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**GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR
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GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

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MAJOR ACTIVITIES OF THE FAO REGIONAL PROJECTS IN 2010*

***Available in English only**

1. This document summarizes the most significant activities carried out by the FAO Mediterranean Regional Projects, namely, AdriaMed, MedSudMed, CopeMed II, EastMed, ArtFiMed, MedFisis and the GEF-supported Partnership for the Mediterranean (MED-LME), during the intersessional period of the GFCM. Project activities include research and training programmes, workshops and working groups, as well as the technical assistance provided to some countries, the SAC and its Sub-Committees and Working groups.

AdriaMed - “Scientific Cooperation to Support Responsible Fisheries in the Adriatic Sea”

2. The project is financed by the Italian Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies (MiPAAF) and has been cofinanced in 2007-2008 and 2010 by the Directorate-General for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs of the European Commission, and additional funds are to be received for 2011/2012. It is operative since September 1999. The participating countries are Albania, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro and Slovenia, with waters included in the GFCM Geographical Sub-Areas (GSAs) 17 and 18. The Project aims at promoting scientific cooperation among the Adriatic countries and to improve the management of fishing activities in compliance with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. The main goals of the Project are to develop common basic knowledge and support regional fishery management through improved scientific coordination among the fishery institutions.

3. The activities carried out during the intersessional period followed the methodological approach used by the Project, as well as the workplan for 2010 as approved by the 11th AdriaMed Coordination Committee (Montenegro, March 2010), which included the continuation of research programmes, workshops, training programmes as well as the technical assistance given to the countries and the cooperation of the Project with relevant institutions, primarily the GFCM, through the SAC and its Sub-Committees.

4. The eleventh meeting of the Coordination Committee of the AdriaMed Project was held from 3rd to 4th March 2010, in Kotor, Montenegro, hosted by the Institute of Marine Biology of Kotor. During the meeting the workplan for 2010 was discussed and agreed; in addition the twelfth Coordination Committee was held at the Fisheries Research Institute of Slovenia, in Ljubljana (1-2 March 2011), where the activities foreseen for the 2011/2012 were planned and agreed on.

5. Following the communication of the Italian Donor, the Ministry of Agriculture Food and Forestry Policies (MiPAAF), of its readiness to continue the support to the AdriaMed Project, the Project activities were extended to June 2012. In the intersessional period the project performed the following main activities:

- Working Group on Demersal Fishery Resources (Italy, September 2010): The Working Group was focused on the appraisal and stock assessment (standard and alternative methods) of demersal stocks and on indicators and reference points which may be considered at the regional level. In addition the demersal surveys in the Adriatic Sea (including the AdriaMed trawl survey) as well as the investigation in deep Adriatic Sea waters were discussed. The stock assessments for sole *Solea solea* in GSA 17 and for Hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) in GSA 18 were presented and discussed during the SAC SCSA Working Group on Demersal Species (Turkey, October 2010).
- Working Group on Small Pelagic Fishery Resources (Croatia, October 2010): The meeting reviewed the knowledge and information on small pelagic fish stocks, mainly of anchovy and sardine. The stock assessments of anchovy and sardine were jointly performed for GSA 17 combining all the data made available by the experts of the participating countries. The Small Pelagic WG reviewed also the preliminary results of the joint acoustic and DEPM survey performed in GSA 18 under the umbrella of the project. Possible future Project activities were identified including those concerning the Coordinating Team on echo surveys and joint research activities in the Adriatic Sea. The results of the stock assessment of anchovy and sardine for GSA 17, as well as preliminary results for GSA 18, were presented and discussed during the SAC-SCSA Working Group on Small Pelagic Species (Italy, November 2010).
- The Project continued to support the countries in developing expertise on small pelagic fisheries resources as well as in the standardization of the methodologies applied. In July 2010, a joint acoustic and ichthyoplankton survey using R/V “Dallaporta” covering South Adriatic waters (GSA18) was organized and supported, in cooperation with CNR-ISMAR Ancona. Taking advantage of the occasion, theoretical and practical onboard training activities on acoustic survey methods were carried out for national staff from Albania and Montenegro. In addition a scientific explorative survey in the deep sea waters of the South Adriatic Sea was jointly performed in August 2010 by all the research institutions involved in the AdriaMed Project, using R/V “Andrea”.
- The Project continued to support the scientific experiments carried out in the Pomo/Jabuka Pits area on *Nephrops* stocks as an example of methodology to assess demersal fisheries resources providing additional data to compare with the trawl survey data. The Istituto di Scienze Marine (CNR – ISMAR) of Ancona (Italy) in cooperation with the Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries of Split (Croatia), under the auspices of AdriaMed, carried out an evaluation of the *Nephrops* stocks in the Jabuka/Pomo pits area using the towed UnderWater TV (UWTV) methodology in August 2010. Moreover additional collection of data by means of trawl survey was supported by the Project in the area, to gather additional data for the completion of a proposal for the management of this critical area.
- The project continues to organize training activities according to the requests formulated by the participating countries. In October 2010 a training workshop on the Daily Egg Production Method (DEPM) for the estimation of the spawning biomass of anchovy was held in Montenegro. In December 2010, following a specific request formulated during the 11th Coordination Committee, a training session on the Virtual Population Analysis (VPA) stock assessment method was organized and held. The activity was extended to the countries participating in the other Mediterranean Projects and it was attended by 21 scientists.
- The Project further supported the continuation of the study designed with the objective of implementing a monitoring system for the Montenegrin fisheries sector, including biological,

environmental, economic and social information, applying the Operational Unit (OU) concept. The study is carried out in cooperation with the Institute of Marine Biology of Kotor and the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Water Management (Fisheries Directorate). The collection of biological data started in 2007 and will be prolonged through 2011.

- The Project supported the participation of several experts in the GFCM - CAQ related meetings. The Project continued its technical support to the countries in particular in accordance with the recommendation GFCM/2009/33/4, and on the need to standardize the collection of production statistics data on aquaculture. Following the request formulated by the Directorate of Fisheries Policies of Albania, support is being provided to the Directorate to establish a monitoring programme to collect data on aquaculture in Albania.
- The Project continued to provide technical support to the participating countries for the creation and updating of databases, web pages and national information systems as in the past years. In particular, following the request of the Directorate of Fisheries Policies of Albania (Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration), support was provided for the digitalization of historic information on fisheries (fishing, fleet, catch, species) available at the Directorate, as well as for the creation of an archive to store and retrieve these data. Moreover the Project, in cooperation with the MedFisis Project, continued to support the national fisheries statistics systems in Albania.
- The Project pursued the activities carried out so far for the inclusion of Adriatic Scientific publications into the ASFA database, as well as supporting the collaboration centres created at the Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries (IOF) in Split, Croatia, and at the Institute of Marine Biology of Kotor (Montenegro). AdriaMed is also continuing to support the FAO ASFA Secretariat. A report summarizing the activities carried out and the records submitted to the ASFA publisher has been prepared and submitted to the ASFA Board Meeting (Casablanca, Morocco, 5-9 July 2010).
- The updated version of ATrIS (version 2.1), the computerized system developed to manage and undertake preliminary analysis of the data sets from the AdriaMed trawl survey, has been distributed to the MEDITS group for additional tests (April 2010). ATrIS is now the common tools being used by more than 20 Mediterranean research institutes to manage trawl survey data (including in many cases MEDITS data). The Project continues to provide technical assistance to the research institutes and to work on the development and improvement of this application.
- The AdriaMed Information System, which is available on the AdriaMed portal (www.faoadriamed.org), has been updated and further improved. Currently, the Project Web site hosts several databases: (e.g. Fishing Ports, Fish Markets, Shared Species, including biological parameters, Fisheries Legislation). Moreover the effort to harmonize the web site of all the regional projects of the Mediterranean is continued and a common repository of all the Projects publications is being prepared.
- In order to strengthen international and regional cooperation the Project interacts closely with the FAO Regional Project MedSudMed. In addition, several meetings of coordination were held with the other regional projects CopeMed II, ArtFiMed and EastMed in order to consolidate and envisage common activities. In this respect the Project also participated to in the Coordination Committee of CopeMed II (May 2010, April 2011), EastMed (April 2010, April 2011) and MedSudMed (May 2010). where synergies were identified. Cooperation with “MedSea Large Marine Ecosystem (MedSea-LME)” Project funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) on topics that may be of common interest, was also sought. In particular, the Project staff participated in the workshop “Implementing the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries - Framework

and Practical Guidance” organised in the framework of the MedSea-LME Project (Rome, December, 2010). In addition a common exposition during the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) session (Italy, 31 January - 4 February 2011) was organized for all the FAO Mediterranean Regional Projects displaying informative material and posters of the Projects activities.

- AdriaMed continued to provide direct support to the activities of the GFCM by funding the participation of 22 Adriatic experts in 13 GFCM meetings (both SAC and CAQ related) held in the intersessional period.

MedSudMed - “Assessment and Monitoring of the Fishery Resources and Ecosystems in the Straits of Sicily”

6. The project is financed by the Italian Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies (MiPAAF) and it is operative since April 2001. The participating countries are Italy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malta and Tunisia. The main goals of the MedSudMed Project are to support the scientific communities of the participating countries in the development of a monitoring system for the study of fishery resources and their ecosystems (GSAs 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 21), with particular focus on the standardisation of methodologies. In addition, the Project promotes the scientific cooperation between participating countries and supports national capacity development. The activities carried out in 2010 followed the work plan approved by the 8th MedSudMed Coordination Committee held in Tajura (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, 18-19 May 2010). The 9th Coordination Committee planned for the second half of March 2011 in Italy was postponed to 16-18 May 2011.

7. Following the communication of the Italian Donor, the Ministry of Agriculture Food and Forestry Policies (MiPAAF), of its readiness to continue the support to the MedSudMed Project, the Project activities were extended to June 2012. In the intersessional period the project performed the following main activities:

- Progress was made in the harmonisation of sampling procedures and data processing in the Project area. The Project organised a meeting (Italy, July 2010) involving the experts of the Italian and Tunisian research Institutes (IAMC-CNR of Mazara del Vallo and INSTM of Sfax) to discuss the technical aspects of an intercalibration exercise between the sampling protocols currently used in the Project area for bottom trawl surveys. The main issues of the exercise including the sampling scheme to be adopted, the sampling area and the period of the year for its execution were preliminary agreed. A draft proposal for the execution of the intercalibration at sea will be brought to the attention of the forthcoming Project’s Coordination committee for approval.
- A working group for the assessment of the stock of *Parapenaeus longirostris* in the project area was organised in cooperation with the CopeMed II Project (Italy, September 2010). The working group finalised the joint stock assessment exercise on *P. longirostris* in GSAs 12-16 initiated in 2009 (Malta, October 2009). National data from Tunisia, Malta and Italy on *P. longirostris* were pooled together and jointly analysed at sub-regional level by experts of participating countries. The results of the joint stock assessment of *P. longirostris*, including the management advice proposed were presented at the SAC SCSA Working Group of Demersal Species (Turkey, October 2010).
- A Sub-regional Working Group on Shared Demersal Fisheries Resources was organised in cooperation with CopeMed II (Italy, September 2010). The main objective of the meeting was to discuss issues related to demersal fisheries shared resources in the Projects’ area. Particular importance was given to establishing a group of researchers to progress in the knowledge and joint assessment of shared demersal stocks. The species to be investigated and tentatively jointly assessed in the Projects’ framework were identified by sub-region: Alboran Sea and surrounding areas (GSAs 01-06), Gulf of Lion (GSAs 01-06), Straits of Sicily (GSAs 12-16 and GSA 21). A

work plan, including specific activities to be carried out and the species to focus on in the short and medium term was agreed on.

- MedSudMed continued to support the identification of shared stocks of *Octopus vulgaris* in the south central-Mediterranean. During the intersessional period the sampling for a genetic comparison of *O. vulgaris* from different zones of the project area (i.e. GSAs 12-16 and 21) has been completed. All samples have been sent to the INSTM of La Goulette, Tunisia for the first part of the genetic analysis.
- As for the previous years, the Project supported the organization and execution of joint surveys at sea in cooperation with the Istituto Ambiente Marino Costiero of Capo Granitola (IAMC-CNR, Italy) and the Marine Biology Research Centre of Tajura (MBRC, Libya) as follows:
 - Ichthyoplankton survey in the Libyan waters (Gulf of Sirt) on board R/V “Urania” (July 2010). The objective was to describe the oceanographic characteristics of the area and the composition and spatial distribution of the ichthyoplankton, hence complementing information on transport patterns of eggs and larvae of commercial fish species in the project area;
 - Acoustic survey covering the western part of the Libyan coastal waters on board R/V “Maria Grazia” (August 2010). The processing of the data collected will produce an estimate of the biomass of small pelagic fish in the area covered.
- The MedSudMed portal has been further developed and updated and its translation was initiated. Regarding the MedSudMed Fishery and Ecosystem and Information System (FEIS), during the 7th MedSudMed Coordination Committee meeting (Sliema, Malta, 18-19 February 2009) the importance to have such tool under the FAO GFCM auspices was recalled. Accordingly, the hand-over of this tool to the FAO GFCM was done as final task for the MedSudMed Project on this component.
- Five MedSudMed Technical Documents were finalised and printed. The documents were widely distributed to the Project network of experts and institutes and an electronic version is also available on the web site.
- On-the-job training was carried out during the surveys at sea for scientists from the MBRC (July-August 2010). Overall 10 scientists from the MBRC were trained on: measurement of physical-chemical parameters of the water column; collection of current profiles; zooplankton sampling; collection of sediments samples; water sampling; collection of multi-frequency acoustic data related to small pelagic fish; biological sampling of small pelagic fish.
- MedSudMed supported the participation of 3 experts from the Project area to the AdriaMed Training course on Virtual Population Analysis for stock assessment (Rome, December 2010).
- In order to strengthen international and regional cooperation the Project interacts closely with the FAO Regional Project AdriaMed, ArtiFiMed, CopeMed II, EastMed and MedFisis. In particular the Project participated to the: i) 11th AdriaMed Coordination Committee meeting (January, 2010); ii) AdriaMed Working Group on small pelagics (Croatia, October 2010); iii) EastMed Inception meeting (Greece, May 2010) and iv) third CopeMed II Coordination Committee meeting, (Morocco, June 2009). In addition, due to the overlap in the geographical areas covered by MedSudMed and CopeMed II, synergies and coordination were sought in the organisation of Working Groups and in supporting the participation of national scientists in meetings organized by the FAO–GFCM, in order to optimize the use of human and financial resources (e.g the co-organized working group on *Parapenaeus longirostris* and of the Sub-

regional Working Group on Shared Demersal Stocks). Accordingly, the Project provided support to the activities of the FAO–GFCM by funding the participation of 8 experts from the Project area in the meetings organized by the FAO–GFCM during the intersessional period.

- Cooperation with “MedSea Large Marine Ecosystem (MedSea-LME)” Project funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) on topics that may be of common interest, was also sought. In particular, the Project staff participated in the workshop “Implementing the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries - Framework and Practical Guidance” organised in the framework of the MedSea-LME Project (Rome, December, 2010).

CopeMed II “Coordination to Support Fisheries Management in the Western and Central Mediterranean”

8. This is a sub-regional project coordinated by FAO-FIRF with offices in Málaga (Spain). The project started in February 2008 with two donors, DG Mare (UE) and Secretaria del Mar (Spain). In December 2010 AECID (Spain) approved a special contribution incorporated as third donor. The Spanish project should finish in February 2011 but the Spanish donors have accepted the extension until July 2011. The project financed by the EU shall finish at the beginning of September 2011.

9. During the fourth meeting of the Coordination Committee held in Madrid (28-29 April 2011) the Secretaria General del Mar (Ministry of Environment, Rural and Maritime Affairs) Ms Alicia Villauriz, the Spanish authority on fisheries issues, stated that promoting cooperation in fisheries management in the Mediterranean led the Secretaria General del Mar to support since 2008 CopeMed II. She mentioned the essential role of the project in facilitating the common management of the fisheries resources of the central and western Mediterranean, including its role as a model for other projects. Finally she pointed out that the Spanish administrations consider CopeMed to be of crucial importance for the reinforcement of the cooperation in the western and central Mediterranean and, for that reason the Spanish Ministry will find the way to maintain its support to the prolongation of CopeMed II.

10. During the 4th CopeMed II Coordination Committee meeting the workplan of CopeMed II was presented and the Committee stressed the important number of activities carried out by the project, and expressed the concerns if the project was not extended. Moreover the Committee reiterated the interest of having future activities supporting the extension of CopeMed, including the activities of ArtFiMed to the whole region. According to the Spanish position during the Coordination meeting in Madrid, CopeMed prepared a Workplan until the end of 2011 that was presented to the Committee and adopted.

11. The overall objective of the project is to maintain the sustainability of the exploitation of the marine resources in the Central and Western Mediterranean sub-regions and their ecosystem, taking into account environmental, biological, economical, social and institutional issues, and promoting scientific cooperation among the regions. Countries involved and focal points in CopeMed II are Morocco (INRH), Algeria (CNRDPA), Tunisia (INSTM), Libya (MBRC), Malta (MRRA), Italy (MiPAAF), France (IFREMER) and Spain (IEO).

12. According to the guidance given by the Steering Committee during the third Coordination meeting in Tunis (Tunisia, May 2010), CopeMed II conducted intersessional activities on the following project’ components:

Strengthening national capacity in the field of fisheries statistics

13. Activities related with statistical issues are included in the project objectives to strengthen national capacity. The main activities supported by CopeMed II under this heading during the SAC inter-sessions period include the following:

- By request of the Tunisian Fisheries and Aquaculture Directorate General (DGPA), CopeMed II prepared a proposal for supporting DGPA in improving the statistical system concerning artisanal fisheries. The project also recruited an international expert on fisheries statistics to support DGPA in the diagnosis of the national artisanal fisheries statistical system, including the identification of weaknesses and gaps, and to prepare a draft project for monitoring these fisheries. The project also recruited two national experts (one from the DG Fisheries and Aquaculture and one from the INSTM) to support the activities of the international expert during the programmed visit. A one-week visit of this expert to Tunisia is planned during May.
- CopeMed II has supported the participation of national experts on statistics from the fisheries administrations in meetings organised by the GFCM. The following countries were supported during 2010: Tunisia (meeting on Fishing capacity); Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia (Data collection methods applied to all segments of the Fleet and their coherence with the requirements of the GFCM Task 1); Morocco (Workshop on monitoring recreational fisheries in the GFCM area). It also supported the participation of experts from the four countries from the southern part of the project area in the SAC Subcommittees meeting (Malta, November-December 2010) including the Sub Committee on Statistics and Information (SCSI).
- The staff organised and carried out different meeting with the fisheries administrations of the participating countries: in February and October with the Fisheries DG from Morocco; in October with DGPA in Tunisia and with the Ministry in Alger in November 2010. The discussions centered on the following main themes: pilot study on socio-economic and biological effects of implementing 40 mm square mesh size in bottom trawl gears (in Morocco and Algeria); the organisation of a national day on artisanal fisheries in Morocco and Tunisia; the participation of experts from the fisheries administrations in statistics-related meetings; the starting of the activities related with the artisanal fishery statistics in Tunisia; fisheries statistics needs in Algeria.
- Experts from the CopeMed countries participating in the SAC-SCCESS requested to CopeMed II the possibility to publish a document on socio-economic indicators prepared during CopeMed phase I. The same request was done during the SAC (Marseille). The project reviewed the related documentation and contacted the Editor requesting authorization to prepare a pdf version for distribution before final publication. After the agreement of the editor, CopeMed distributed the document to the GFCM Secretariat and SAC chairpersons, vice chairs and SCs Coordinators.

Strengthening fisheries research

14. The main activities supported by CopeMed II under this heading during the intersessional period include the following:

- During the inter-sessional period the project continued supporting the countries in reinforcing their capacity for fisheries research, including fish stock assessment and particularly shared stocks, through a number of activities. The most relevant of these were i) support the entry on duty of the new Algerian research vessel, through facilitating the participation of Algerian experts (CNRDPA) in demersal and small pelagic stock assessment surveys carried out by research vessels from other project' countries, Italy and Spain, made possible by the cooperation of the partner organisations from the two latter member countries; ii) organisation, with the collaboration of the IEO, Spain, of a training course (17 January-18 February) on acoustic methods for the assessments of small pelagic species for ten experts from Algeria, Tunisia and

Morocco; iii) organise and support the participation of experts from Morocco in a course on selectivity of fishing gear (Zaragoza, Spain) and in a master on Fisheries Management (Barcelona); iv) Co-supervision by the project' staffs of a Master thesis of a Moroccan researcher at the Barcelona University on “*Commercialisation of the voraz (P. bogaraveo) from the artisanal site of Dikky, Morocco*” (presented and approved in November 2010);

- CopeMed organised and supported sub-regional Stock Assessment Working Groups, including the second meeting of the working group for the assessment of the shared *Parapenaeus longirostris* stock in the Straits of Sicily (co-organised and supported with MedSudMed) and the first Morocco-Spain joint working group for the assessment of the *Pagellus bogaraveo* stock in the Gibraltar Strait area. The results of these assessments were presented to the SCSA meeting in Malta by the national experts and reviewed by the SAC. The project also co-organised, with MedSudMed, the first Central-Western Mediterranean subregional demersal fish working group (Mazara del Vallo, Italy), and a meeting on the shared resource *Coryphaena hippurus* was planned to be held in Tunis 25-26 January, but it was delayed.
- A document that revised the progress in the “pilot project for the management of small pelagic fisheries in the Alboran Sea” was also produced. CopeMed also organised a meeting “*Small pelagic fisheries in the Alboran Sea within the framework of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management*” (Málaga, Spain. 15 March 2011) with the participation of 20 experts from Algerian, Moroccan and Spanish research institutions and fisheries administrations and one NGO. A report was prepared.
- CopeMed supported on-the-job training for two experts from Algeria participating at an assessment of demersal stocks by direct methods onboard the Italian Medits survey (May-June 2010). Total 17 experts from different countries were supported to participate in training courses organised by the project (e.g. Acoustic methodologies), AdriaMed (VPA), Med-LME (on EAF approach), CIHEAM (Selectivity; Fisheries Management; Tools for monitoring and surveillance)
- CopeMed II financed the participation of 72 experts from all the countries, according to requests from the national focal points and GFCM, in different activities organised by the projects, other projects and the GFCM, including twelve meetings of the SAC and subsidiary bodies during the GFCM intersessional period.
- The project, in collaboration with INRH (Morocco) and CNRDPA (Algeria), supported the preparation of two proposals to carry out pilot projects in Morocco and Algeria on the implementation of 40 mm square mesh in trawl gears. The pilot survey in Algeria will be developed during May 2011, while the Moroccan one will be organised as soon as possible in Al-Hoceima.

Strengthening institutional capacity at national and sub-regional level

15. This component of CopeMed II requires the involvement of national fisheries research institutions, General Fisheries Directorates in the countries, the EU DG Mare, the GFCM, ICCAT, Mediterranean Fishers Associations and other stakeholders. In this framework, the activities carried out by the Project included:

- CopeMed maintained the main fisher's organisations and other stakeholders informed by distributing information generated by the project;
- The project is collaborating with responsables of the fisheries administration at different levels (local, provincial and national) and through ArtFiMed in supporting the creation and reinforcement of artisanal fishers' associations in Morocco and Tunisia;

- CopeMed is supporting a revision of the national artisanal fisheries statistics system in Tunisia, and collaborating with MedFisis in implementing new tools to facilitate the statistics procedures in the countries.
- CopeMed II facilitated and supported the participation of staff from the national fisheries services in regional activities, reinforcing the cooperation between the countries in the subregion and the expertise of the countries in regional fisheries management aspects.
- The FAO Mediterranean Projects have been invited to participate in the EU Mediterranean RAC and included in the groups of discussion. The FAO CopeMed II Project staff participated as representative of the FAO Mediterranean Projects in the RAC Med meeting on: Technical measures in June 2010 in Marbella (Spain), and on the revision of Mediterranean EU Fisheries Policy including discussion on small scale fisheries and collaboration between fishermen and scientists in June 2010 Bussels (Belgium).
- Served as a channel of communication among the different organizations dealing with fisheries issues in the project's area, and disseminated information on events and activities of interest in the region through the project's website (www.faocopemed.org) and the i-bulletin which is distributed bi-monthly to key persons in the eight countries.

Strengthening regional cooperation

16. In order to strengthen international and regional cooperation beyond its own activities (that all target reinforcement of regional cooperation) CopeMed II interacts closely with the other FAO Regional Projects MedSudMed, AdriaMed, EastMed and the Med-LME by sharing transversal activities, that create the opportunity for experts from different sub-regions to meet each other, and co-financing different products.

17. CopeMed II also contributed directly to reinforcing regional cooperation by its support to the participation of national experts in GFCM Working Groups and Sub-Committees or specialised meetings, including the support to the preparation of national contributions, where necessary, and by the participation of project staff in GFCM meetings and activities. The project is also reinforcing the GFCM, facilitating regional activities and by giving broad participation to some countries that, without the project support, would not be able to participate in the numerous activities organised by the GFCM during the intersession.

18. CopeMed in coordination with the other subregional FAO projects, organised and supported different subregional meeting, mainly on shared stocks, courses, and joining activities between the mediterranean countries. At the same time the subregional activities organised by the project incorporate different national administrations, institutions, professionals and NGO, reinforcing the national collaboration. The projects also prepared, edited and published over 10 technical and informative documents on different aspects of fisheries in the project area, aiming at reinforcing common standards in the sub-region and to disseminate general and scientific information. Documents produced in 2010 are available in the project's Web pages.

ArtFiMed - "Sustainable development of Mediterranean artisanal fisheries in Morocco and Tunisia"

19. The objective of the ArtFiMed Project (Sustainable Development of Artisanal Mediterranean Fisheries in Morocco and Tunisia) is to contribute to reduce the poverty of the target artisanal fisheries communities by improving their livelihoods in the respect of the ecosystems which they exploit so as to contribute to improve positive integration of these communities in the dynamics which affect them directly, in particular the management of fisheries and the development of the coastal

areas. Expected results concern three different levels: i) at the level of the three artisanal fishing communities where the project is carried out; ii) at country level (Morocco and Tunisia) particularly as concerns lessons learned and promotion of the role of artisanal fisheries at national scale and, iii) at the Mediterranean level, strengthening the information on artisanal fisheries and promoting lessons learned and methodologies at regional scale. The ArtFiMed project is funded by the Spanish Government through the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID).

20. CopeMed II coordinates the project under the general coordination of the FAO-FIRF Service. As CopeMed II, ArtFiMed started in March 2008. During the 4th CopeMed II Coordination Committee meeting (Madrid, Spain, 28-29 April 2011), ArtFiMed 2011 workplan was adopted and expressed the concerns if the project was not extended. Moreover the Committee reiterated the interest of having ArtFiMed future activities extended to all the CopeMed II project area. Following guidance given by the Coordination Committee of CopeMed II during the 3rd Coordination meeting (Tunis, Tunisia, May 2010), intersessional activities were conducted by ArtFiMed on the following project's components:

Contribute to improving the socio-economic situation and sustainable livelihoods of the target communities in Morocco and Tunisia.

21. The identification of priority activities to be undertaken under the project is a permanent participatory process, coordinated in the framework of an internal (FAO) and regional process. The fourth meeting of the Internal Committee (CPSI) was held in November 2010 in Tunis

22. ArtFiMed promotes responsible fisheries through the application of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) principles and the dissemination of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF). A number of activities were implemented through the seven following area of intervention:

- Support/reinforce the collaboration process between fisheries stakeholders (Administration, research and profession) for sustainable fisheries management.
- Contribute to disseminate the fisheries legislation and the good practices
- Support the monitoring of the small scale fisheries activities
- Support fishermen's organization
- Contribute to prevent and deter Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing activities
- Enhance safety at sea and improve the working conditions
- Support the fisheries product transformation and quality

23. Concerning the activities carried out to support sustainable livelihood and socioeconomic development, ArtFiMed supported the creation of a women's organization in Morocco and the training of its members. With the same purpose, it also organized and supported technical training for fishers (men and women) and finally ArtFiMed also supports the development of alternative income generating activities .

Promote and extend the results of the project to other artisanal fishing areas based on lessons learned.

24. Different activities have been carried out to promote the use of the lessons learned and extend the results obtained by ArtFiMed to other artisanal sites:

- ArtFiMed protocol for monitoring activities and indicators has been elaborated and published. The fishing monitoring system, involving members of the fishing communities and professionals, is implemented in all 3 sites and all this information is recorded in a database in the project' offices.
- The project website www.faoartfimed.org is periodically updated, several posters and informative documents were elaborated and distributed and the project participated in different national and international meetings and workshop, promoting the results obtained and the role of artisanal fisheries.
- The project participated in different national and international meetings and Workshop, promoting the results obtained and the role of artisanal fisheries, including the CopeMed II and ArtFiMed annual Coordination Committee meeting and the coordination meeting between the different FAO Mediterranean projects; GFCM Sub Committees, SAC and Commission meeting; Technical meeting with Fishery ministry and national fisheries institutions in Morocco and Tunisia; Training course in CIHEAM, Zaragoza (Spain) on artisanal fisheries products markets and on gear selectivity; an Extraordinary Meeting of the Focal Points for SPAs and the 2nd Meeting of the SAP BIO National Correspondents (Istanbul, Turkey).

Reinforce the information base on Mediterranean artisanal fisheries

25. Information and data on national artisanal fisheries is extremely important for the management of fisheries and other coastal activities, although countries do not always carry out periodical sampling. ArtFiMed, by preparing diagnostic reporting and follow-up methodologies, should contribute to reinforce the national information and also the regional information and databases. The main activities carried out under this main line include:

- preparing diagnostic reports and follow-up methodologies to contribute to reinforce the national information, the statistic systems for artisanal fisheries and also the regional information and databases.
- working with Tunisian fisheries administration on a consultation to identify and implement a new small scale fisheries monitoring system.
- collaborating with the Mediterranean GEF LME project, and particularly in supporting fisher's participation in monitoring and management of coastal MPA's.
- In coordination with the Fisheries administrations, working on the organization of a small scale fisheries day in Tunisia and Morocco to contribute to a better understanding of the role of the artisanal fisheries, the promotion and visualization of the artisanal fisheries and reinforce the information base on Mediterranean small scale Fisheries.
- ArtFiMed prepare a set of publications on small-scale fisheries in Tunisia and Morocco, to contribute to disseminate the ArtFiMed results, regarding the specificity of the small scale fisheries, the fishing gears and techniques and the species landed.

Strengthening regional cooperation

26. In order to strengthen international and regional cooperation the Project interacts closely with the other FAO Regional Projects and particularly with the GEF-MedLME in supporting the participation of artisanal fishers from Morocco in MPA management. Correspondence, contacts and coordination between the different project's experts and informal meetings were carried out during the

last Sub Committees meeting in Malta. A Coordination meeting with FIRF (Marine and Island Fisheries Service, Fisheries Department, FAO) was organised during January 2011.

EastMed - “Scientific and Institutional Cooperation to Support Responsible Fisheries in the Eastern Mediterranean”

27. The project’s longer-term development objective is to contribute to the sustainable management of marine fisheries in the Eastern Mediterranean, and thereby at supporting national economies and protecting the livelihoods of those involved in the fisheries sector. The project’s immediate objective includes supporting and improving the capacity of national fishery departments to increase their scientific and technical information base for fisheries management and to develop coordinated and participative fisheries management plans in the Eastern Mediterranean sub-region.

28. The Project is funded by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Rural Development and Food of Greece, the Italian Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies and by the European Commission. It is operative since September 2009 and it will run for five years. The beneficiary countries are those with waters included in the GFCM Geographical Sub-Areas (GSAs) 19-20 and 22-28. The recruitment of the project staff has been completed in 2010, with the appointment of the project clerk and the technical officer. The first Coordination Committee of the EastMed Project was held in Athens from 19-20 April 2010, culminating on the agreement on a series of activities be carried out during the first year of the project, while the 2nd Coordination Committee was carried out in Antalya, Turkey (5-6 April 2011). During the intersessional period the following activities, shown below under each project component, have taken place:

Institutional Strengthening

29. During the intersessional period, visits to several countries in the sub-region were carried out. To Egypt, from 19 to 22 January 2010; to Lebanon, from 16 to 19 March 2010; to Turkey, from 22 to 25 March 2010; a second visit to Lebanon, from 8 to 11 June 2010 and to Egypt from 15 to 17 April 2011. The purpose of these visits was to present the project and its objectives, discuss the possible benefits for the countries and identify possible institutional and scientific country needs.

30. The project procured several items of essential equipment to some of the countries, including IT equipments to Egypt and Lebanon, and equipment for processing of biological samples to Egypt, and also promoted and supported the translation of documents to local languages, including the translation of the Project Document to Arabic, and the translation of several FAO documents to Turkish.

Staff Training and Development

31. Since staff training and development is one of the main tasks of the project, several of these initiatives were taken during the reporting period. These included:

32. An ad-hoc training course on otolith age reading for *Spicara smaris* and *Mullus barbatus* for Cypriot scientists was held in the Fisheries Laboratory of the Ministry of Rural Development and Food in Piraeus, Greece (19-23 July). The course covered items as sectioning of otoliths, use of an Image Analysis System for annuli reading, age validation and estimation of growth parameters.

33. A pilot survey for collection of fisheries dependent data on the Mediterranean coast of Egypt was organised in close collaboration with the General Authority for Fish Resources Development of Egypt (GAFRD). The pilot study's aim was to improve the data collection activities of the Mediterranean fisheries of Egypt, and it dealt with both catch/effort and biological sampling. The pilot survey was supported by two international experts recruited by the project. It includes two missions of one month each, of which the first has been carried out in November 2010, while the second will take place at the end of 2011. Visits to review the ongoing work were and will be carried out during the intersessional period.

34. The EastMed Project also organised and supported the participation of three scientists from the Project area to the AdriaMed training course on Virtual Population Analysis (VPA), which was carried out in Rome from 22-26 Nov 2010.

35. A Training Course on Single-species Length based Stock Assessment Methods was carried out in Kavala, Greece from 21-25 February 2011. The course was designed for fisheries biologists working in research institutes or other institutions involved in fisheries research and management in the Eastern Mediterranean. The training included theoretical classes and practical sessions on the application of different methods focused on the analysis of length data.

Collection and Organisation of Data

36. EastMed Project organised a sub-regional workshop on collection and organisation of data. The meeting was held in Batroun (Lebanon) from 14 to 17 September 2010 and hosted by the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture. The WS reviewed and discussed the systems/procedures/methods used in each country for collection and organisation of fisheries data and their coherence with the requirements of the GFCM Task 1 and of the on-going EC project on Data Collection.

Increased Participation and Cooperation

37. Under this goal, the Project organised a sub-regional technical meeting on Lessepsian migration and its impact on eastern Mediterranean fisheries. The meeting was carried out in Nicosia Cyprus from 7 to 9 December 2010. The meeting discussed the status, trends and monitoring of Lessepsian migrant species in the Mediterranean as well as historical events and environmental conditions favouring the expansion of lessepsian species in the eastern Mediterranean.

38. As adopted at the 1st Coordination Committee, the Project organized a Workshop on Fisheries Management Strategies and Approaches, which was carried out in Athens, Greece (15-17 March 2011). The Workshop has been designed for managers from the project area in order the current management strategies including their strengths and weaknesses to be presented and discussed.

39. The Project also supported the participation of experts from the eastern Mediterranean countries to the GFCM WS on Red Coral (Alghero, Italy), to the GFCM WG on stock assessment of demersals (Istanbul, Turkey), to the GFCM WS on algal and jelly fish blooms, to the GFCM WS on data collection methods (Rome, Italy), to the WS on monitoring recreational fisheries in the GFCM

area (Palma de Mallorca, Spain), to the meeting of the GFCM Sub-Committees (St. George's Bay, Malta), to the GFCM – 13th session of the Scientific Advisory Committee (Marseille, France) and to the GFCM 35th Session (Rome, Italy)

Coordination within Sub-regional Projects and with GFCM

40. Several meetings of coordination were held with the other sub-regional projects AdriaMed, MedSudMed, CopeMed II, ArtFiMed and MED-LME in order to consolidate and coordinate common activities. This included an effort to harmonize the information included in the respective projects web site, starting from the information of the fisheries in each participating country. In this respect the Project also participated in the CopeMed II -1st meeting – subregional WG on shared demersal and pelagic (April 2010), the 8th MedSudMed Coordination Committee (May, 2010), the 12th Adriamed Coordination Committee (March 2011) and the 4th CopeMed Coordination Committee meeting. The project Professional staff also participated in the meeting among Sub-regional projects and HQ FIRF staff in January 2010 in Rome, as well as at the service retreat in Rome (Jan 2011). A common exposition during the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) session (Rome, Italy, February 2011) was organized for all the FAO Mediterranean Regional Projects displaying informative material and posters of the Projects activities.

EastMed webportal (www.faoeastmed.org)

41. A new section of upcoming events was constructed on the project home page, while the site was updated with new information.

Publications

42. The project has prepared, uploaded to the website and distributed five publications of meeting reports. Two posters dealing one with the 1st year activities of the Project and the other with the lessepsian species impact on fisheries were also published.

MedFisis - “Mediterranean Fisheries Statistics and Information System”

43. The MedFisis project was conceived to promote and develop a Mediterranean Fishery Statistics and Information System with the ultimate objective of achieving a region-wide integrated system.

44. The project is jointly financed by the European Community and FAO. During the intersessional period, the activities of the project were concentrated on completing the development of the software tools and the documentation for carrying out Fleet Censuses (Frame Surveys) and Catch and Effort Surveys). During the intersessional period the first version of the Fleet register was completed, and the accompanying documentation was drafted. The software for the management of the Catch and Effort survey data and the accompanying documentation, however, were delayed, and are expected to be completed by mid-2011, as are also the final changes of the Fleet Register.

45. The project also assisted some countries, namely Albania, Egypt and Lebanon in transferring their existing data into the new system and in adapting the system to their specific requirements.

MED-LME Fisheries - “Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystem – Regional Component: Implementation of agreed actions for the protection of the environmental resources of the Mediterranean Sea and its coastal areas” – Conservation of Biological Diversity – Implementation of SAP-BIO and related NAPs

46. The project “Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Sea Large Marine Ecosystem. Regional Component: Implementation of agreed actions for the protection of the environmental resources of the Mediterranean Sea and its coastal areas” includes, as its component 3, the “Conservation of biological diversity: Implementation of SAP BIO and related NAPs”. This component of the Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean LME in turn has two main sub-components, 3.1: conservation of coastal and marine diversity through the development of a Mediterranean MPA Network and 3.2. Promote the sustainable use of fisheries resources in the Mediterranean through the development and application of ecosystem-based management approaches. FAO, in close cooperation with the GFCM Secretariat and with the support of the regional Projects, prepared the “fisheries component” of the project and will be the Executing Agency for subcomponent 3.2, and for part of component 3.1

47. The objective of Sub-Component 3.2 is to increase the ability of coastal nations to utilise coastal and high seas resources through the adoption of the ecosystem approach to fisheries management and the application of targeted interventions to reduce bycatch and other unsustainable fishing practices. The Sub-Component will focus on the dissemination of the ecosystem approach to Fisheries, on by-catch of regionally important species at a fleet level and on unsustainable fishing practices at regionally- representative Marine Protected Areas (MPA’s). The duration of the project is five years.

48. The Inception Workshop/First Steering Committee Meeting of the UNEP/MAP GEF Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Sea Large Marine Ecosystem (MedPartnership) was held in Budva, Montenegro, from 17 to 19 February 2010. Both revised work plan and budget of the fisheries component of the MedPartnership were endorsed by the Steering Committee.

49. Regarding the activity on the participation of fishers in the management of MPAs, an agreement was reached to run this activity in the Al-Hoceima MPA, in Morocco, and a preliminary workplan was drawn. The actual field activities are expected to start in May 2011.

50. The field work on the bycatch activity was expected to be initiated during January 2011, but had to be delayed due to the instability situation experienced in Tunisia. It will be carried out as soon as possible.

51. A training workshop on “Implementing the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries - Framework and Practical Guidance” was held during December 2010 (Rome), for the staff of the Fisheries Management and Research organisations of the directly targeted countries. Due to some difficulty in communications, however, only staff from Croatia, Montenegro and Tunisia participated, since experts from Turkey were not available to participate. It is however expected they will be able to participate in the follow-up activities to be carried out during 2011.

Black Sea project

52. During the intersessional period, FAO, in consultation with the GFCM Secretariat, called for a meeting in Rome of the Permanent Representatives of the six Black Sea countries, to discuss the approach of the planned project. Based on this consultation, and on work previously carried out by GFCM and FIRF, a possible concept note was drafted and sent to the countries for comments. Meanwhile, the full responsibility for this project was transferred to the FAO Regional Office for Europe, based in Budapest. The final details of the agreement on the financing of the preparatory phase of this project are being discussed with Turkey.