

**Queen Conch Working Group (QCWG)**  
**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES QCWG**

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**Terms of Reference**  
**(2014 - 2018)**

**1. ROLE OF THE QCWG**

**1.1 Scope**

The scope of the QCWG is the sustainable management and conservation of Queen Conch (*Strombus gigas*) resources and its fisheries in the WECAFC Region. In undertaking its work, the QCWG will pay due attention to the Code of Conduct's Article 6.4 of the general principles<sup>1</sup>.

**1.2 The goal of the QCWG**

Using a multidisciplinary approach the QCWG will contribute to the sustainable conservation and management of the Queen Conch fisheries and trade. In pursuing this goal the QCWG will contribute to the fulfilment of national, regional and international responsibilities and commitments for the management and conservation of and trade in Queen Conch and related or interacting species or fisheries in the WECAFC Region under the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and in accordance with agreed, documented management goals including ensuring the livelihoods of the people depending on these resources.

In particular, the QCWG will aim to support with technical and scientific advice the implementation of CITES 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties Decisions on Regional cooperation and management of and trade in Queen Conch (*Strombus gigas*) (Thailand, 2013), and WECAFC 15 Recommendation (WECAFC/15/2014/3) "on the management and conservation of Queen Conch in the WECAFC area" (Trinidad and Tobago, 2014).

**1.3 Terms of Reference (TORs)**

Queen Conch is a transboundary resource with commercial and economic, as well as ecological, importance for most countries in the Wider caribbean region. Therefore these TORs apply at regional and/or national levels as appropriate. The QCWG, with the support of FAO, WECAFC, CFMC, CITES, CRFM and OSPESCA, will act in an advisory capacity to guide and facilitate the sustainable management and conservation of Queen Conch.

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<sup>1</sup> 6.4 Conservation and management decisions for fisheries should be based on the best scientific evidence available, also taking into account traditional knowledge of the resources and their habitat, as well as relevant environmental, economic and social factors. States should assign priority to undertake research and data collection in order to improve scientific and technical knowledge of fisheries including their interaction with the ecosystem. In recognizing the transboundary nature of many aquatic ecosystems, States should encourage bilateral and multilateral cooperation in research, as appropriate.

The QCWG will carry out the following general tasks:

1. Share already available data and information on Queen Conch, status.
2. Develop common methodologies for assessment and monitoring of queen conch stocks. Involve the private sector in data collection.
3. Monitor changes in distribution of Queen Conch species in the Caribbean.
4. Compile and analyze data on Queen Conch catch and effort and aquaculture production in the member countries and monitor changes.
5. Compile information about the social and economic importance of Queen Conch fisheries.
6. Provide management advice and advise on the implementation of regional management regulations on Queen Conch to countries and regional organizations.
7. Establish communication between the members of the QCWG, and between the QCWG and interested parties including the private sector.
8. Take other necessary actions involving the emerging issues in the Queen Conch subject.
9. Develop and implement a biennial work plan that will be monitored and evaluated.
10. Report to CFMC, OSPESCA, WECAFC and CRFM on the outcome of each session.
11. Define a precise profile of the experts to participate in the QCWG to ensure that the right experts participate.
12. The TOR may be amended as required by the members at the level of the WECAFC, following each two year period coinciding with the meetings of the WECAFC.

## **1.4 Mode of Operation**

### *1.4.1 Role of Countries*

The members of the QCWG will play a leading role in its activities through the following activities and commitments:

- Participate in agreed activities of the QCWG, and ensure the participation of appropriate experts;
- Implement, at the National level, the work identified in the agreed work plan of the Group;
- Host QCWG meetings on a rotational basis.

### *1.4.2 Role of FAO/WECAFC Secretariat*

The FAO Subregional Office for the Caribbean and WECAFC Secretariat will play a facilitating and supporting role in the activities of the QCWG by collaborating actively with the partner agencies CFMC, OSPESCA, CRFM and CITES in:

- Co-coordinating the activities of the QCWG (including facilitate procurement of funding);
- Providing a technical secretary and technical backstopping;
- Providing technical assistance and support to research;
- Facilitating training (as appropriate);
- Communicate outcomes to WECAFC, CITES, UNEP-SPAW and countries (as appropriate);
- Ensure the participation of appropriate experts and other stakeholders.

### *1.4.3 Roles of other Subregional organisations (e.g. CFMC, OSPESCA, CRFM)*

Subregional organisations have an important role to play in assisting their member countries to participate fully in the activities of the QCWG by:

- Providing technical assistance and support;
- Facilitating procurement of funding for QCWG activities;
- Co-coordinating the activities of the QCWG;
- Facilitating the decision-making process at the Subregional level.

#### *1.4.4 Role of the convener*

The QCWG convener will:

- formally convene the meetings of the group,
- technically guide the group work and determine subjects to be discussed,
- represent the group in regional and international meetings (as appropriate),
- invite new members and *ad hoc* experts to participate in QCWG meeting,
- review and clear publications and messages produced by the QCWG, and
- take a leading role in securing funding for QCWG meetings.

### **1.5 Communication**

A mechanism for on-going communication among QCWG members (Video conference, Skype and email), is essential to ensure that the work of the group is sustained between meetings. It must include all QCWG members.

The successful functioning of the QCWG also requires that each member country and organization/agency identify a national focal point/expert through which communications will be directed. The outputs of the QCWG will be communicated through QCWG reports to WECAFC, OSPESCA, CFMC, CRFM, CITES, UNEP-SPAW and national fishery and CITES administrations via the WECAFC Secretariat.

### **1.6 QCWG meetings**

The QCWG should meet physically once every two years. The meetings should be of two to five days duration. Meetings should use cost effective accommodations and institutional facilities and where possible take advantage of other meetings in the region.