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MEDAC advice in view of the GFCM Working Group on Management Strategy Evaluation (WGMSE) on Adriatic small pelagics. Session 1: preparatory meeting to decide methods

Considering the previous experience in the stakeholder's involvement in a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE), the MEDAC already deems appropriate to provide a contribution about the methods to be adopted in the forthcoming GFCM MSE process on Adriatic Small pelagics. Although the collaboration with the GFCM Working Group is expected as much as possible throughout the entire process, the MEDAC is aware that its contribution can be more valuable when the harvest strategy options are addressed.

The points already raised up in the previous consultative process are the following (Ref. 145/2021 and Ref. 208/2021):

- The process of adoption of Harvest Strategy needs enough time in order to provide reliable simulations based on the best available science. Acquiring data and improving its quality must be continued and strengthened. Furthermore, the data acquisition must also have a reduced time frame to understand at the best the cause-and-effect relationship.

- Bottom-up approach and collaboration of stakeholders should be the basis in defining the future Harvest Control Rules (HCR) taking into account their interests and their experience as well as the typology of the fleet, improving the continuous exchange of information with the ACs.

- It is important that the process will be based on a continuous consultation in collaboration regularly throughout the process and by organizing as soon as possible informal webinars to collect the opinions from a heterogeneous platform of stakeholders with particular attention to the working languages and the **simplification of the scientific information to collect informed feedback**.

- Other factors, such as environmental changes, pollution and trophic dynamics, needs to be taken in due account when defining Harvest Strategies.

On the basis of the outcomes of the debate the MEDAC is available to provide a space for effective stakeholders' engagement for each step of the process, assuring an effective sharing of knowledge and their active collaboration in defining and implementing Harvest Control Rules.

Disclaimer - This advice reflects only the MEDAC's view and the Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information that it contains

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