



GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION
FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN
COMMISSION GÉNÉRALE DES PÊCHES
POUR LA MÉDITERRANÉE



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Concept note for the First regional programme on small-scale fisheries

BACKGROUND

1. At the fifteenth session of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) (FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, 8–11 April 2013), a concept note was presented in order to tackle the urgent need to address the small-scale fisheries (SSF) subsector through a regional symposium. This symposium would provide a platform where the main recurring issues of small-scale fisheries could be duly examined and relevant regional stakeholders could bring their opinions to the fore. The SAC endorsed the proposal and agreed that a final concept note and comments be presented to the Commission for final endorsement.
2. The thirty-seventh session of the Commission (Split, Croatia, 13-17 May 2013) recommended the organization of the First regional symposium on sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea within the remit of the Framework Programme (FWP). The symposium was hosted by the Government of Malta and held from 27 to 30 November 2013, in partnership with CIHEAM Bari, the FAO Fisheries Department and the FAO regional projects (AdriaMed, CopeMed, EastMed and MedSudMed), MedPAN and WWF Mediterranean Programme. The event gathered over 170 participants from international organizations, NGOs, fishers' associations, stakeholders and civil society at large.
3. The symposium was articulated around five key thematic sessions and its main outcomes included the following: (i) Conclusions of the symposium; (ii) The signature of the Malta Commitment to establish a cooperation platform of small-scale fishers at the regional and subregional levels; (iii) The publication of the symposium proceedings within the FAO FI proceedings series; (iv) A dedicated website regularly updated with pictures, videos, interviews, documents and material (www.ssf Symposium.org).
4. The conclusions of the symposium, grouped under one cluster of general and transversal proposals and five clusters on specific thematic sessions, were endorsed at the sixteenth session of the SAC (St Julian's, Malta, 17–20 March 2014), where progress was also made in developing a concept note for a regional programme fostering knowledge on small-scale fisheries (involving the co-organizers and other interested partners). More specifically, for the first year of implementation of the programme, a series of case studies on small-scale fisheries covering a range of geographic and socioeconomic aspects relating to the five thematic sessions of the symposium were identified.
5. The list of case studies and the key elements to develop a regional programme on small-scale fisheries are included in Annex A. The implementation of the regional programme would occur within the remit of the FWP and thus be subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS BY THE COMMISSION

6. The Commission is invited to review this document and, in particular, to:
- Provide advice on the proposed case studies;
 - Endorse the proposed case studies to be used as a basis to develop the regional programme on small-scale fisheries;
 - Support to initiatives to raise extrabudgetary funds and to develop synergies for the implementation of the regional programme.

CONCEPT NOTE FOR THE FIRST REGIONAL PROGRAMME ON SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

INTRODUCTION

Small-scale fisheries in the GFCM area

A clear definition of small-scale fisheries is difficult to be agreed upon. At present, the terms “artisanal fisheries” and “small-scale fisheries” are used often interchangeably. Both refer broadly to a multi-faceted segment of capture fisheries very commonly practiced along the coastal areas in the Mediterranean and Black Sea and worldwide. The FAO Fisheries Glossary mentions that artisanal fisheries are “traditional fisheries involving fishing households (as opposed to commercial companies), using relatively small amount of capital and energy, relatively small fishing vessels (if any), making short fishing trips, close to shore, mainly for local consumption [...]. In practice, definition varies between countries”.

Small-scale fisheries traditionally represent an important share of the fisheries sector in the Mediterranean and Black Sea and their considerable role in the region has long been recognized. They have the potential to contribute significantly to food security, economic growth and rural development and to provide valuable employment opportunities. Small-scale fisheries are strongly anchored in local communities, reflecting often historic links with traditions, culture and values. They are a vibrant and multi-dimensional sector, where traditional local knowledge and cultural heritage coexist and are embedded in the surrounding environment. This is why they represent a pillar for the livelihood of coastal communities and for the empowerment of women, who are known to play an active role along the value chain of small-scale fisheries products in some countries. Moreover, they are important vectors of local knowledge and good practices and they have a relatively low environmental impact. However, there is sparse information at the regional level on their production volumes and socio-economic dimension, on their contribution to sustainable development and to the preservation of marine ecosystems.

Small-scale fisheries are generally characterized by the use of a large number of boats of low tonnage, extremely diversified and selective low-impact fishing gear targeting a wide variety of species. Fishers exploit areas that are usually very close to the coast where they live and shelter their boats. Small-scale fisheries generally require small capital investment as opposed to industrial fishing, generate income and significantly contribute to food security especially to coastal communities which greatly rely on this activity. In the Mediterranean and Black Sea fishing fleet (about 90 000 vessels in total), the small-scale segment (defined as embarkations below 12 meters of length overall) represents more than 80 percent of the entire fleet (source: GFCM data). In the Mediterranean and Black Sea, small-scale fisheries include a great number of fishing techniques; employ over 50 types of fishing gear to adapt to target species and fishing season based on a rotatory system, and embrace all the *métiers* (fishing gear) that are not typically industrial.

Landing sites are widespread along the coasts and in fishing ports and monitoring, control and surveillance of small-scale fisheries is therefore extremely challenging. At present, small-scale fishers account for the principal part of the active population operating in the fishery sector. Their activities are often family-based and linked to other sectors, such as food and tourism. It has been estimated that out of approximately 250 000 people employed in the fishing industry, at least more than a half (i.e. about 55 percent) are working in the small-scale fisheries sector.

Current challenges

Despite their socioeconomic importance, small-scale fisheries face today many challenges. Fishers' marginalization and often exclusion from public policy processes and decision-making,

overexploitation of stocks, sometimes competition for space and resources with industrial fisheries and other coastal activities, scarcity of data on fishing effort and catches, low capacity in data collection and in monitoring, control and surveillance, and the lack of a holistic regional knowledge and management of the sector represent the most important difficulties. Moreover, issues related to the welfare of small-scale fishers and their communities, their social protection and safety are insufficiently addressed and little is known about these aspects. With so many interests at stake and challenges to face, small-scale fisheries are at a turning point.

Innovative and participatory management and governance approaches need to be set up in order to strengthen this key socioeconomic sector for the Mediterranean and Black Sea. Small-scale fishers activities need to be preserved and supported and investments into small-scale fisheries increased. This includes for instance more sustainable and energy-efficient gear and techniques, safety measures, promoting and labelling of fish products, support to participatory decision-making, including co-management, etc. Fish stocks in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea need to be properly managed and preserved, to ensure the long-term sustainability of fisheries in the whole area. Recently, the GFCM has been promoting the establishment of fisheries multiannual management plans. For this purpose, it is necessary to identify sources of information on small-scale fisheries, to collect data and to involve stakeholders in their analysis. A sound analysis will eventually lead to efficient management plans. At the moment, there is no precise quantitative information encompassing biological and socio-economic data at the regional level and no regional database exists to provide a complete picture on small-scale fisheries, despite the efforts deployed by the GFCM – which collects those data from its Members. It has become urgent to achieve a data collection system on small-scale fisheries in order to be able undertake an effective analysis of the sector.

FIRST REGIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE BLACK SEA (NOVEMBER 2013)

The symposium provided a forum to take stock of the current situation of small-scale fisheries, identify key areas of intervention, strengthen dialogue between partners and stakeholders in the region, give a visibility at the regional level, and find strategies for the implementation of the FAO SSF Guidelines.

The symposium reaffirmed the socioeconomic importance of small-scale fisheries in the region and the need for strong political commitment, intergovernmental cooperation and technical assistance for Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian States. It was acknowledged that new transversal governance and management approaches should be developed and translated into actions underpinning the consolidation of the knowledge base, data collection and analysis, management and co-management mechanisms and their integration with environmental objectives, including marine protected areas (MPAs).

The conclusions of the symposium related to the five specific thematic sessions could be summarized as follows:

Current situation of SSF: (i) Bridge gaps in data and information on SSF including interactions with other human activities and their socio-economic aspects; (ii) Develop an information monitoring system to improve knowledge and collect data on SSF, including parameters and synthetic indicators (social, economic and environmental); (iii) Launch a survey on SSF in the Mediterranean and Black Sea; (iv) Recognize the socio-economic and technical specificities of SSF to better tailor investments and other kinds of support to this sector; (v) Include SSF in national fisheries management plans and MCS activities to fight IUU, (vi) identify fishing grounds, and (vii) address other key issues.

SSF (co)-management: (i) Support the implementation of co-managed fisheries, including through a critical analysis of available case studies, as well as best practices and the wide dissemination of achievements; (ii) Promote in a participatory way the creation of an active network of pilot cases in fisheries co-management in the GFCM area; (iii) Evaluate capacity-building needs for fisheries co-management based on lessons learnt, including support to community-based data collection programmes and monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS).

SSF and marine protected areas (MPAs): (i) Promote a participatory approach inclusive of small-scale fishers communities in establishing of MPAs and in MCS; (ii) Develop and implement a work plan aimed at adequately managing resources in and around MPAs, actively involving small-scale fishers, fisheries managers as well as relevant institutions; (iii) Ensure cooperation between the network of MPA managers (MedPAN) and small-scale fish workers platforms, with the support of GFCM, to strengthen understanding, capacity-building, relationships to guarantee effective co-management mechanisms.

SSF value chains: (i) ensure better knowledge on local and regional value chains, as well as the creation of added value through good practices/quality systems, eco-labelling, and concerted actions; (ii) Identify needs for an educational and scientific programme; (iii) support national institutions in the empowerment of SSF communities, highlighting the importance of multi-functionality and diversification; (iv) Set up IT systems to gather and share key information and assist decision-makers in developing SSF strategies at the national and regional levels; (v) Support integrated horizontal and vertical coordination (north-south) strengthening the role of regional organizations and promoting best practices; (vi) Create cooperatives and consortium to enable direct sales.

Implementation of the FAO SSF Guidelines: (i) Increase the visibility of SSF actors and facilitate the engagement of stakeholders and civil society organizations in the implementation of the SSF Guidelines; (ii) Integrate the provisions of the SSF Guidelines in regional, national and local policies, strategies and action plans; (iii) Support the establishment and development of organizations and networks created for and by small-scale fisheries actors; (iv) Establish regional confederations of professional organizations and platforms; (v) Promote a gender approach towards gender equality; (vi) Create and support one or more platforms of small-scale fishers and fish workers for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

THE REGIONAL PROGRAMME ON SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

General structure

The regional programme on small-scale fisheries would be articulated around the following five thematic/strategic areas as identified by the Symposium:

- Current situation of small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea: strategies and methodologies for an effective analysis of the sector
- Management and co-management options for small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea
- Integration of small-scale fisheries in marine protected areas (MPAs)
- Enhancing small-scale fisheries value chains in the Mediterranean and Black Sea
- Setting up a regional platform to promote the implementation of the voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF Guidelines)

The workplan and outputs of the programme will build on the conclusions of the Symposium and will be jointly decided in a participatory process with organizations joining the programme. The SSF regional programme will be used as a framework to develop specific projects with any of the organizations or consortia of organizations joining the programme.

General objectives

The overall focus of the first regional programme on small-scale fisheries is to promote the successful management of SSF in the Mediterranean and Black Sea, delivering on the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) while improving livelihoods, economies and food security of coastal communities.

GFCM Framework Programme in support of Task Force activities (FWP)

The regional programme on small-scale fisheries builds on and is consistent with the FWP work package (WP) 4: “Enhancing the development of artisanal fisheries. Assessing the status of recreational fisheries”. More specifically, it shares the WP4 overarching outcomes: “better management and control of artisanal fisheries to support fisheries-dependent coastal communities relying on these resources” as well as output “strategic and programmatic interventions to improve the livelihoods and sustainability of artisanal coastal fishing communities implemented; fishers’ organizations strengthened and co-management regimes in place”.

Strategy

During the first year of the programme, a series of case studies on SSF covering a range of geographic and socioeconomic situations related to the five thematic areas will be undertaken. The selected case studies should be balanced in their geographical coverage taking into account well-known and new cases on SFF. An analytical framework to analyze the case studies will be developed and existing data will be used as starting point to identify gaps and needs.

Specific objectives

Provisional identified specific objectives include the following:

- Identify existing good practices in SSF at the national level concerning governance, management measures (including area management/MPAs), value chain and diversification of economic activities. Good practices can range from single specific issues to comprehensive management schemes;
- Establish a Mediterranean and Black Sea regional network of good practices (see above point) and try to include at least one case study per GFCM country;
- Establish in parallel a regional network of pilot multi-stakeholder co-managed fisheries; the network would include 1–2 fisheries case studies per subregion. Case studies will be comprehensive and address governance (e.g. co-management committees, community-based data collection programmes, stakeholder involvement in MCS, etc.), management and value chain issues;
- Establish national fora gathering multi-stakeholder platforms supporting the regional programme (i.e. “Sustainable Fisheries Forum”); support and empower such platforms;
- Identify capacity-building needs (training, technical assistance, etc.), design and implement related programmes covering governance, management measures (i.e. EAF toolkit), value chain and diversification of economic activities;
- Establish a well-designed exchange programme targeted primarily to fishers to spread/replicate good practices across the region.

Implementation

GFCM Secretariat and relevant party organizations.

Programme duration

2014–2018: 4 years

Funding

The implementation of the regional programme will be subject to available extrabudgetary resources. It will be supported by *ad hoc* funding mechanisms (e.g. through multilateral trust-funds settings). Potential donors include GFCM Members, non-Members, international organizations and private foundations/entities.

List of case studies for the first year of the regional programme

- **Algeria:** one case study in Hadjrat Ennas, and one case study in Taza (*to be received*)
- **Egypt:** one case study in Alessandria and in areas where there are conflicts between SSF and recreational fisheries (*to be received*)
- **FAO regional project AdriaMed:** one case study in the Adriatic Sea (*to be received*)
- **Italy:** one case study in the Egadi islands in NW Sicily where conflicts between trawling, purse seine, MPA and SSF occur. Possibly other case studies (*to be received*)
- **MedArtNet:** one case study on the Mediterranean Platform of Artisanal Fishers (MedArtNet) (*received*)
- **Morocco:** one case study linking SSF and MPA in Morocco (*to be received*)
- **Spain:** one case on spiny lobster and associated artisanal fisheries in the Minorca channel (Balearic islands, western Mediterranean); one case study on bivalves fisheries in the northern Alborán Sea (western Mediterranean); one case study on eel fisheries in the Mar Menor (*received*)
- **Tunisia:** one case study on the Kerkennah islands and one case study on the Bahiret el Bibane lagoon (*to be received*)
- **Turkey:** one or more case study/ies in the Black Sea in cooperation with the Coast-to-Coast NETWORKS Project (CoCoNET) (*received*)
- **WWF:** one case study on sand eel SSF in Catalonia, Spain (*to be received*)