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Major activities of the FAO regional projects in 2013–2014

1. This document summarizes the most significant activities carried out by the FAO Regional Projects, namely, AdriaMed, MedSudMed, CopeMed II, EastMed and the GEF-supported Partnership for the Mediterranean (MED-LME), during the intersessional period of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC). 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. The Project is executed by FAO through the Marine and Inland Water Branch (FIRF) of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department.

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 co-financed since 2007 by the Directorate-General for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs of the European Commission. It is operative since September 1999. The participating countries are Albania, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro and Slovenia, with waters included in 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 inter-sessional period followed the methodological approach used by the Project, as well as the workplan for 2013 as approved by the 14th AdriaMed Coordination Committee (Croatia, March 2013), 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 fifteenth meeting of the Coordination Committee of the AdriaMed Project was held on 11-13 March 2014 in Trieste, Italy, hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies of Italy. During the meeting the workplan for 2014 was discussed and approved.

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 December 2014. In the intersessional period the project performed the following main activities.

6. The relations and interactions with the participating countries were further strengthened, which contributed to the improved implementation of the Project activities. Several missions were organised to Croatia (Split), Montenegro (Kotor and Podgorica), Slovenia (Ljubljana) and Albania (Tirana and Durrës). In particular meetings with the Director General of Fisheries Directorate of Albania of the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration (MEFWA) and the Director of the Laboratory of Fisheries and Aquaculture of the Agricultural University of Tirana (LFAD) were held to organize the socio-economic survey in Albania and the pilot catch/effort survey in the fishing port of Durres. *Ad hoc* meetings with the Directorates for fisheries of Croatia, Italy and Slovenia were held to define a common monitoring pilot study on the height (and drop) of purse seiners net for small pelagic in the Adriatic Sea. Specific meetings with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Montenegro, and the Fisheries Unit staff were held to define a road map for the future involvement of Montenegro in the Project and for streamlining of fisheries development policies of Montenegro for EU accession.

7. Informal meetings were held during all the year and occasion was taken back to back to international meetings to liaise with representatives and experts of the participating countries (both fisheries administrations and research institutes).

8. As indicated by the Coordination Committee and also by the FAO Independent Evaluation, the Project strengthened the liaison with the Donors (MiPAAF and EU-DG-MARE) and intensified the meeting of coordination with them, accordingly several coordination meetings were organized and held.

9. The Project continued to support the establishment of sub-regional fisheries monitoring system as well as to foster the scientific cooperation in the area. To this extent and in order to progress in the joint evaluation of the shared stocks, the Project organized the *Study Group for the application of bottom-trawl survey data to fish stock assessment in South Adriatic Sea* (Italy, October 2013). The Study Group was carried out to joint analyse data on hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) and Deep-water rose shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*) collected in the area by scientific trawl surveys together with commercial fisheries data. Scientists from Albania, Montenegro and Italy participated the results were presented and discussed at the AdriaMed Working Group on Demersal Fisheries Resources, Montenegro, October 2013.

10. The annual meeting of the AdriaMed Working Group on Shared Demersal Fisheries Resources (WG-DEM) was held in Montenegro, 23-25 October 2013. The WG 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 regional level in line with the EC Marine Strategy Framework Directive. The result of the catch/effort survey carried out in Montenegro, the pilot action on biological sampling in the port of Durres (Albania) were presented as well as the results of the SoleMon and SoleDiff Projects. Future common activities were identified and possible common actions were proposed. The stock assessments presented by the SG-DEM18 on European hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) and Deep-water rose shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*) were reviewed. The WG-DEM assessed the state of the stock of Common sole *Solea solea*, and Red mullet, *Mullus barbatus* in GSA 17. All the assessments produced were presented and discussed during the GFCM-SAC-SCSA Working Group on Stock Assessment of Demersal Species (Bar, Montenegro, 28 January-1 February 2014) and endorsed by the GFCM Sub Committee of Stock Assessment (Bar, Montenegro 4-5 February 2014).

11. The Project is continuing to support the activities carried out in the framework of the SoleMon Project: in November 2013 the ninth SoleMon survey covering the North-Central Adriatic Sea was carried out with mixed scientific crew from Italy, Slovenia and Croatia. The stock assessments for sole, *Solea solea*, in GSA 17 was performed and presented for discussion at the AdriaMed WG-DEM and then at the GFCM SAC - SCSA Working Group on Demersal Species (Montenegro, January 2014). In addition, the research activity SoleDiff initiated with the support of the Project, to support analysis on differentiation of *Solea solea* and *Solea aegyptiaca* inhabiting Northern Adriatic Sea and the identification of the population structure of common sole (*S. solea*) in the whole Adriatic Sea and the related stock assessment, was concluded.

12. In the framework of the activities related to the demersal fisheries resources, the Project is supporting the full participation of South Adriatic Sea countries to the EC funded MEDITS programme. Participation to the annual MEDITS Coordination meeting (Greece, March 2013) was supported. In addition the extension to the eastern waters of the South Adriatic Sea (Albania and Montenegro) of the MEDITS trawl survey was supported with scientific campaigns carried out in July 2013. During the survey theoretical and onboard training activities have been carried out.

13. The Project continued to support the scientific experiments carried out in the Pomo/Jabuka Pits area on *Nephrops norvegicus* stocks as an example of methodology to assess demersal fisheries resources giving additional data to compare with the trawl survey data. The 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 *N. norvegicus* stocks in the Jabuka/Pomo pits area using the towed UnderWater TV (UWTV) methodology in April- 2013.

14. The annual meeting of the AdriaMed Working Group on Small Pelagic Fisheries Resources (WG-SP) took place from 14 to 18 October 2013. The meeting reviewed the knowledge and information on small pelagic fish stocks, mainly of anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*) and sardine (*Sardina pilchardus*). The stock assessments of anchovy and sardine were jointly performed for GSA 17 by combining all data made available by the experts of the participating countries. The WG also reviewed the outcomes of the Study Group on DEPM (SG-DEPM) and the Study Group on intercalibration of fish otolith reading (SG-OTH). The preliminary results of the joint acoustic and DEPM survey performed in GSA 18 under the umbrella of AdriaMed were discussed. Possible future activities were identified as well as joint research activities to be carried out in the Adriatic Sea. The results of the joint stock assessment of anchovy and sardine for GSA 17 and GSA 18, were presented and discussed during the GFCM SAC- SCSA Working Group on Stock Assessment on Small Pelagic Species (Bar, Montenegro, 28 January-1 February 2014) and endorsed by the GFCM Sub Committee of Stock Assessment (Bar, Montenegro 4-5 February 2014).

15. The Project continued to support the countries in developing expertise on small pelagic fisheries resources as well as for the standardization of the methodologies applied. In July –August 2013, a joint acoustic and ichthyoplankton survey using R/V “Dallaporta” covering South Adriatic waters (GSA18) was organized and supported by the Project, in cooperation with CNR-ISMAR Ancona, the Institute of Marine Biology of Kotor (Montenegro) and the Laboratory of Fisheries and Aquaculture of Durres Agricultural University of Tirana (Albania). Taking advantage of the occasion, theoretical and practical onboard training activities were carried out.

16. The Project continued to foster the rebuilding of the expertise on DEPM method and organized a meeting in Ancona (Italy 19-20 November 2013). This was the fourth of a set of meetings requested by the Adriatic experts on the issue (January 2012 in Croatia; June 2012 in Italy; October 2012 in Slovenia). The meeting was mainly focused on the overall revision of the DEPM protocol used in the Adriatic Sea. The SG-DEPM agreed on the final version of the new protocol. The newly adopted protocol together with a -revised estimation of anchovy biomass, were presented at the GFCM- SAC –SCSA Working Group on Stock Assessment on Small Pelagic Species (Bar, Montenegro, 28 January-1 February 2014).

17. The project continues to progress in the standardization of data collection and data analysis (statistical data collection, biological sampling, age determination, etc.). The AdriaMed Study Group on intercalibration of anchovy otolith reading (SG-OTH, Italy November 2013) was organized to review the the age reading criteria adopted for sardine in the sub-region and proposed measures to improve quality and accuracy of the biological data collected. The SG-OTH is part of the annual programme on small pelagic that foresees intercalibration exercise and exchange of otoliths alternating anchovy and sardine year by year. The SG-OTH discussed on the results of the common exercise on age assignment carried out in summer 2013 by involving all the AdriaMed participating research institutes. The preliminary results showed a general low level of agreement between the Adriatic countries on age reading. Accordingly the SG-OTH urged and defined a road map to reach a new common agreement on ageing for the Adriatic Sea.

18. In addition the Project continues to improve national capacity at institutional level by organizing training activities according to requests formulated by the participating countries; accordingly, 7 training activities have been carried out and/or supported. Moreover the Project in cooperation with the other FAO Mediterranean Project is seeking synergies on common activities.

19. The Project further supported the activity started in 2007 and designed to implement a monitoring system for the Montenegrin fishery sector. The monitoring activity 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 monitoring has been developed in coherence with the indications given by the GFCM and according to the EU regulations, bearing in mind the existing monitoring practice and the data collected in the country. The activity at present is the only catch and effort survey in place in the country. The results of the first three years are summarized in the AdriaMed Technical Document 32.

20. In consideration of the socio-economic relevance of small-scale fisheries and of their role in the exploitation of some shared stocks, the Project, was asked to re-establish the AdriaMed Working Group on Adriatic Sea Small-Scale Fisheries (WG-SSF) and organized the first meeting of this WG in Split, Croatia, 23 October 2013. The WG-SSF revised the inventory of the data on SSF at national level in the Adriatic sea produced by each country; ii) initiated technical discussion to identify key elements related to SSF for management purposes; iii) discussed on the contribution that the WG-SSF could provide to the First symposium on Small Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean (e.g. identification of existing data and information gaps) and; iv) identified some joint future activities to be carried out in the framework of the Project.

21. According to a request formulated by the country during the 13th Coordination Committee (March 2012), the Project designed and initiated a pilot action on biological sampling in the fishing port of Durres, Albania in cooperation with the Laboratory of Fisheries and Aquaculture of Durres. The aim of this pilot activity is to verify and test the feasibility of a catch and effort data collection at national scale. It also aims to provide a description of the main resources exploited and landed per fishing fleet segment. The pilot action started in May 2013 and will provide additional element to design a global monitoring system including all the aspects of the fisheries sector (biological economical and sociological) to be defined and agreed on with the national administration.

22. Following the request formulated by the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Management, Directorate of Fisheries Policies of Albania, during the 12th Coordination Committee (2012) on the need to update the socio-economic information available on fisheries in the countries, the Project supported a pilot survey for the establishment of a socio-economic data collection programme in Albania. The survey is in line with the Project mandate of supporting the participating countries in the fulfilment of the GFCM requirements, in particular of the GFCM TASK1 (1.3, according to the Recommendation GFCM/33/2009/3). A sampling scheme for the socio-economic survey was drafted and consolidated after discussion with the local administrations and data collectors. A training was organized and held in Durres in May 2013 for 4 data collectors to interview fishermen, vessel's owners and workers in all the ports of Albania, as well as to record and store data. In May 2013 the survey was completed and data collected in the port of Shenjin, Durres, Vlora, Sarande.

23. According to its mandate and with the objective to provide technical advice for fisheries management decisions at national and sub-regional levels, the Project continued in its pilot approach through multilevel consultations (fisheries administration and research institutions) toward the support in the identification of ways and means to elaborate possible management options to be adopted in the Adriatic Sea. In the intersessional period the attention was mainly dedicated to the small pelagic. In January 2013, the Fisheries Administrations and Research Institutions of Croatia, Italy and Slovenia agreed to convey a series of technical meetings, under the framework of the FAO AdriaMed Project, to set a road map for addressing the issue of purse seiners in the central and northern Adriatic Sea. In particular, the meetings were scheduled within the rules set by the common management plan for small pelagic in the Adriatic Sea defined by the GFCM Reg. 2013/37/1 and EC Reg. 1967/2006. Two

technical meetings were organized, in July and October 2013 towards the implementation of a pilot study on purse seiners net height and related fishing technology.

24. With regard to the technical support provided to the countries on aquaculture, a pilot study *step I* on the identification of indicators for sustainable aquaculture in Montenegro was implemented in Kotor (Montenegro) in July 2013. The Workshop was organized by the GFCM-CAQ- GFCM-CAQ-InDAM Project (*Indicators for Sustainable Development of Aquaculture and Guidelines for their use in the Mediterranean*) in close cooperation with the FAO regional project AdriaMed. The pilot study aimed at supporting Montenegro to introduce the concept of indicators and their identification by adapting the InDAM methodology and its practical application for the identification of potential mariculture zones especially in the open part of Montenegrin coast, to develop offshore farming through the use of a system of sustainability indicators and allocated zones for aquaculture (AZA).

25. The Project continued to provide technical support to fisheries national information systems as in past years. In particular, technical support to the Water and Fisheries Resources Directorate (WFRD) Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration of Albania was provided on national fisheries statistical system.

26. In addition, in line with its mandate to provide technical assistance to the participating institutions the Project continued in improving the data management tools designed and developed so far. With reference to the trawl survey data, ATrIS, the common tool developed by the Project and used by more than 20 Mediterranean research institutions to manage trawl survey data, was further upgraded. With reference to the data on small pelagic fisheries, the “AdriaMed Small Pelagic Application (ASPA)” created by the Project for the storage and management of small pelagic related data, was finalized on the basis of the indication and feedback received during last Working Group on Small Pelagics (October, 2013).

27. The Project is restructuring the information included in the web portal (www.faoadriamed.org) according to new areas of interest to website users.

28. The Project pursued the activities carried out so far for the inclusion of Adriatic Scientific publications into the ASFA (Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts) database, as well as supporting the collaboration centres created at the Institute of Marine Biology of Kotor (Montenegro) and the Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries (IOF) in Split, Croatia. 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 (Callao, Peru, 23–27 September 2013).

29. In line with the support of the Project in streamlining of fisheries development policies of Montenegro for EU accession, AdriaMed sought synergies and is cooperating with the EU-Sedaf Project (Socio-Economic Development of Adriatic Fisheries) namely *Improved knowledge of the main socio-economic aspects related to the most important fisheries in the Adriatic Sea*.

30. 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, and EastMed throughout the year (the last being on January 2014) in order to consolidate and envisage common activities. In this respect the Project.

31. Cooperation was further sustained with the GFCM and the GFCM Subsidiary Bodies. Several informal meetings of coordination were held with the GFCM staff back to back GFCM events, in order to strengthen the cooperation and to find synergies. AdriaMed continued to provide direct support to the activities of the GFCM by providing scientific contributions for discussion and supporting the participation of 58 Adriatic experts in 18 GFCM technical and institutional 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”

32. The project is financed by the Italian Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies (MiPAAF) and it is operative since April 2001. In 2011 an *ad hoc* contribution was provided to FAO by the Regione Siciliana (Italy) to carry out specific actions on crustacean fishery resources in the south-central Mediterranean in the framework of the Project activities. These funds are used to reinforce the effectiveness and the activities carried out in the framework of MedSudMed. The MedSudMed participating countries are Italy, Libya, Malta and Tunisia. In 2012 a co-funding from the European Commission (EC) Directorate for (DG-MARE) was initiated. The main goal of the Project is to support the scientific communities of the participating countries in the monitoring of fishery resources and their ecosystems (GSAs 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 21), thus contributing to the development of a common view on the management of fisheries. In this framework, the Project promotes the scientific cooperation between participating countries and supports national capacity development.

33. The activities carried out during the intersessional period followed the methodological approach used by the Project, as well as the work plan for 2013 approved by the 11th MedSudMed Coordination Committee held in Sliema (Malta 23-24 April 2013). The work plan 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.

34. The twelfth meeting of the Coordination Committee of the MedSudMed Project was held on 14-16 April 2014 in Gamamrth, Tunisia, hosted by the Institut National Des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer (INSTM) of Tunisia. During the meeting the work plan for 2014 was discussed and approved.

35. 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 December 2014. An outline of the main activities performed by the Project is provided hereunder.

36. The annual meeting of the MedSudMed Working Group on Demersal Fisheries Resources (WG-DEM) was held on 23-27 September 2013 in Tunis, Tunisia, kindly hosted by the Institut National des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer (INSTM). The meeting was jointly organised with the CopeMed II working group on demersals to: improve cooperation in the central and western Mediterranean Sea; enhance the overall MedSudMed and CopeMed II achievements; and to optimise human and financial resources. The meeting focused on the standardisation and joint processing of bottom trawl survey data for mapping the spatial distribution and stock assessment of fisheries resources in the south-central Mediterranean Sea. During the MedSudMed WG-DEM a strategy to improve the appraisal of the state of demersal fish stocks and fisheries in the MedSudMed Project area by integrating all existing biological and economic data was also discussed. Technical discussion was held on the development of fisheries management strategies in the south-central Mediterranean for demersal fisheries.

37. To further progress in the assessment of the stock dynamic and fisheries of *M. merluccius* and *P. longirostris*, an *ad hoc* meeting was organised by the Project. During the meeting the joint stock assessment of these two species in the MedSudMed area (south-central Mediterranean Sea) carried out in 2012 were updated and further improved. Additional shared fisheries target species to be jointly assessed in the framework of the Project were also identified, i.e. *Mullus surmuletus* and *Aristaeomorpha foliacea*. Information available, main gaps and priorities in terms of fisheries monitoring and data requirements to progress in this direction were briefly outlined. Discussion was also held on the way forward to present results achieved on *P. longirostris* and *M. merluccius* to the meetings of the Working Groups on Demersals of the FAO General Fisheries commission for the Mediterranean Sea (GFCM) were also defined.

38. Great importance has been attached by the Project through time to the identification of nurseries and spawning grounds in the south-central Mediterranean Sea. Further progresses were made in this view taking advantage of the outcomes of the MedSudMed inter-calibration exercise at sea of bottom trawl surveys carried out in July 2011. Survey data gathered in all the MedSudMed area were standardised, pooled together and joint processed. As results, preliminary maps of distribution of adults and juveniles of *Merluccius merluccius* in the south-central Mediterranean Sea were produced, thus pointing out potential sensitive areas for this species.

39. MedSudMed continued to support the identification of shared stocks of *Octopus vulgaris* in the south central-Mediterranean. During the intersessional period the genetic comparison of *O. vulgaris* samples collected in the entire Project area was completed. Collaboration with the University of Oviedo (Spain) was established and all the samples collected were processed. The processing of the results for the discrimination of population units was also completed.

40. Given the importance of demersal crustaceans for the fisheries in the south-central Mediterranean Sea, the Project supported the preparation of a review on selected demersal crustacean species. The species were defined according to the list of MedSudMed priority species and taking into account the importance for fisheries in terms of economic value and total commercial catch. A draft of the review, the MedSudMed Technical Document 32, has been prepared.

41. In 2010 the MedSudMed Coordination Committee (Italy, May 2010), following the successful cooperation established at scientific level, underlined the important role that the Project may have in promoting and supporting the technical discussion on the harmonisation of management strategies in the Project area (south-central Mediterranean Sea). In this view, and according to the priorities pointed out by participating countries, in the intersession period the Project fostered discussion on: i) the harmonisation of closed season for fisheries in the Gulf of Gabès; and ii) the case studies identified by the GFCM Secretariat for the development of multiannual fisheries management plan in the central and eastern Mediterranean Sea. *Ad hoc* discussion was held on these issues back to back with the MedSudMed WG-DEM held in Tunis in September 2013. Representatives of the national fisheries research institutions of Italy, Libya, Malta and Tunisia and fisheries administration (Italy, Regione Siciliana, Tunisia and Malta) participated to the meeting.

42. According to the recommendations of the 11th meeting of its Coordination Committee, the Project was call to support for the implementation of joint surveys at sea. In this view, the organisation of two surveys at sea were foreseen: an inter-ship comparison for acoustic surveys involving the Tunisian and Italian research vessels, R/V Hannibal and R/V Dallporta; and a joint ichthyoplankton survey in western Libyan waters. The technical aspects concerning the sampling scheme, the dates of the work at sea were discussed and agreed on. The administrative procedures to provide the necessary authorisation for the surveys were also initiated.

43. As for the previous years, efforts were made by the Project in pursuing the improvement of expertise on small pelagic fisheries resources and harmonising methodologies for data collection at sea, as well as in monitoring areas not regularly covered by national surveys targeting on small pelagic fishery resources. The MedSudMed Working Group on Small Pelagic Fisheries Resources in the south-central Mediterranean Sea was held on 4-6 March 2014 at FAO HQs, Rome. Experts from the south-central Mediterranean research institutions participated to the meeting. During the meeting national experts: i) reviewed and discussed the results of the joint activities carried out on small pelagic fish in the participating countries in the last year; ii) reviewed the existing data on pelagic stocks with particular focus on eggs and larvae; iii) initiated a joint exercise to produce preliminary maps of areas of concentration for early life stages of small pelagics; iv) explored options to standardise acoustic data and initiate a joint exercise to combine and carry out preliminary joint data processing; v) identified priority issues on small pelagic fisheries and fisheries resources to be jointly addressed in the framework of the Project activities.

44. The MedSudMed portal (www.faomedsudmed.org) has been further developed and updated. The adaptation of the website contents and structure in Arabic and Italian continued. The section describing the main activities carried out in the framework of the Project is under renewal.

45. The list of Technical Documents available on the Project web site has been updated and more than 25 MedSudMed Technical Documents are now available as .pdf files.

46. During the intersessional period, considerable effort was dedicated to the organisation/support of training courses, mainly upon request of the participating institutes. Some of the training courses allowed for joint processing of survey data and aimed not only at enhancing capacity development but also at producing scientific information directly related to the Project activities, accordingly 4 training activities have been carried out and/or supported. Moreover the Project in cooperation with the other FAO Mediterranean Project is seeking synergies on common activities.

47. As indicated in the last meetings of the Coordination Committee and also by the FAO Independent Evaluation, the Project strengthened the liaison with the Donors (MiPAAF, Regione Siciliana and EU-DG-MARE) and intensified the meeting of coordination with them.

48. In order to strengthen international and regional cooperation the Project interacts closely with the FAO Regional Projects AdriaMed, CopeMed II, EastMed and MedSea Large Marine Ecosystem (MedSea-LME) Project. In the framework of FAO decentralisation MedSudMed is reinforcing collaboration with the subregional (SNE) and regional (RNE) FAO offices in the north African and near east countries by liaising periodically, by supporting joint initiatives on fisheries and sharing information on the activities and results of the Project. MedSudMed, jointly with CopeMed II and the GFCM and the FAO-SNE Office for the region, supported the organisation of the Maghrebian Network of Research Institutes.

49. Cooperation was further sustained with the GFCM and the GFCM Subsidiary Bodies. Several informal meetings of coordination were held with the GFCM staff back to back GFCM events, in order to strengthen the cooperation and to find synergies. MedSudMed continued to provide direct support to the activities of the GFCM by providing scientific contributions for discussion and supporting the participation of 25 experts in 8 GFCM technical and institutional meetings held in the intersessional period.

CopeMed II “Coordination to Support Fisheries Management in the Western and Central Mediterranean, phase 2”

50. The project is based in Málaga (Spain) and started in February 2008 and is funded by DG Mare (UE) and the Spanish Government (Secretaria del Mar and AECID).

51. The overall objective of the project is to maintain the sustainability of the marine resources in the Central and Western Mediterranean and their ecosystems, taking into account environmental, biological, economical, social and institutional issues, and promoting scientific cooperation among the regions. Countries involved are Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Malta, Italy, France and Spain. FAO-FI, GFCM, and the two donors are also members of the Coordination Committee.

52. During the 6th meeting of the Coordination Committee (Malaga, March 2013) participating countries reiterated their concern for the financial problems of the project. National representatives expressed their wishes that, with the support of the two traditional donors, budgetary constraints of the Project be resolved and the extension of CopeMed II be ensured. The persistent budgetary problems during 2013-14 had great incidence in the implementation of activities adopted by the Committee during the intersessional period of SAC. Nevertheless and according to the guidance provided by the Coordination Committee, CopeMed II conducted several activities during 2013-March 2014 according to the Project mandate and to the project' components.

53.

opeMed continued to support national experts from research institutes and fisheries administrations to finalize documents related to biological and socio-economic conditions necessary for statistical analysis of shared stocks. After the GFCM workshop held in Frascati (Italy, March 2013) on fisheries data collection in the western, central and eastern Mediterranean, with the participation of the focal

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points of CopeMed countries and the Project Coordinator, the project continued collaborating with the Secretariat and the countries on this issue.

54. Based on the discussion and conclusion from the workshop in Frascati (Italy, 25-27 March 2013), a Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) in the GFCM area of convention was prepared by the GFCM Secretariat and sent to the projects for revision. During a transversal session on this issue and the annual session of the Subcommittee on Statistics and Information of the SAC in Bar (SCSI, Montenegro, 3-5 February 2014), CopeMed participated in the discussions to improve the DCRF proposal. CopeMed participated in the revision and presented proposals for amendment during the SCSI in collaboration with representatives of Morocco and Tunisia.

55. Concerning socio-economic data, CopeMed prepared and presented two documents during the Subcommittee on Economic and Social Sciences (SCCESS Montenegro, 3-5 February 2014): i) *Socio économie des pêcheries de petits pélagiques en mer d'Alboran : Données, indicateurs, méthodologie et principaux résultats* and, ii) *Aspects socio économiques de la pêche artisanale au Maroc et en Tunisie : Méthodologie et principaux résultats issus du projet ArtFiMed*. Both documents are related to the needs of basic data for the formulation of recommendations for the management of fish stocks of small pelagic in the Alboran Sea and concerning artisanal fisheries data collection in Morocco and Tunisia.

56. Also in relation to socio-economic data, CopeMed contributed to the First Regional Symposium on Small Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea (Malta, 27-30 November 2013) with the document *FAO-ArtFiMed promoting the sustainability of the resources, small scale fisheries management and social development based on EAF* presented to Thematic Session V. This document describes the method adopted and results obtained through a community based monitoring system for the fisheries activity in Morocco and Tunisia. The monitoring system has been developed by the project as a first step toward a co-management process and to improve data and information available on fisheries.

57. Interactions with the participating countries (research institutions and fisheries administrations) were further strengthened and missions were organised to the research institutes in the countries according the available budget for planning joint activities. The Project supported experts from the national fishery research Institutions in international training courses, workshop and joint research activities. CopeMed organised and supported the subregional joint meetings on shared stocks of demersal, including stocks assessment, within the CopeMed region. The Project, jointly with MedSudMed, co-organised a Working Group on demersal shared stocks. The annual subregional joint meeting on small pelagic, although organised with the support of the Algerian administration finally was not celebrated by problems for travelling of some experts.

58. The project provided support to the national fisheries research institutes and experts facilitating the preparation of documents, data providing and shared stock assessments. Stock Assessment Forms documents as foreseen by the GFCM SCSA (Subcommittee on Stock Assessment) were prepared by the countries with the technical support of CopeMed staff and presented during the SCSA Working Groups on demersals in Bar (Montenegro, February 2014).

59. The project organised the annual meeting of the Subregional Working Group on Small Pelagic Fisheries Resources in the Alboran Sea (Oran, Algérie, 5-7 Novembre 2013), with the valuable support of the Fisheries Ministry of Algeria. The meeting was organising to prepare a joint assessment form for *Sardina pilchardus* stock, and other on *Engraulis encrasicolus* stock. However, there were some difficulties with data and experts participation and the meeting was postponed.

60. The main results of the socio-economic study on the small pelagic fisheries in Morocco and Algeria prepared with the support of the project were presented to the SCCESS (03-05 March 2014, Bar, Montenegro) by the project. The activity resulted in the publication of two CpeMed II Technical Documents that are now available at the project Web page.

61. The third meeting on CopeMed II demersal species from the Alboran Sea (Gammath, Tunis, 23-27 September 2013) was focus on Deep-water pink shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*), European

hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) and Red mullets (*Mullus surmuletus* and *M. barbatus*). During this meeting experts from Morocco and Spain shared the data and information and worked together performing stocks assessment on the three species. Experts from Algeria excused their participation.

62. Following the mandate by the respective Coordination Committees of the two projects, the MedSudMed and CopeMed II Working Group on Demersal Fisheries Resources in the south central and western Mediterranean was held in Gamamrth, Tunisia, from 23 to 27 September 2013, kindly hosted by the Institut National des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer (INSTM). The Working Groups of MedSudMed and CopeMed II were organized jointly to improve cooperation in the central and western Mediterranean Sea, to enhance the overall MedSudMed and CopeMed II achievements and, eventually, to optimise human and financial resources. To meet these objectives, the joint meeting activities and agenda were designed to favour the completion of the work programme initiated in the working group of each Project in the past years and, as further step, to promote a discussion among experts of different sub-regions on methods applied and results achieved. The MedSudMed and CopeMed II Working Group pooled together expertises, capacities and objectives of the single projects working groups on demersal fisheries resources, each focused on different geographical sub-regions, i.e. south-central Mediterranean the MedSudMed Working Group, and western Mediterranean/Alboran Sea the CopeMed II working Group.

63. CopeMed contributes to the standardisation of common methodologies in the Mediterranean area in different ways such as organising joint WGs, supporting on the job training and international courses, organising workshops and courses. The activities supported by the Project in this view are briefly described hereunder.

64. In collaboration with CNRDPA (Algeria), the project is supporting actions to assess the implication on biological and economic aspects of the implementation of the 40 mm square mesh size for bottom-trawl codend. To this extent an experimental survey at sea (Selectivity Survey) was carried out and processing of the data is ongoing. The Selectivity Survey was conducted in February-March 2013. The processing of information and data gathered during the campaign with the selectivity of 40 mm square mesh in Boujedzar (Algeria) is currently ongoing using standard methodologies and software provided by CopeMed.

65. CopeMed staff is participating with the project MedSea LME and MedSudMed to: i) a study on the implementation of different measures/methodologies to reduce discards and by-catch in Tunisia trawlers (Gulf of Gabès, south Tunisia); and ii) the process for incorporate artisanal fishermen in the monitoring and management of a Marine Protected Areas (MPA) in Morocco. A Field mission for the preparation of the bycatch mitigation study was held in July with the participation of CopeMed, MedSudMed and FIRF technical staff, the representatives of the General Directorate for Fisheries of Tunisia (DGPA).

66. In relation with MedSea LME project CopeMed is participating in the implementation of a data collection system based on the involvement of artisanal fishers in the MPA of Al-Hoceima (Morocco), coordinated by FAO-FIRF in collaboration with the INRH (Institut National de Recherche Halieutique, Morocco).

67. Universities, Environment and Fisheries Administrations and Research institutes and NGOs from Morocco and Spain are involved in the Alborán project funded by the POCTEFEX initiative of the EU. CopeMed participated in a seminar in Almeria (Spain) in April and a workshop in Málaga, Spain (19-21 June), aiming to create the scientific structures to facilitate the international cooperation for the implementation of a transboundary systems of governance in the Alboran Sea in relation to climate change effects.

68. CopeMed II participated in 14 scientific-related activities and supported the participation of 17 experts and consultants from Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Spain in different scientific activities organised by the GFCM and by the FAO projects (mainly on the assessment of

shared stocks). The support was provided in coherence with the project annual work plan and according to requests from the national focal points and the GFCM.

69. During the reporting period, CopeMed held formal meetings visiting the countries and the higher authorities for fishery in Morocco, Spain and Tunisia with different objectives and to reinforce the collaboration. Informal meetings were organised during international events mainly with national experts (GFCM SCs) discussing the activities adopted by the Coordination Committee and the main issues of the countries needing the support of CopeMed. A meeting was held in Alger (Algeria, February 2013) and in Morocco (Agadir, February 2013) with the Ministries for Fisheries and corresponding General Directors to inform on the advances of the project in the countries.

70. The project organised meetings with the Director General of the national fisheries and marine research institutes from Algeria (CNRDPA), Tunisia (INSTM), Morocco (INRH) and Spain (IEO) at its offices and maintained a meeting with the new Director General of the MBRC (Libya) and responsible for fisheries, the Marine Wealth Authority during meeting in Italy, Spain and Morocco. CopeMed, jointly with MedSudMed and the GFCM and the FAO-SNE Office for the region, supported the organisation of the Maghrebian Network of Research Institutes.

71. CopeMed contributed to keeping fisheries administrations, main fisher's organisations and other stakeholders informed on fisheries and marine-related issues. This was done through dissemination of information resulting from the project activities (meeting agendas and documents, technical and occasional documents), information from others sources (courses, meeting, documents, jobs opportunities). The project is also channelling communication among different regional organizations and disseminating fisheries documents and information on events and activities of interest in the region through the project's web page.

72. In order to strengthen international and regional cooperation beyond its own activities (that all target reinforcement of regional cooperation) CopeMed led or participated in a number of initiatives organised by the Mediterranean projects as a whole and the GFCM. These are described in greater detail in the section on Common activities and overall coordination.

73. Participation, in the GFCM Subregional Technical Workshop on Fisheries Multiannual Management Plans (Tunis, Tunisia. 7–10 October) for the Western, Central and Eastern Mediterranean and revision of the draft document on the Alboran sea small pelagic management plan.

74. The projects also prepared a technical document on interactions between marine fisheries and aquaculture in Tunisia in support to the Directorate General for Fisheries and Aquaculture (DGPA) in Tunisia.

75. CopeMed, in coordination with the other FAO subregional projects, coordinated and led the Thematic Session V of the First Regional Symposium on Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea. The GFCM and FAO FIRF (sub-regional Projects) and FAO FIPI, in partnership with CIHEAM Bari, MedPAN, WWF and in collaboration with the Government of Malta, organised the Regional Symposium from 27 to 30 November 2013 in Malta. CopeMed also chaired session V and prepared with the other partners and projects, the conclusions of the Symposium, developed on the basis of the contents of the background papers prepared in connection with the five thematic sessions of the Symposium and the discussions maintained.

76. To reinforce the cooperation and coordination in the Alboran Sea between North and South countries and with the international organisations, CopeMed participated in a Consultation meeting for the neighbouring countries of the Alboran Sea representing FAO. The Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC-SPA, UNEP/MAP) organized a consultation meeting (Málaga, Spain 11-12 December 2013) to set up multilateral working groups to identify sites and establish Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the Alboran open seas, including the deep seas. The meeting was organised in collaboration with the International Union for Conservation of Nature Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation (IUCN-Med).

77. CopeMed staff participated at the GFCM Working Group on Common methodologies to carry out socio-economic analysis; on a Working Group on Marine Protected Areas in the

Mediterranean and to the four Sub Committees of the SAC-GFCM on Stocks Assessment (SCSA), Socio-Economy (SCSE); Statistics and Information (SCSI) and Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE) in Bar (Montenegro) from 2th to 6th February 2014. During the first working group CopeMed presented two documents already mentioned.

78. CopeMed also prepared, edited and published technical and informative documents on different aspects of fisheries in the project area. Documents produced in are available at www.faocopemed.org. Since its publication, the Project's website is continually updated. The FAO Mediterranean projects harmonized the information and appearance of the different websites, to present a unified image to the visitor.

79. All the FAO-led Fisheries Management Support projects in the Mediterranean are tightly coordinated and develop their activities in a joint way, among them and with the GFCM, whenever this can bring added benefits to the participating countries and the GFCM.

80. CopeMed II has, in cooperation with FAO-FIRF service, reinforced the activities of coordination and contacts with the current donors of the project, the European Commission and the Spanish Government. It also explored new options for support to its activities and consequently an extension of the project during 2014 was decided.

81. Communication with representatives of the government of Spain was permanent, in particular with the project donor the General Secretariat of Maritime Fisheries (Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment). Thanks to additional funding secured by the Spanish donor in 2013 and the provision of funds for a part of 2014, the CopeMed II activities were extended in view of the implementation of the new FAO programme for the Mediterranean in January 2015.

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

82. The Project is financed by the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Greek Ministry of Rural Development and Food, the Italian Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies and by the European Union through the European Commission DG-MARE. EastMed has been operative since September 2009 for a total of four years. The beneficiary countries are those with waters included in the GFCM Geographical Sub-Areas (GSAs) 19-20 and 22-28. 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. Its immediate objective is to support and improve the capacity of national fisheries departments of participating countries 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.

83. The activities carried out during the intersessional period followed the project's document, as well as the work plan for 2013-14 as approved by the 3rd and 4th EastMed Coordination Committee meetings in Bari and Rome, Italy which included the continuation of research programmes, workshops, training programmes and promotion of regional cooperation 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.

Institutional Strengthening

84. In Egypt a web-supported computer system was set up in February 2012 and continued to be developed in 2013 with an internet Samac-Web for the storage and analysis of catch/effort data collected in outposts during the pilot survey, which is supported by the EastMed Project. A workshop was organized at which the current data collection methods would have to be associated with computerization aspects. The workshop reviewed the initial boat/gear set-up and revised the lists according to GFCM Task 1 standards. The new decentralized and web-supported system was installed

on five PCs from Alexandria, Port-Said, Damiette, Arish and Kafr-El-Sheikh, while a sixth component was installed on a PC at the GAFRD office in Cairo. The purchase of the six PCs was supported by the project.

85. After the appraisal of the current licensing system in Lebanon and the proposal to develop a web based supporting system, a prototype system for the analysis of fleet data was demonstrated to the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA). The system was followed by recommendations on how the licensing system should have to be developed including its utility in future catch and effort assessment surveys which were also provided to the MOA. A capacity development component for national staff was also included in the programme for the preparation of the web-based licensing system. The software was delivered to the MoA in December 2012 and the testing phase was initiated. The development of the software was finished in 2013 after the testing period by the Lebanese Fisheries department of MOA. The staff of the MOA was trained in the use of the software. The system is now operational, although its full implementation still requires further efforts.

Staff Training and Development

86. Training courses on socio-economic data collection were conducted in Gaza strip, Lebanon and Turkey. The courses included lectures and practical work experience in the field with interviews with fishers as foreseen in the data collection system. The aims of the training courses were: i) to introduce the general scheme and the goals of the data collection survey; ii) to provide the definition of the variables for which the information should be gathered; iii) to introduce the methodologies adopted; iv) to validate the questionnaire and describe the approach that should be followed by the data collectors to interview the fishers.

87. The project supported training on catch and effort data collection including biological sampling in Turkey. In 2012 and 2013 lectures were given on the technical and logistical requirements in the implementation of a data collection system, including basic theory with practical applications in the collection of catch and effort data. Training courses were also given on catch, effort and biological sampling as part of a pilot study on data collection.

88. The project participated in a training course for trainers on EAF. The training course was organised within the framework of the EAF Nansen project. The course aimed at improving the understanding of EAF with specific emphasis on the processes involved in the preparation and implementation of fisheries management plans. The knowledge gained increased the capacity of FAO to carry out training courses on EAF in the Mediterranean.

89. The project supported the participation of 3 experts from countries of the project's area at the GFCM Workshop on fisheries data collection in the Mediterranean Sea (Rome, Italy, March 2013).

90. The project supported the participation one expert at the training course using FLR for quantitative fisheries advice at the EC joint research centre (Ispra, Italy, March 2013).

Data Collection and Organization of Data

91. Within the fisheries-dependent data collection survey in Egypt, the project supported the collection of biological data for the second year (January 2013 to December 2013). Catch and effort data have been collected since 2011. During the second year a follow up of the progress in collecting the biological data together with the processing of the data was conducted. The data collection was improved and adapted according to the experience gained during the first year of sampling.

92. After the training course conducted in Antalya Bay, Turkey on catch, effort, biological and socio-economic data collection, a pilot survey on data collection was initiated in September 2012 and continued through 2013. After 4 months of data collection, progress of activities was reviewed, some

data analysis for checking the quality of the data was carried out and technical assistance for further improvement was provided by the Project.

93. As follow up of the training courses on fisheries data collection in Gaza Strip the work plan for a pilot study on data collection was discussed. The pilot study included the refinement of the catch and effort system, the collection of biological parameters for four species which include three small pelagic species namely *Sardinella aurita*, *Scomber japonicus*, *Alepes djedaba*, and one demersal species, *Upeneus mollucensis*; and the collection of socio-economic parameters. The data collection was started in April 2013.

94. A pilot survey on the collection of catch and effort data was started in 2013, in Lebanon, in collaboration with the University of Balamand. The aim was to provide support to the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture for the implementation of the national pilot survey on fisheries dependent data collection in Lebanon. The pilot survey comprises also a capacity development component for national experts involved in the sampling and processing of samples and data. This component includes illustration of all the fields in the of catch/effort forms (meaning and principles that lead to their definition) followed by pilot testing of the catch/effort monitoring program.

95. According with the work plan adopted by the Project 3rd and 4th Coordination Committees (April, 2012, Bari, Italy and April 2013, FAO HQs, Rome) two activities to explore the possibility of exploiting the venus clam *Chamelea gallina* were carried out in Egypt: i) a trial fisheries independent survey was and ii) a study on the impacts of the hydraulic dredge on the bottom. The survey at sea for the clam fisheries resources survey was carried out in April 2013. To explore the potential impacts of the hydraulic dredge on the bottom an extensive literature review was made. The results of the survey show that the commercial clam *Chamelea gallina* has a potential for exploitation together with other potentially commercial species such as the changeable nassa *Nassarius mutabilis* and the bivalve *Anadara polii*. Most of the biomass is located on the Western side of the area investigated and close to the fishing port of Rasheed, making the area more easily reachable. The results obtained from the bacterial and heavy metal analysis show that the clams are in general within safe limits especially in the western and middle parts of the investigated area and when compared to other commercially exploited bivalve species. Most of the potential production would probably be for local consumption in Egypt, since export is rather difficult due to the special regulations for the import of bivalve species. The main constraint for the commercialisation of the products will be the market, since these species are at present not commercialised in Egypt, so a market chain analysis should be conducted and a market strategy should be devised in order to successfully introduce the product in the local markets.

96. The second meeting of the EASTMED Permanent Working Group on Stock Assessment was held in Kavala (Greece) from 9 to 14 of September 2013. The meeting had six main general objectives i) to identify surveys and fishery-dependent data collection programs carried out in the last 10 years in each country of the EastMed area; ii) to provide advice on how to increase the standardization between surveys carried out in the EastMed area; iii) to process with raw data that has been collected through the pilot activities supported by the project and/or supported by the countries within the framework of the European DCF, in order to produce stock assessments, iv) to make an effort to define a few shared stocks in order to monitor through the GFCM management plans, v) to discuss the possibility of establishing two WGs on stock assessment, one for demersals and one for small pelagics, vi) to define gaps existed in the sampling protocol which is used during the implementation of the pilot activities on data collection and decide on amendments. Furthermore five stock assessments were completed and other preliminary analyses were carried out. The five stocks assessed, represented also by two Lessepsian species.

97. FAO EastMed has been requested to assist Lebanon to undertake an assessment of the situation of beach seines in use in the country, to determine the legal background behind the banning of beach seines and to propose any recommendation on the management of the beach seine fishery in Lebanon. To this extent a field mission was carried out during April 2014 with the assistance of the Ministry of Agriculture of Lebanon and the FAO representation in Lebanon. The focus of the mission was to visit the main landing ports where beach seines are used (Daura, Ouzai and Aabdi), and

conduct interviews with fishers. Discussions with officers from the Ministry of Agriculture were also held to gather some background information on beach seines in the country.

Increased Participation and Cooperation

98. The fifth Coordination Committee Meeting of the EastMed project was held in FAO HQ, Rome, Italy, from 6 to 7 May 2014. During the meeting the work plan for 2014 was discussed and approved.

99. The project participated at the GFCM WS on fisheries data collection in the Mediterranean Sea (Frascati, Italy, 25-27 March 2013), which is one of the actions included in the GFCM strategic Framework Programme (FWP). In the meeting, the GFCM secretariat presented a compilation of the questionnaires circulated to the countries through which problems of collection and data transmission were analysed. The national focal points described their national scheme on data collection and presented their gaps and weaknesses. The sub-regional projects presented the activities achieved in the participating countries regarding training and pilot activities on data collection. At the end and based on the outcomes of the meeting, a deep discussion was dedicated to the improvement of GFCM TASK 1. The participants agreed to withdraw TASK 1.5 given that all the information is available in the stock assessment forms.

100. The project participated at the round table on innovation and best practices in the fishery production chain in the Near East: the Lebanese case in Genoa Italy from the 9th to the 11th of May 2013.

101. On the occasion of the 10th International Conference on Artificial Reefs and Related Aquatic Habitats (CARAH) which took place from 23-27 September 2013 in Izmir (Turkey), GFCM in collaboration with the EastMed project organized a workshop devoted to the Mediterranean and Black Sea. In particular the Workshop aimed in discussing on the draft guidelines for artificial reefs applications in the context of an integrated maritime approach.

102. The project participated at the Subregional Technical Workshop on Fisheries Multiannual Management Plans for the Western, Central and Eastern Mediterranean which was part of an action within the GFCM Framework Programme addressing the following fisheries: i) small pelagics fisheries in the Alborán Sea; ii) rose shrimp and associated species in the Strait of Sicily; iii) deep water red shrimps in central-eastern Mediterranean areas and iv) the fisheries of eel in the Mediterranean. For these case studies, the objectives of the workshop were: i) to assess the technical feasibility of the GFCM guidelines for the development of multiannual management plans, ii) to identify issues and needs for the management of each case study and iii) to progress towards the preparation of documents and strategies supporting management plans. The minimum structure and common criteria upon which multiannual fisheries management plans have to be built for the case studies, were agreed upon.

103. Five technical documents have been prepared and the ones published are available online through the website. Hard copies have also been distributed to participating countries. Posters were prepared, and presentations were given to several meetings, in which the publications were distributed.

104. The project web site (www.faoeastmed.org) has been improved and active links have been created with the websites of the other subregional projects and GFCM. It is continuously updated with new information, and on the home page a new section on upcoming events was developed.

MedSea-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

105. This component of the Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean LME 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 and is the Executing Agency for subcomponent 3.2., the “EAF component”.

106. Under subcomponent 3.2 there have been three main lines of activity: a) improving involvement and participation of the local communities of fishermen on the monitoring of the fisheries activity in the National Park of Al Hoceima (PNAH); b) Bycatch management in the Gulf of Gabes and c) training in EAF

107. As part of a) a first activity consisted in a scoping survey of the fishing activity in the PNAH.

108. In order to engage stakeholders in the process, a launching workshop was organized and held in Cala Iris (September 2012) to present the project and the results of the scoping survey. The discussion was open, and the project was well received by all, including fisher’s and local authorities. The final recommendations approved by the workshop included the creation of a fisheries monitoring cell for the Park fisheries, including representatives from the fisher’s associations and the Administration, and the full involvement of the fishers and their associations in the regular monitoring of the fisheries.

109. The next activity carried out jointly between FAO and INRH, was the characterization of the modus operandi of the fishing and commercialization operations. A series of field surveys and meetings were held to design the methodology and the monitoring system. The sites and the fisheries samplers have been identified during this process. Specific toolkits (guidelines, technical manuals) were elaborated and translated, to be understandable by the fishing community. A set of sampling material and other field work tools is being prepared for each of the fisheries samplers engaged in the project.

110. Future steps include training of the fishers and the implementation of the monitoring system in selected sites.

111. Management of bycatch has been another area addressed by the project through a case study in the Gulf of Gabes. Main phases so far have included:

1. Phase-II was conducted in 2013 and involved the planning of an experimental survey at sea for reducing the by-catch and discards in the trawling fisheries of the Gulf of Gabes, Tunisia and the process for incorporate artisanal fishermen in the monitoring and management of a Marine Protected Areas (MPA) in Morocco. Institutional analysis to highlight convergences between national work plans and EAF/EAA was initiated in collaboration with other FAO Projects and national counterparts. Phase-II was fairly successful.
2. The key results, conclusions and recommendations of Phase-I have been presented to Fisheries Authorities and Fisheries Organizations in Tunisia. The latest stakeholder meeting was held in Sfax on January 10, 2013.

112. Following the capacity development programme on the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries and Aquaculture, conducted by FAO-FIRF in Agadir, Morocco (September 2011), in Rome, Italy (November 2012) a new training has being organized to take place for the whole Mediterranean region in Turkey FAO HQs, Rome (June 2013).

Common activities and overall coordination

113. All the FAO-led Fisheries Management Support projects in the Mediterranean are tightly coordinated and develop their activities in a joint way, among them and with the GFCM, whenever this can bring added benefits to the participating countries and the GFCM.

114. During the intersessional period, the projects co-organized several Working Groups, Workshops and Training Courses. This co-organization not only promotes the best use of limited human and financial resources, it also contributes to increase the linkages and connections among the fisheries researchers and managers of the whole Mediterranean. It is expected that the connections thus established, and the common language and methods shared, will also contribute to facilitating the reinforcement of the regional and sub-regional cooperation frameworks considered essential for sustainable fisheries management in the Mediterranean in the GFCM framework.

115. Coordination with the donors of the projects was also strengthened. Joint discussion meetings were also held with representatives of traditional donors, namely EU (DG-Mare), Greece, Italy and Spain. In this context a meeting with representatives of DG-Mare, the four FAO Regional Mediterranean Projects (AdriaMed, MedSudMed, EastMed and CopeMed II) and FIRF staff was held in Brussels, Belgium, on 2 July 2013. The progress and results achieved by each project were presented including the Concept Note of a joint Mediterranean-wide programme that shall be the natural evolution of the existing FAO Fisheries Projects in the Mediterranean. Subsequently a meeting was organised on 17 July 2013 in FAO-HQ (Rome) with the representatives of the three donors (Italy, Spain and Greece) to present the proposal for a single Mediterranean Programme.

116. Based on the initial acceptance and comments received by the donors on the proposed Concept Note, FAO improved the Concept Note that provides the justification for, and an outline of, a single Mediterranean programme to further consolidate and develop the work currently ongoing in the Mediterranean countries with the support of the four FAO sub-regional fisheries projects. The single Programme is expected to capitalise the experience accrued by participating institutions to achieve more coordinate and challenging results. The programme is expected to be operational starting from 2015. An informative meeting with the permanent representatives of the Mediterranean countries based in Rome was organised on 22 November 2013. During the meeting a description of the programme activities, pros and cons, roadmap for its planning and implementation were presented and discussed. The countries and the four donors expressed the wish to continue supporting the new phase and FAO was requested to prepare a fully fledged project document. During the meeting, FAO was also requested to ensure a smooth transition in order to avoid any gaps between the present phase and the new Programme (second phase). In addition, it was agreed that funding support to the new Programme should be enlarged to include all Mediterranean countries, and not only to traditional donors (EU, Greece, Italy and Spain), for their possible contribution. The first draft of the document is expected to be circulated to Mediterranean countries and potential donors for their comments and suggestions.

117. The projects have also jointly supported several initiatives in the framework of the GFCM, aiming at increasing cooperation and linkages in fisheries management across the Mediterranean, as well as at sub-regional level.

118. In this view, the participation of more than 100 Mediterranean experts to more than 20 GFCM meetings (SAC, CAQ and institutional meetings) was ensured thank to the contribution of the Project.

119. The FAO projects organised or participated in the next coordination meeting with the GFCM Secretariat:

- ✓ Preparatory meeting with the GFCM Secretariat on the workshop on management plan in the “Subregional Technical Workshop on Fisheries Multiannual Management Plans for the Western, Central and Eastern Mediterranean”
- ✓ Meeting with the GFCM secretariat on the draft Concept Note for a single FAO Regional Programme in the Mediterranean,(FAO-HQs, Rome 05 September 2013)

120. The FAO projects AdriaMed, CopeMed, EastMed and MedSudMed participated at the second GFCM Task Force meeting. The second meeting was held in Split on May 2013 and was attended by 48 participants, including representatives of the GFCM members, the FAO, non-governmental organizations and both the GFCM Bureau and the Secretariat.

121. Under the coordination of the GFCM and the support of the Maltese fisheries administration, co-sponsored by the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, the FAO sub-regional projects AdriaMed, CopeMed II, MedSudMed and EastMed, CIHEAM, WWF and MedPAN, organized the First Regional Symposium on Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea (27-30 November 2013, Malta).

122. In collaboration with the JRC (EU), the GFCM Secretariat and the other FAO Mediterranean projects AdriaMed facilitated the organisation of a 5 days training course titled: "Improving the Analysis of Fisheries Data: An Introduction to R and the Fisheries Library based on R (FLR)". The training was held on 04-08 November 2013 at the GFCM, Rome (Italy).

123. A training workshop on EAF was co-organised in June 2013 within the program of work of the FAO component of the project "Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystem" by all the Mediterranean Projects. The aim of the workshop was to improve the understanding of EAF and EAA (Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture) and of the processes involved in the preparation and implementation of fisheries and aquaculture management plans by experts from the fisheries management and research.

124. The cooperation among Projects also resulted in the participation at the second symposium on Fishery-Dependent Information in Rome, Italy 3-6 March, 2014, an international conference for resource managers, scientists and the fishing sector on the collection and interpretation of information in the context of the ecosystem approach. Together with the other FAO sub-regional projects an oral presentation was made on the comparative analysis of fisheries socio-economic data collection in the Mediterranean: lessons learned and future prospects. Furthermore three scientific posters were presented at the conference from Egypt, Lebanon and Turkey, respectively.

125. Also, the projects harmonized the information and appearance of the different websites, to present a unified image to the visitors, reinforcing the concept of harmonized projects.

126. To ensure a tighter coordination, all projects are represented in the Coordination Committee meetings of the other projects. This contributed to avoiding overlap in activities, and to the planning of joint activities. Also, the project staff met twice a year, once at FAO Headquarters and another at the GFCM SubCommittee meeting, to take stock of the development of the activities and problems faced by each of them, and to plan the joint or shared activities. This tight coordination and sharing of information and resources has already led to a significant increase in the number and importance of jointly-organised or shared activities, as is evident in this report. It also means that the total number of activities implemented has effectively increased, as the specific advantages (human or otherwise) of each project is put at the disposal of all the projects, and there was no duplication of efforts, reducing the wastage of resources.

127. In the framework of the FAO decentralisation, and with the same objective of maximizing the support to the participating countries and the GFCM, the projects are reinforcing the collaboration with the FAO regional and subregional offices in the region. Thus, the projects have regular communication and also co-organise activities with the Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa, in Cairo, the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, in Budapest, as well as with the sub-regional offices in Ankara (Central Asia) and Tunis (North Africa). This tighter cooperation also increases the overall delivery of FAO for the benefit of the countries in the region and for the reinforcement of the GFCM as the Regional Fisheries Management Organization with responsibilities for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.