

THE 3rd SIPAM ANNUAL MEETING

17-19/09/1998, OLHAO - PORTUGAL

1- Meeting place and participants.

The third meeting of the SIPAM National Coordinators took place from 17 to 19 September 1998 at Olhao, Portugal, in the premises of the Centro Regional de Investigaçao Pesqueira do Sul (IPIMAR). The local organisation of the meeting was the responsibility of the SIPAM National Coordinator for Portugal Mrs. Elisa Vasconcelos, and the general coordination of the travel of participants was carried out from the Regional Center in Tunis. The list of participants is attached as Annex 1.

2- Opening of the meeting.

The meeting was opened by Mrs. Elisa Vasconcelos, General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture of Portugal who, on behalf of her Government, welcomed the participants noting that their presence in Portugal coincided with the celebration of the EXPO 98 in Lisbon, an event of great importance for the countries and for the international community concerned with the future of the oceans.

Mr. M. Pedini, Technical Secretary of the Aquaculture Committee of the GFCM, thanked Portugal for hosting the meeting and for the excellent arrangement for the third session as well as the representatives of the countries for their presence. He thanked in particular the Italian delegation for their continuing financial support to the SIPAM which made this meeting possible.

Mr. Hadj Ali Salem, SIPAM Regional Coordinator, thanked Portugal and IPIMAR for hosting the meeting, on behalf of the participants.

In the opening session Mr. Ahmed Mohamed Salem, new national co-ordinator for Egypt introduced himself to the participants.

3- Adoption of the Agenda.

The agenda proposed by the SIPAM Regional Center (attached as Annex 2) was adopted without changes.

4- Agenda Items.

4.1- Current SIPAM Situation.

The SIPAM Regional Coordinator distributed the working paper attached as Annex 3 describing the present situation of the network. The report of the Regional Coordinator touched upon administrative and financial aspects including the situation of the staff to be recruited for the Regional Center. He was followed by an intervention of Mr. Pedini, who highlighted the additional assistance to the network provided through FAO. In particular it was noted that FAO had assisted in the preparation of a prototype for the SIPAM Home Page, had contributed resources for a meeting of experts for the design of the marketing data base. A meeting of experts for the elaboration of the health management data base had been already planned for December 1998, and agreements with ICRAM had been successfully negotiated

for the support to the present meeting and for the elaboration of a data base in SIPAM of economic nature. He also informed of the failure of the negotiation with Spain in support of the GFCM networks including SIPAM.

In the discussion which followed the presentation of the situation of the network the following point were raised:

The lack of a programmer in the Regional Center limits considerably its operation, and some risk of system collapse exists due to the lack of specialised computer personnel in the Regional Center. To date the lack of the programmer in Tunis has been solved by means of a contract with the IMBC, but that is not considered a sustainable situation. Furthermore it was noted that a specialist in data processing was included in the agreements signed between the Government of Tunisia and the GCMF and that this conditions had not yet been fulfilled properly by the Tunisian Government.

The Regional Coordinator of SIPAM informed on the difficulties existing to contract and maintain a computer specialist in the SIPAM Regional Center due to the less attractive salary offered by the public administration in Tunisia to that kind of personnel. Keeping in mind the fact that it is basically an economic problem, such as indicated by the Regional Coordinator, some alternatives to settle this problem were discussed, including the possibility of establishing a two years contract for technical support with the IMBC as well as a possible support, from F.A.O and/or other sources, to share the programmer's salary. Taking in consideration the difficulties indicated by the Regional Coordinator to this solution, and in light of the seriousness of the problem (already indicated in the previous meeting of the Group in Salerno), it was requested to the Regional Coordinator of SIPAM to try to expedite a solution to this problem using to the maximum the possibilities offered by the agreement signed between the Government of Tunisia and F.A.O and more precisely, the possibilities of using the available funds to contract consulting or personal specialised, though it would be part-time, even outside the Tunisian Administration.

It was also pointed out the fact that it does not exist yet a documentalist in the Regional Center. The Regional Coordinator informed that documentalist has not yet been recruited because it has not been considered necessary for the existing work, but that her/his contracting does not present so high difficulties as in the case of the programmer. The Regional Coordinator informed about the possibility of including the cost of the documentalist in the budget for 1999, so that the documentalist would be incorporated into the Regional Center in the first months of 1999.

It was agreed that the GFCM Secretariat could write a letter to the Government of Tunisia to expedite the recruitment of the programmer and documentalist, to assist the Regional Coordinator in his effort.

4.2- SIPAM Expansion.

The Regional Coordinator informed the meeting about activities of SIPAM (see Part 1.2 of the Annex 3) related to the expansion of the network. He indicated that Algeria and Bulgaria were the two countries expected to be linked to the network in 1998.

Other countries which had also been contacted were Libya and Romania. The discussion with the countries indicated that the accession of Algeria and Libya was considered easier than that

of Romania and Bulgaria which had not yet nominated candidates for the national coordinator position.

Taking into account the need of carrying out training activities for the representatives of the new members, as well as to update the knowledge (in particular in the case of the last version of the software) of the current members, the representatives of Turkey, Portugal, Egypt, Spain, Croatia and France proposed, according to a suggestion of the Mr. Coppola (FAO), that a training seminar be organised. The representative of CIHEAM was asked about the possibility that this seminar was carried out in the facilities of the IAMZ at Zaragoza, and he agreed to inform on such possibility to the Regional Center as soon as possible. Concerning the financing of the expenses of the attendees to the seminar it was informed that, if the member countries were financing the trips and subsistence expenses of their representatives, the organisation of the seminar would be quickly organised. Attending to the proposal of several representatives, it was agreed that a letter would be sent to each country informing on the organisation of the Seminar, hoping to know the response of all the members before the end of 1998.

Mr. Coppola (FAO) proposed the tentative content for the training seminar (attached in Annex 4) and the proposal was accepted by the participants with the understanding that it had to be considered a draft which could be further developed. It was also recommended to the participants that prior to the celebration of the training seminar the problems encountered with the current version of the system had to be notified to the SIPAM Regional Center so that they could be included in the agenda of the seminar.

4.3- Visit of the Coordinator of the Regional Center to SIPAM member countries:

The SIPAM Regional Coordinator addresses the Part 1.3 of his report (Annex 3) related to his visit to Turkey in December 1997 and announcing the visit to the National Center of Portugal in Lisbon on 21-22 September 1998. It was pointed out the interest of this type of visits, especially in those cases in which they could serve as support to the establishment of the internal SIAPM networks within the participating countries. It was proposed that reports of these visits were circulated to the National Coordinators of all the member countries in order to inform them on the activities and results of these visits.

The National Coordinator for Turkey indicated that the visit of the Regional Coordinator in last december had a good effect on the consolidation of the SIPAM centre in Turkey ; although improvements over the past situation in terms of effective support from MARA remain modest. In the case of Portugal the National Coordinator suggested the preparation of brochures to be translated in the various languages to promote the use of the network in the participating countries.

4.4- Data management,

4.4.1. Contribution of the countries and quality of the data:

The SIPAM Regional Coordinator presented the situation of the various data bases, attached in the annex 2 of the report. In the discussion which followed the presentation by the Regional Coordinator, in relation to the quality of the data, the participants pointed out the need to avoid duplicated or incomplete records in the directories, and the need to complete gaps in some historical series, giving priority to the more recent 1997 data series. It was highlighted

that the credibility of the system could be questioned if the present practice of entering incomplete records is continued.

It was reported that obtaining data on import and export of aquaculture products is particularly difficult. In the case of the EU member countries it was considered nearly impossible to follow the movements of products from one country to another. The options which were considered are: (a) drop the data base, (b) change the nature of the data base and refer mainly to import/export of fisheries products, and (c) insert estimates by the SIPAM coordinators.

In the experts directory, the existence of experts with a high number of specialities was discussed, and it was agreed that the maximum number of specialities admissible per expert would be 3. The expert qualification in a speciality must be endorsed by three publications on-the speciality topic and two years of direct experience in the speciality.

Concerning the bibliography database, the convenience of having some tools that would allow the downloading of records from ASFA to SIPAM was suggested. 'Grey literature' that were registered must be located in some known library, so that the users could request or acquire copies. In this case, it is considered necessary to have titles and to prepare an abstract in English, while the original title should also be maintained. In a similar way, it would be necessary to translate the titles of the R&D projects of the research programs database.

Regarding the Legislation data base it was reiterated that legislation and regulation should remain in the original languages and that only the date of issuance and the abstract need to be in English.

4.4.2. Frequency of data exchange:

After the presentation of this point by the Regional Coordinator (see Annex II.3) in which he indicated that only four countries had replied to the questionnaire distributed the discussion centred on the need to have deadlines for the submissions. As a result it was considered appropriate for the Regional Center to download on a monthly basis the regional databases to the INTERNET SIPAM Home Page. The consensus for the data uploadings from National Centers to the Regional Center was that this flow should be continuous as the data arrive in the various National Centers.

4.4.3. Data bases empty or scarcely completed:

Possible reasons by which some databases (i.e.: Import/Export, Pathology, Legislation, ...) are practically empty were analysed and the following agreements were taken:

- Given the existing difficulties to find consistent data on aquaculture products import / export, it was agreed to include the available data though the products of the fishing and the aquaculture were included together, warning about this situation so as users do not were lead into error. The content of this database will be analysed with greater detail when SELAM design the marketing database currently in preparation. It also was agreed to begin the data introduction from 1997 backwards, to have most recent data as soon as possible.

- In relation to the pathology database the representative of the GFCM informed that the structure of the database is going to be modified in-depth in the experts meeting to be

convened for the next month of December. Consequently it was agreed to stop the introduction of data in the current database.

4.4.4 Reference tables of the system:

Concerning the species reference table and the photographs request sent by the Regional Center, the French national coordinator mentioned the issue of the property of the photographs to be sent to SIPAM. It was clarified that the photographs property right are not altered by transferring them to SIPAM and that, in case of transfer, the origin of the photograph would be made known in the species datasheet.

All the reference tables of the system need to be edited at the earliest possible date and sent to the national coordinators, so that they can co-operate actively in their improvement.

In addition to that information was requested that 'general aquaculture' be included in the specialities reference table in order to properly classify aquaculture generalists.

4.4.5 National reports:

The need to have a standard format for the national reports was again highlighted.

To prepare a standard report proposal, a small group integrated by the representatives of Croatia, France (coordinator), Italy, Malta, Morocco and Turkey was established; this group proposed the report scheme attached as Annex 5. Though the group proposed a maximum length of the report of 3 pages, it was agreed that the maximum size of the national reports would reach a maximum length of 5 pages, and all countries should follow the same outline, although empty chapters may be allowed if information was not available.

4.5- Improvements of the SIPAM Windows version:

The representatives of the IMBC informed about the preparation of the new version SIPAM 2.0 that is being already evaluated and tested in the Regional Center and in FAO. The version 2.0 will have the following characteristics:

- It will permit the installation of units of the system in different places of each country (up to 10 units including the National Center), what will facilitate the data entry as well as improve access of external users, since all units will have a complete regional data module. The existence of several units of the system in each country can also allow the distribution of work by geographical zones or by topics (i.e.: experts, statistics, producers, suppliers, bibliography, R&D programs,..) and it represents a step towards the creation of the national networks.

- Research and projects data base were assigned to the unit 0 (the National Center). The units 1 to 9 will send its data to the National Center (unit 0) and this will upload them to the Regional Center.

- The new version includes a module for data import through Excel worksheets, in which all the information, also the numerical codes, is in text format. This incorporation makes to the system more vulnerable in relation to the data integrity, but permits a greater flexibility to National Coordinators for planning the data entry from other information sources already available. The National Center (Unit 0) is the only one authorised to introduce data through this module.

- Two manuals of the new application are being distributed: one general, with a description of the software, and other more specific that will include more technical details (as the tables structures) necessary to import external data.

The installation of the new version 2.0 (9-10 diskettes or 1 CD-ROM) will have to be made after loading in the current system the REG004.ZIP updating file that will be sent later by the Regional Center to all the members. It was agreed that FAO would distribute the new SIPAM version by e-mail through the FAO FTP.

5- Establishment of the National Networks.

The meeting discussed the progress made by the various national coordinators to establish a national network involving the various institutions and association related to aquaculture. Although attempts were made in countries like Italy and Turkey the organisation of national networks is still facing considerable difficulties in most countries. Although the System is known to the administrations in many cases the lack of complete data sets which would not present gaps has limited the response of potential users and input centers at national level. Potential problems related to the use of software by other institutions were raised and the need to establish hierarchies for data manipulation was again noted. Croatia reported about the impatience of the Croatian Government regarding the slow progress in terms of data entry and the participants agree that visibility of outputs of quality was essential at this stage to convince other institutional to participate in the system. The French national coordinator proposed to concentrate on a core of data bases which should be closely controlled and totally filled so that the system could demonstrate its real value. The production, institutions and programmes and the national report could form this core and France proposed that they be filled including data for the years 1995 to 97 and if possible estimates for 1998.

The unclear situation of the Greek national center (in terms of responsibility for provision of data to the regional center) is an issue which has to be solved in the shortest possible time.

6- SIPAM Brochure and Home Page.

The need to improve the visibility of the system had been noted at several instances during the meeting. The two mechanism to improve the visibility which had already been identified were the preparation of a brochure and the creation of the Home Page of SIPAM in the INTERNET. A draft of the brochure had been prepared by the FAO and Portugal offered, due to the availability of funds to finalise and distribute in various languages and to cover the cost of printing. An estimated amount of US \$ 6000 could be earmarked for that purpose.

Concerning the SIPAM Home Page, Mr. Coppola explained the structure of the prototype which had been prepared in FAO. The Home Page would have four components: (a) and introduction (public) similar in presentation to the FAO Aquaculture Newsletter, (b) the brochure of the network which would also be public, (c) a blank component with contents to be decided by the meeting, and (d) the SIPAM engine for searching data bases. The meeting had to decide whether this last component would be public or restricted in access.

It was discussed that in level (c) summaries and tables could be included and refreshed periodically. Several proposals were put forward, either one input per data base as examples of the presentation of the information for the countries which would rotate. there was no

formal agreement on the final content of this level although the rotation of information was mentioned several times.

The meeting expressed the view that the maintenance of the Home Page was a core responsibility of the regional center in Tunis. The absence of a qualified programmer was deplored by the participants as it was considered to be a major limitation for the progress of the system.

The participants agreed that a letter to the Tunisian Government be prepared by FAO accompanying the report of the meeting highlighting the problem of staffing faced by the Regional Center and highlighting that this was a part of the agreement voluntarily signed by Tunisia with FAO which had not been properly fulfilled. It was indicated that the letter should indicate that if a satisfactory solution could not be found for the staffing of the Regional Center, the next session of the GFCM Aquaculture should discuss alternative relevant solutions.

7- Follow-up activities.

The meeting agreed to the following follow-up activities:

a core of data bases should be carefully completed. Production statistics for 1995-97, the institutions directory and the Research and development programmes as well as the national reports for 1995-97 should be entered and verified before the end of 1998.

The format for the national reports should be distributed to the National Coordinators as soon as possible

The REG 004 issue presented by the Regional Coordinator should be distributed within one week by the Regional Center in Tunis.

Candidature for the hosting of the next meeting of SIPAM Coordinators would be required. The national coordinators were supposed to discuss with the national authorities and provide some information to FAO by end of January 1999.

The Regional Center would inform after a national meeting for SIPAM in Tunisia about the possibility for having a qualified programmer

FAO should verify the possibility of completing the design of the Home Page as soon as possible. If this was not possible for financial reasons, possibilities with institutes in participating countries should be explored.

For the finalization of the brochure, Portugal should finish the preparation of the masters which will be sent to the participating countries for translation in the local languages, which will be sent back to Portugal for finalization and printing

The regional center should prepare the output tables to be formatted for insertion in level (c) of the Home Page.

The participants as well as the Regional Coordinator and the FAO thanked Portugal for the excellent and generous arrangements for the meeting.

8- Visit to the facilities of TiMar:

Facilities of TiMar in Fuzeta-Livramento were visited on the 18th for the afternoon. TiMar belongs to the Norwegian group Tiedemanns and its facilities include a hatchery, a nursery and on-growing tanks for seabream and seabass production. Other company of the Tiedemanns group in Portugal is OesNor, whose facilities include a hatchery and a nursery, in Ferrel-Peniche, and floating cages for on-growing in the Port of Sines.

During the visit to the TiMar facilities the participants were attended by Mrs Luisa Guilherme, Financial Directress of TiMar, who explained in detail the facilities. After the visit, the company offered a dinner to the participants.

9- Country reports

Several National representatives delivered reports about structure and operation of SIPAM in respective country. In Annex 6 reports from Cyprus, Malta and Turkey are included.

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