

Conclusions of the regional FAO/EUROFISH/GFCM workshop on “Predicting the market for seabass and seabream” held on 4-5 November 2014 in Istanbul, Turkey

The workshop identified several distinct challenges for the sustainable development of the Mediterranean aquaculture sector in terms of markets and marketing. Potential strategies to respond to these challenges include increased availability of trade and market data, and efficient dissemination of information to all stakeholders in the supply-chain in order to promote sustainable growth and production. Improved collaboration among stakeholders in the industry is essential to continue to address obstacles and encourage market-driven growth in the sector.

Session 1: Production and trade data availability

- Current regional or global data collection systems are more production focused, rather than trade and market oriented
- Contrary to the need of industry and governments, available data only allows for assessment of past trends, and does not allow for future predictions
- Timely data and market analysis are necessary to better understand new developments in markets and value chains; however reliability and transparency of data are essential for this to happen
- The level of aggregation needs to be expanded providing more disaggregated data, however this could raise confidentiality issues, since economic data cannot be made public for the segments for which there is an insufficient number of companies; corporate and national sensitivities on data provision have to be addressed
- Both industry and national authorities’ roles in data transmission and data collection need to be further supported, at the same time acknowledging the potentially greater role of Aquaculture Farmers’ Organisations in facilitation of data collection and dissemination.

Session 2: Planning of seabass and seabream production

- For production planning and market forecast purposes there is a need for timely submitted quantitative data (including hatchery production, fish feed, and consumption data) and qualitative data and information
- Both organizational and adaptive responses are needed to respond to market changes since producers are losing negotiation power with different distribution channels, especially due to the structure and requirements of modern retail sector, which is gradually replacing traditional wholesalers and fishmongers
- Responsible aquaculture practices by Mediterranean and Black Sea producers have to be further encouraged through best management practices, food safety assurance, traceability and transparency – actions that will provide a positive image.

Session 3: Trade and marketing of seabass and seabream

- Adapt a market-oriented approach, rather than production-oriented, using a better understanding of markets and consumer preferences to respond to these quickly

- Better understand, create, communicate and deliver consumers' and client's values within the marketplace
- Increase fish consumption in local markets, reducing dependence on imports
- Develop and implement coordinated marketing strategies and promotional activities at the local, national, and regional levels
- Place a greater emphasis on non-price attributes of the products
- Increase awareness of competition with non-seafood products (e.g., beef and poultry)
- Combat negative perception of the media and NGOs on aquaculture sector by supporting a positive image of the aquaculture sector and its products
- Expand markets through new product development and diversity of aquaculture products following consumers demand
- Provide greater potential market intelligence through accessible ICT (Information, Communication, Technologies).

Session 4: Fields of cooperation

- The creation and role of Aquaculture Farmers' Organizations should be further promoted at national and regional level
- Foster the sustainable development of the aquaculture sector through focused market research and product innovation
- Increase a multi-stakeholder participation through a regional cooperative framework by improving communication between stakeholders
- Facilitate establishing grounds for improvement for a dialogue between stakeholders and market intelligence tools
- Promote the establishment of a Pan-Mediterranean and Black Sea industry organization (with contributions from farmers) for sharing production and market data, performing market analysis, and initiating establishment of market intelligence tools.