

## **6th SIPAM ANNUAL MEETING**

*12/01/2002, ROME*

### Opening of the Meeting

1. The 6th SIPAM Annual Meeting was opened by Mr Jia Jiansan, Chief, Inland Water Resources and Aquaculture Service (FIRI), Department of Fisheries, FAO (Annex I). Mr Benedict Satia, GFCM Interim Secretary (International Institutions and Liaison Service - FAO, FIPL) was also present at the opening session. The meeting was attended by participants from 14 member countries of the SIPAM. Observers from the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies/Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Zaragoza, Spain, (CIHEAM/IAMZ), and from the Spanish General Directorate of Marine Resources (Dirección General de Recursos Pesqueros) were also present. The SIPAM National Co-ordinators for Greece, Lebanon and Libya were not able to attend. The full list of participants is attached as Annex II.

2. In his opening speech Mr J. Jiansan thanked the Italian Government for the generous support provided through ICRAM (Istituto Centrale per la Ricerca Scientifica e Tecnologica Applicata al Mare) for the organisation of the meeting. He highlighted the importance of the SIPAM network as a tool to effectively disseminate information required for the sustainable development of the aquaculture sector in the Mediterranean region and a link between all players engaged in the industry. He recognised the support and contribution of all member countries as a key factor towards the future of the network. Mr Jiansan also recognised the role of the SIPAM Regional Centre with regards to the future maintenance and up-dating of the SIPAM portal. He finally pledged continuous support to SIPAM through the FAO Regular Programme until the independent General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) body was established and running on an autonomous budget. The text of this opening statement is attached as Annex I.

3. Mr Mario Pedini welcomed all the participants and introduced Mr Alessandro Lovatelli as the new Technical Secretary of the GFCM Committee on Aquaculture (COAQ). He then thanked all present for the fruitful collaboration he had with all those that have been involved in setting-up the SIPAM network despite all the funding constraints. Mr Pedini regarded this stage of the SIPAM network as an important one as the completion of the SIPAM portal would revolutionise the way data and information was collected and disseminated. He strongly felt that the new portal, once completed, would greatly increase the visibility of the network, however stressed that the dynamics behind the functionality of the portal would have to change. In order for the portal to be active and attractive to the end users Mr Pedini cautioned that all parties involved would have to collect and disseminate up-dated, complete and screened information at a much faster pace. He concluded that this would be the next hurdle SIPAM would have to face and overcome in the future in order to provide the information demanded. He also emphasised the importance to establish effective national networks.

4. The final remark of Mr Pedini concerned the funding of all SIPAM Annual and Steering Committee meetings. He reminded that so far these meetings had been funded thanks to external resources. SIPAM would only have the necessary resources once the GFCM member countries have effectively joined and ratified the budget agreement. Mr Pedini invited all the National Co-ordinators to encourage their own countries to do so while he was confident that FAO would continue its support during the interim phase which also included the creation of a P2 professional post within the Fisheries Department. He then concluded that he would remain available to consolidate and further support the development of the network.

5. Mr Alessandro Lovatelli introduced himself as a new staff member of the Inland Water Resources and Aquaculture Service (FIRI) of the FAO Fishery Resources Division. He gave a brief background of his work experience, starting from his first appointment with FAO in 1987 working on a regional seafarming project in Southeast Asia. After working for projects in Latin America (FAO), Vietnam (EU, Danida) and Eastern Africa (EU) he joined FAO again in 1997 as the Aquaculture Advisor attached to the EASTFISH project based in Copenhagen, Denmark. Mr A. Lovatelli concluded that he was honoured to have been selected as the new COAQ Technical Secretary.
6. Mr Rino Coppola, FAO Fishery Resources Officer and SIPAM System Designer, welcomed Mr Roland Kristo from Albania as the latest arrival to the SIPAM family.
7. Following the introduction and welcome notes the Provisional Agenda was deliberated and adopted without changes (Annex III).

### Regional Report

8. Mr Hadj Ali Salem, the Regional Co-ordinator, reported on the work carried out since the last annual meeting held in Istanbul, Turkey, 8-11 November 2001 (see Annex IV for the complete report). The highlights of the report included information on the newly established links with Romania and Lebanon as recommended in the last Steering Committee Meeting and, the visits to Egypt, Spain and France to address the importance of the national networks with regards to ensuring the collection and dissemination of information and linkage to the overall SIPAM network. The report also mentioned the distribution of GLOBEFISH data to the National Co-ordinators, the situation of the two databases on pathology and marketing and the work carried out by the SIPAM Regional Centre to improve the quality and reliability of individual records. Final observations presented were on the work so far carried out on the SIPAM logo and on the Arabic version of the SIPAM brochure.

### Links to new countries

9. A brief report was delivered on the visit to Romania by the SIPAM Regional Centre team (Mr Hadj Ali and Ms Rym Chebil). The general impression was that the visit was well received by the authorities in Romania. During the visit, Ms Elisabeta Metaxa was confirmed as the SIPAM National Co-ordinator. The system in Romania would start with the establishment of a local network that included three peripheral data collection points that would feed the information to the national centre at Bucharest. Mr Hadj Ali informed that Romania planned to use SIPAM as a central system for the collection, organisation and storage of all the data relevant to the national aquaculture sector.
10. The visit to Lebanon, carried out to train the national team, was made in July 2001 and allowed the Regional Co-ordinator to demonstrate how SIPAM functioned. The visit was the opportunity to start a small local information network. Mr Ibrahim El Hawi was confirmed as SIPAM National Co-ordinator.
11. Discussing the situation of the remaining countries in the Mediterranean basin the Regional Co-ordinator welcomed the presence of the delegate from Albania, Mr Roland Kristo, to the SIPAM Annual Meeting and expressed the need to formalise the participation of this country to SIPAM at the earliest. Mr Hadj Ali also took the opportunity to inform the participants on the need to re-activate the contact with Bulgaria through the Directorate of Fisheries and/or the Bulgarian representative to FAO to clarify the situation of their participation. Bulgaria was invited to formally join SIPAM, but so far no reply was received.

It was pointed out that other GFCM countries such as Syria and Slovenia would also be invited to join the network, an effort that could be initiated in 2002.

#### National networks

12. Mr Hadj Ali visited three Mediterranean countries (France, Spain and Egypt) through travel funds made available by FAO, FIRI. The purpose of the visits was to discuss the organisation and the consolidation of the national networks with regards to the gathering and dissemination of aquaculture data. During the visits, the functioning of the SIPAM network and linkage to the national networks was discussed and presented. The missions resulted in an increased interest in SIPAM among the three countries visited. The immediate results should be the creation or strengthening of national networks with the inclusion of a few peripheral data collection points. The participants were informed that the planned visit to Greece had to be postponed to 2002 as the new SIPAM National Co-ordinator had not been designated. The General Directorate for Fisheries in the Ministry of Agriculture in Athens was expected to host the national centre. The visit to Greece would be arranged depending on the availability of funds.

#### Aquaculture products price data

13. Based on the decision taken in Istanbul during the last SIPAM Annual Meeting, Mr Hadj Ali re-confirmed that the SIPAM Regional Centre had subscribed to GLOBEFISH and has regularly distributed monthly price reports on selected aquaculture products. He also confirmed that the Regional Centre started to explore the possibility of distributing information on traded volumes by searching for the data in the Mercaberna / Merca Madrid (Spain) and Rungis (France) web sites. This exercise was done in response to a general request from the SIPAM National Co-ordinators. In the case of Italy, ISMEA (Istituto di Servizi per il Mercato Agricolo Alimentare) was indicated as the possible source for periodic data on the main Italian markets. Ms Carla Iandoli was asked to explore such a possibility.

#### Pathology database

14. Mr Bernardo Basurco, the TECAM (Technology of Aquaculture in the Mediterranean) Administrator, presented the preliminary results of a survey on the capabilities of the Mediterranean countries in the field of disease diagnosis.

Mr Basurco informed that the complete survey report would be published by CIHEAM. It was agreed at the meeting that the SIPAM Pathology database, which had so far received little inputs, would be initially based on the information collected in the TECAM Diagnostic Directory. The information would be made available at the earliest by Mr Basurco so that Ghenesis 2000, the Italian firm constructing the SIPAM portal, would be in a position to insert the information and design an appropriate search application.

15. Mr Hadj Ali reported that the adaptation of AAPQIS (Aquatic Animal Pathogen and Quarantine Information System; [www.enaca.org/aapqis](http://www.enaca.org/aapqis)) to the Mediterranean was not finalised even though the work was initiated by Mr Frank Berthe of IFREMER in 1999. This work should have been completed in 2001 as originally reported by Mr Rohana Subasinghe, FAO Senior Fishery Resources Officer (FIRI).

## Bibliography database

16. Mr Hadj Ali informed the participants that practically no bibliographic documentation (hard or electric version) had been received by the SIPAM Regional Centre from the member countries apart from a contribution from Croatia. He invited all member countries to contribute what they could in order to enable the Regional Centre to fulfil its contribution as part of the ASFA agreement. To date the SIPAM regional team had entered selected documents relevant to TECAM and SELAM networks and was in the process of entering selected MEDRAP project documents. The importance of the above agreement was strongly emphasised, particularly for non-ASFA member countries, as this would give them a certain visibility. All non-ASFA member countries were invited to consider including in their national networks, if possible, institutions and national organisations that could contribute towards the bibliographic database.

## Regional database

17. The SIPAM Regional Centre Co-ordinator reported that the overall regional database has expanded over the last year with currently 10,361 records. In 2001 only a mere 452 new records had been received from all National Co-ordinators. The input was considered as insufficient particularly as many records remained incomplete. Mr Hadj Ali reiterated the words of Mr M. Pedini on the importance of scaling-up the national contributions, particularly as the SIPAM web site would be up and running by the middle of 2002. The report of the SIPAM Regional Centre Data Manager, Mr M. Bendag, clearly indicated that some SIPAM member countries (Spain and Greece, in particular) had not been supplying new or revised data. The National Co-ordinators from Spain (Mr Ignacio Arnal) and France (Mr Denis Lacroix) raise the issue regarding the separation of Mediterranean data from the overall country data that included information from the Atlantic coast.

18. Mr Hadj Ali expressed his concern regarding the situation of Greece. The present restructuring of the Institute of Marine Biology of Crete (IMBC) and the poor communication from the Ministry of Agriculture in Athens were delaying the process regarding the selection of a new SIPAM National Co-ordinator. In the case of Spain the general feeling was that some development was in progress following the visit to the country. It is expected that a national network would be established in the near future with Mr I. Arnal as the National Co-ordinator and JACUMAR as the main partner.

19. Mr M. Bendag reported a series of problems relating to the Laws and Regulations database. He assumed that the National Co-ordinators were facing difficulties in the collection of the relevant published national legislation and in preparing adequate summaries. The only country that so far had contributed to some degree was Italy. The possibility of collaborating with the FAO Legal Office was discussed. Ms Barbara Moauro from the FAO Legal Office confirmed that a SIPAM link to FAOLEX was possible and advisable as this would avoid the 'double' collection of relevant national legislation. The National Co-ordinators were encouraged to send hard or electronic copies of relevant and new laws and regulations to FAO so that they could be inserted in the FAOLEX database. Mr R. Coppola confirmed that the link to FAOLEX would be developed and made accessible through the SIPAM portal.

20. The participants were informed that the National Report database had been modified to the new format agreed during the SIPAM meeting in Olhao, Portugal. Although most countries had provided the missing data some had yet to complete the database. Mr M. Bendag reported that all countries had their production statistics up-dated to 1999 and several countries had also provided 2000 statistics. He urged all countries that had not supplied the

latest data to urgently complete the 2000 set and, if available, also provide the data for 2001. This would allow SIPAM to maintain an advantage with respect to the statistics collected and published by FAO (FIDI). Regarding the database on Research & Development Programmes, it was noted that countries such as France, Greece, Spain and Portugal had yet to enter and/or up-date their data entries.

21. As a conclusion it was agreed that the SIPAM Regional Centre would prepare an up-dated status report on all the main databases (National Report, Production statistics, the 4 Directories, Laws and Regulation, R&D Programmes) and circulate it to all the SIPAM National Co-ordinators. The National Co-ordinators would be requested to complete records with missing information and check the reliability of all the existing data. Only complete and verified records would be utilised in the SIPAM portal. Mr M. Pedini cautioned the SIPAM Regional Centre to produce all future reports by strengthening the qualitative analysis of the data rather than distributing reports of a quantitative nature. Furthermore he noted that the Regional Report did not adequately inform the participants on the work so far carried out by the SIPAM Regional Centre to enhance the quality of the data in its databases and to complete missing records. The quality and completeness of all data should be of major concern to all parties involved in the SIPAM network. However the lead quality control role was the responsibility of the SIPAM Regional Centre.

#### SIPAM web site

22. During the last SIPAM Steering Committee Meeting it was decided that placing the SIPAM databases on the internet was necessary and a matter of priority. This would enhance the visibility and flexibility of the system and ensure an effective link to FIGIS. The construction of the SIPAM portal had been initiated by a private Italian company (Ghenesis 2000) in the framework of a contract signed between FAO (FIRI) and that company. The draft SIPAM portal was demonstrated by two representatives of Ghenesis 2000. Clarifications were provided on the main architectural components of the portal, including the links to FIGIS and other institutions such as CIHEAM, ASFA, EAS, EU, etc., through a network of sub-portal. It was agreed that all SIPAM National Co-ordinators would communicate their comments once the first draft was completed and circulated. All comments and suggested modifications would be forwarded to FAO. Regarding the issue on what kind of data would be made available through the SIPAM portal it was agreed to start with data and information of public domain. Furthermore, it was decided that the first version of the SIPAM portal would only be loaded with data which was complete and that had been verified. It was also mentioned that the National Co-ordinators would have to decide at some point the minimum fields required before any information is released via internet.

23. Mr R. Coppola, SIPAM System Designer, delivered an introduction on the development of SIPAM. The network started in 1992 with five member countries using DOS to collect and disseminate data. The system soon evolved with the new SIPAM platform in MS Windows. SIPAM is the only current Mediterranean Information System dedicated to the aquaculture sector with a membership of 16 countries. He pointed out, however, that the visibility of SIPAM to-date has been very low, with little dissemination of data outside the SIPAM 'Club'. The advent of the internet is providing the opportunity for SIPAM to increase its visibility and to be in a position to offer up-dated information. This resulted in the creation of the SIPAM portal. He highlighted the role of the SIPAM Regional Centre with regards to the maintenance of the SIPAM portal and the new way the regional staff would have to work to ensure that correct and relevant information is collected and inserted in the SIPAM web pages. Mr R. Coppola emphasised that the work involved to maintain the SIPAM portal live and up-date

would be demanding, however no additional resources were needed to carry out this task. He reported that the work methodology would change as the SIPAM Regional Centre would now require a continuous input, rather than receiving data on an annual basis. The National Co-ordinator of Cyprus, Ms D. Stephanou, strongly supported the move towards the SIPAM portal as this was seen as the only way to keep the SIPAM network going.

24. It was agreed that the SIPAM Regional Centre would contact an external consultant in order to investigate the possibility, and quantify the funds required, to up-grade the computer network of the Centre. This exercise was deemed necessary in order to enable all regional staff to have direct access to the internet. Mr Hadj Ali noted that any additional expenses would have to be covered by the project as he did not envisage additional inputs from the Government of Tunisia at this stage.

25. Mr A. Freddi, a consultant recruited by FIRI to assist FAO with the development of the SIPAM portal, delivered a presentation on how the information available in SIPAM could be accessed by the end user. The mechanics of the query system were presented to the participants. Following the demonstration of the SIPAM portal by the two Ghenesis 2000 representatives the National Co-ordinators were informed that the system under development would remain dynamic and changes could be carried out at any time and at any level within the portal. Confidential data, paid advertisements, pay-per-view pages, forum pages and the possibility for the private sector to add news items were issues raised and briefly discussed. It was decided that all these aspects would be discussed in depth once the first draft of the SIPAM portal was completed and viewed.

26. The issue related to the maintenance of the SIPAM portal was raised by Mr M. Pedini. He informed that the FAO Regional Project had helped with the initial development phases of the portal and that further FAO financial assistance would possibly be granted during the transition period of the autonomous GFCM body. He nevertheless cautioned that other sources of funding may be required.

#### Co-ordination with FIGIS

27. Mr M. Taconet (FIDI) gave an overall presentation on FIGIS highlighting the reciprocal advantages FIGIS and SIPAM would gain from one another. One main advantage for SIPAM would be an increased visibility of Mediterranean aquaculture at a global level. He introduced FIGIS as an FAO Fisheries Department project that aims at establishing a central fisheries information system in FAO. Three years had already been completed of the 5-year project. So far the main focus of FIGIS had been on marine fisheries including the integration of statistics from the FIDI databases. Mr Taconet mentioned that work on the aquaculture component started in September 2001 with a first meeting held with Ghenesis 2000. Following this meeting it was decided to move ahead with establishing a link between SIPAM and FIGIS. SIPAM would provide data and information to be placed inside FIGIS.

#### Country reports

28. All member countries present at the meeting delivered short country reports with some countries distributing hard copies (not attached). The following are some highlights from the various reports. Algeria reported that a new National Co-ordinator had been nominated, Mr T. Milla, from the Centre National d'Etudes et de Documentation pour la Pêche et de l'Aquaculture (CNDPA). Croatia informed that 2 national centres were active (in Zagreb and Split) and three more were under consideration. Cyprus confirmed that they are ready to

contribute to the further development of SIPAM via the GFCM autonomous budget and supported the development of the Pathology database. Egypt confirmed that six national data collection points had been identified as part of the national network and that within the near future the 2001 data will be made available. France informed that the SIPAM national centre was moved to the IFREMER station in Palavas located on the Mediterranean coast and that Mr F. Renè would assist the French National Co-ordinator.

29. Italy reported that the 2000 data would be made available soon and informed that a number of other Italian institutes appeared to be interested in being part of the Italian network. The Italian National Co-ordinator, Ms C. Iandoli, reported that Italy had been the only country that had so far contributed to the legal database and encouraged a link to FAOLEX. Furthermore she informed the participants that ICRAM would most likely be absorbed by the Italian national agency for the environment although it would possibly maintain its current structure. Portugal informed that a national aquaculture directory was in preparation and that the information could be made available to SIPAM. Romania confirmed that five data collection centres had been identified, however the work was progressing slowly as a result of changes in the national administration. Finally, Albania confirmed their willingness to actively join and contribute to the SIPAM network.

#### Other matters

30. Mr M. El Ahdal, National Co-ordinator of Morocco, informed that the Arabic version of the SIPAM brochure was being finalised with funding from Morocco, and would be made available.

31. The question of the new SIPAM logo was re-introduced by Mr D. Lacroix, National Co-ordinator of France, as the issue remained unsolved following the last meeting in Istanbul when an alternative logo was presented. It was decided that FAO and Ghenesis 2000 would explore the possibility of merging the new logo with the logo developed by FAO as it appeared in the SIPAM web site.

32. The SIPAM National Co-ordinators thanked Mr M. Pedini for his past efforts towards establishing the SIPAM network and for his constructive work and achievements during his term as the COAQ Technical Secretary. They also supported the nomination of Mr A. Lovatelli as the new Technical Secretary. Furthermore, the National Co-ordinators unanimously invited Mr M. Pedini as one of the pioneers of SIPAM to accept a position within SIPAM ad persona. Mr M. Pedini appreciated the trust placed on him and accepted the invitation pending approval from his Division. He briefly mentioned the targets achieved and thanked all for the collaboration and friendship shown over the years. He concluded by mentioning that he would investigate the possibility of getting the World Bank involved in the activities of SIPAM.

#### Next SIPAM Annual Meeting

33. Mr M. Pedini proposed that the next SIPAM Annual Meeting be held in Casablanca and explained the reasons for arranging the current meeting in Rome. The three main reasons were the availability of funding through the Italian Government, the importance of demonstrating the SIPAM portal under construction and the reduced logistic expenses that resulted by avoiding the travel expenses of the consultants employed to develop the SIPAM portal. The National Co-ordinator of Morocco welcomed the proposal and reiterated the invitation to host the 7th SIPAM Annual Meeting in late 2002. In the absence of an autonomous budget it was

agreed that a general effort was needed to identify the funds to support the organisation of the next meeting.

#### Next SIPAM Steering Committee

34. It was agreed that the next SIPAM Steering Committee Meeting would be held in Rome, Italy, and would comprise two FAO staff (Mr A. Lovatelli as the COAQ Technical Secretary and Mr R. Coppola as the SIPAM System Designer), two SIPAM National Co-ordinators (Ms C. Iandoli from Italy and Mr M. El Ahdal from Morocco) and one officer from the SIPAM Regional Centre in Tunis (Mr Hadj Ali). A proposal was put forward to possibly include an additional representative. It was decided that the meeting should be organised at the earliest in order to discuss future programme activities and funding arrangements.

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