide data useful for describing and quantifying changes in the fish populations, through indices of abundance, demography, mortality, spatial occupation, and biological traits. By this way trawl-surveys may substantially contribute to the development of assessment and management advice tools.

In the Mediterranean, trawl-surveys have been used for acquiring biological information on target species and fish community, for population dynamics modelling and to identify reference points (GFCM-SAC Workshop on Reference Points, Rome, April 2004). In addition, assessments based on trawl-survey data have been presented and discussed in several GFCM-SAC forum (2005-2007).

It is well known that the indices from trawl-surveys, when estimated for the different fractions of the populations can allow tracking changes in recruitment strength and spawning stock biomass throughout the time. This task, together with the annual estimation of total mortality, growth parameters, sex-ratios and average length at maturity, can allow the formulation of a framework that incorporate assessment for population modelling (e.g. using simulation techniques) and for estimating indicators at population and fish community levels.

In the present Italian situation, many of these objectives could be better achieved with the availability of two seasonal data sets per year, obtained by means of the same sampling gear.



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Estimates and trends of indicators based on reproduction, recruitment, seasonal distribution, spatial segregation aspects will greatly benefit from a second data set gathered with homogeneous methodology and operational protocols.

The use of two complementary data sets would permit, for example, more accurate estimates of life history parameters such as mortality and growth. In addition it would provide valuable records for the estimation of stock-recruitment relationships. At the same time, spatial occupation of the different components of the stocks would be better assessed. The gain in accuracy would, in turn, make also more robust the evaluation of changes in the population indicators and of the input parameters for population and community modelling.

Indeed, these are the tracks on which European research projects (e.g. FISBOAT - Fishery Independent Survey Based Operational Assessment Tools) have moved in the recent years, producing tools and results for different species and geographical areas, including the Mediterranean. The increasing importance of survey based assessments has been also evidenced by the use of model like SURBA, particularly in the ICES area.

Looking forward a reply to the above explained request of amendment, I send you best regards.

The National Correspondent
Piniho Conte