



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



General Fisheries
Commission for
the Mediterranean

MEDSEA4FISH PROGRAMME

Capacity development for sustainable fisheries management in the Mediterranean

GUIDING DOCUMENT



MedSea
4Fish

Contents

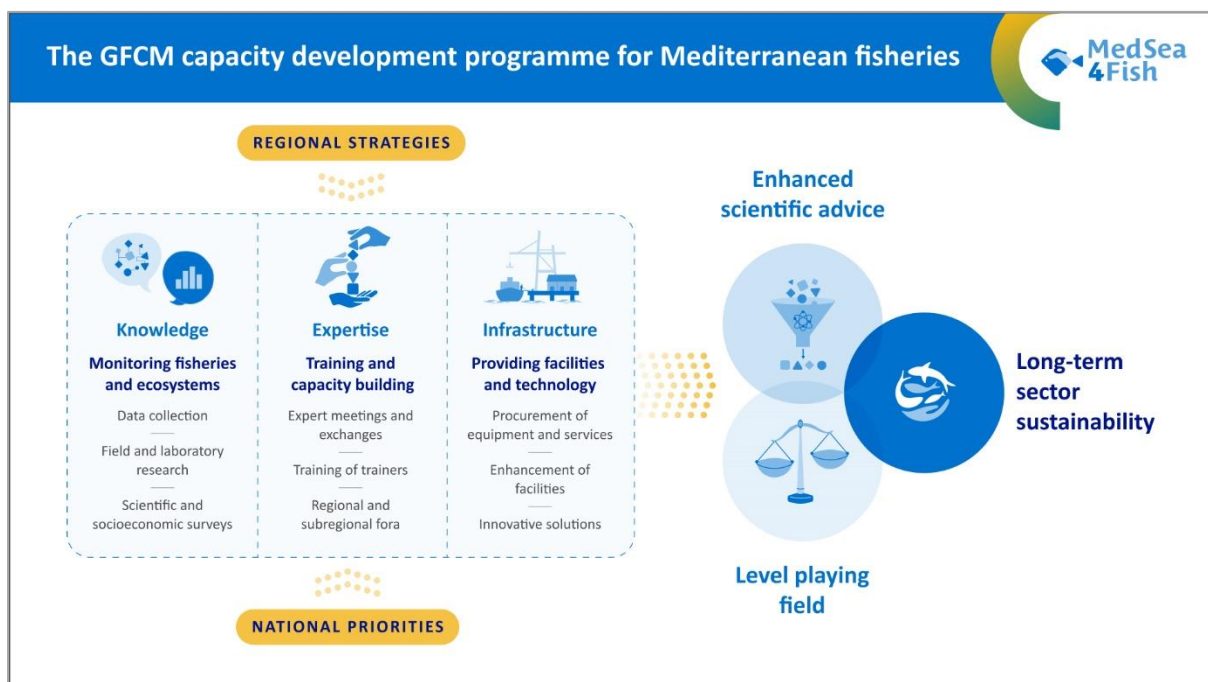
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Summary

MedSea4Fish is the GFCM capacity development programme for the Mediterranean Sea providing resources, training and technical assistance where they're most needed. In doing so it helps to level the playing field across the Mediterranean on knowledge, expertise and infrastructure, supporting GFCM countries in acquiring the latest data and information, best practices, tools and technologies to underpin stronger scientific advice for improved fisheries management. It strengthens the ability of Mediterranean countries to collect, analyse and report on fisheries data, which leads to improved inputs for the GFCM decision-making process.

The programme revolves around three pillars of capacity development at the national level, namely fisheries monitoring, training and infrastructure, and it relies on the combined use of both a bottom-up approach, whereby national priorities feed into discussions at the subregional and regional levels, and a top-down approach, whereby GFCM binding decisions and the GFCM 2030 Strategy provide guidance on priorities to be addressed at the different levels. Its implementation is governed by a biennial planning of activities discussed with countries, a steering committee to provide guidance and a general coordinator to oversee progress. MedSea4Fish operates on the basis of co-financing mechanisms and in-kind contributions, with financial means currently provided by its main donor, the European Commission, as well as a Global Environment Facility project and a voluntary contribution from Spain.



This document guides the implementation of MedSea4Fish within the GFCM, detailing its background and rationale, its objectives, structure and expected results, its management and implementation mechanisms as well as its results-based monitoring, performance assessment and reporting.

Introduction and rationale

Fisheries are at the heart of Mediterranean communities, providing a source of quality food and jobs, and are an intrinsic element of coastal cultures and livelihoods. Due its semi-enclosed nature, low productivity, subjection to intense anthropogenic pressures, long fisheries tradition and wide geopolitical diversity, the Mediterranean and its natural resources are at risk, and the sustainable management of human activities faces considerable challenges.

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) was created to promote the development, conservation, rational management and best utilization of marine living resources in the Mediterranean and Black Sea. Among its various responsibilities, the GFCM builds capacity and provides technical assistance at the national and subregional levels, with a view to assisting in the formulation of scientific and management advice, supporting its Membership's policy commitments and promoting sustainable and responsible fisheries in the region. Over the last decade, despite existing challenges, reinforced action from its contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) and growing support from donors have allowed the GFCM to put strategies in place to reverse the negative trends observed in the region's fishing sector. Maintaining these advances require all countries to comply with an increasingly detailed set of measures and data collection requirements, as well as manage their resources effectively, securing a profitable future for fisheries and a sustainable source of jobs, food and wellbeing for coastal communities.

Established by the GFCM at its forty-fourth session in November 2021, MedSea4Fish responds to the need to further the development of capacity-building and technical assistance mechanisms already enshrined in the GFCM mandate and accelerated by the adoption of the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (GFCM 2030 Strategy)¹. In particular, MedSea4Fish reinforces technical capacity at the national level with a view to further enabling GFCM countries to enhance the management of key fisheries, meet existing and future GFCM requirements, actively participate in strategic initiatives and abide by their regional and international commitments. It mirrors the example of the BlackSea4Fish project and its successful synergies with relevant GFCM structures in place in the Black Sea, building upon the achievements of the GFCM subregional approach to fisheries management by multiplying effective tools to advance the formulation of sound scientific advice in support of decision-making. It is also aligned with the FAO Strategic Framework, which seeks to support the 2030 Agenda through transforming agrifood systems, especially focusing on the Blue Transformation of aquatic food systems, for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind.

This document guides the implementation of MedSea4Fish within the GFCM. It provides the programmatic framework and objectives, the principles, structure, means and tools designed for MedSea4Fish to reach meaningful results and effectively support the GFCM Membership in fulfilling its mandate. The main sections of the document reflect the GFCM's ambition for MedSea4Fish and are conceived as a lasting reference point; the appendices are expected to be reviewed and, as appropriate, updated regularly in order to maintain their relevance over time.

¹ The GFCM 2030 Strategy was adopted in 2021 and is aligned with the global agenda: <https://www.fao.org/gfcm/publications/brochures/gfcm2030strategy>

1. Alignment and strategic fit

MedSea4Fish is fully integrated within the framework of the GFCM, which provides the objectives, means and tools for it to operate effectively and confers overall sustainability to its purpose. It serves the basic need of the GFCM and its members to obtain reliable data and information to formulate sound scientific advice for decision making at the regional, subregional and national levels.

1.1. Context

As the regional fisheries management organization (RFMO) responsible for Mediterranean fisheries, the GFCM is best placed to execute a capacity development programme such as MedSea4Fish and to deliver quality results underpinning the efficient and sustainable management of the sector in the region. The GFCM builds upon FAO comparative advantages and strengths related to its authority and status as an intergovernmental organization, while remaining the unparalleled source of information and institutional memory on fisheries and fisheries management in the region. MedSea4Fish draws upon other past and ongoing similar projects in the context of the FAO, both within and beyond the region (e.g. the FAO regional projects), as well as on the experience accumulated since the establishment of the subregional approach, capitalizing on lessons learned.

1.1.1. Capacity building and technical assistance within the GFCM

The concept of capacity development is enshrined in the GFCM Agreement. It is considered an essential tool for the GFCM to fulfill its mandate, as it supports CPCs in meeting the requirements emanating from adopted recommendations and resolutions². Relevant instruments adopted at the GFCM level demonstrate the importance placed on capacity building and technical assistance as means for developing the sector and creating a level playing field in the region: the Framework Programme³ adopted in 2012 included a dedicated work package to foster technical cooperation and assistance, while both the mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries⁴ and the subsequent GFCM 2030 Strategy single out capacity development as a transversal target, instrumental to advancing sustainability goals. The GFCM aims for capacity development to underpin national strategies, ensuring that regional mechanisms can feed into national priorities and accelerate objectives at the national, subregional and regional levels. MedSea4Fish draws on this approach, scaling out by replicating successful mechanisms, scaling up by consolidating a permanent framework for capacity development within the GFCM and scaling deep by catalysing effective implementation at different levels.

1.1.2. GFCM subregional approach

The GFCM subregional approach to fisheries management is an integral part of the GFCM Agreement and aims to reinforce regional fisheries governance (GFCM fisheries advisory process in Figure 1) by accounting for the specificities of the GFCM area. In the context of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC), four subregional committees (SRCs), one per Mediterranean subregion, gather experts and representatives of relevant administrations to contribute in a technical capacity and supporting enhanced scientific advice. In particular, the SRCs provide and update technical elements for the management of key fisheries, address an increasing number of requests on a variety of technical aspects related to fisheries management and ensure that workplan proposals cover priorities identified at the subregional level.

² The GFCM takes binding decisions for fisheries management and conservation: <https://www.fao.org/gfcm/decisions/en/>

³ The [Framework Programme](#) was a result of the modernization of the GFCM legal and institutional framework.

⁴ The [mid-term strategy](#) aimed to revert, by 2020, the alarming trend in the status of commercially exploited stocks.

In the Black Sea, the Working Group on the Black Sea (WGBS) was reinforced with the necessary resources to efficiently execute its priority actions through the 2016 establishment of the BlackSea4Fish project⁵, which proved to be a dynamic and transparent platform facilitating advances on key management issues through targeted capacity development, promoted synergies and productive knowledge-sharing practices.

In parallel, subregional technical units were set up to effectively backstop the work of the GFCM in the field and create enabling conditions for enhanced uptake of national and subregional priorities. The GFCM now boasts subregional technical units in the western (Málaga, Spain), central (Tunis, Tunisia) and eastern (Beirut, Lebanon) Mediterranean as well as in the Adriatic Sea (Split, Croatia) and in the Black Sea (Burgas, Bulgaria).

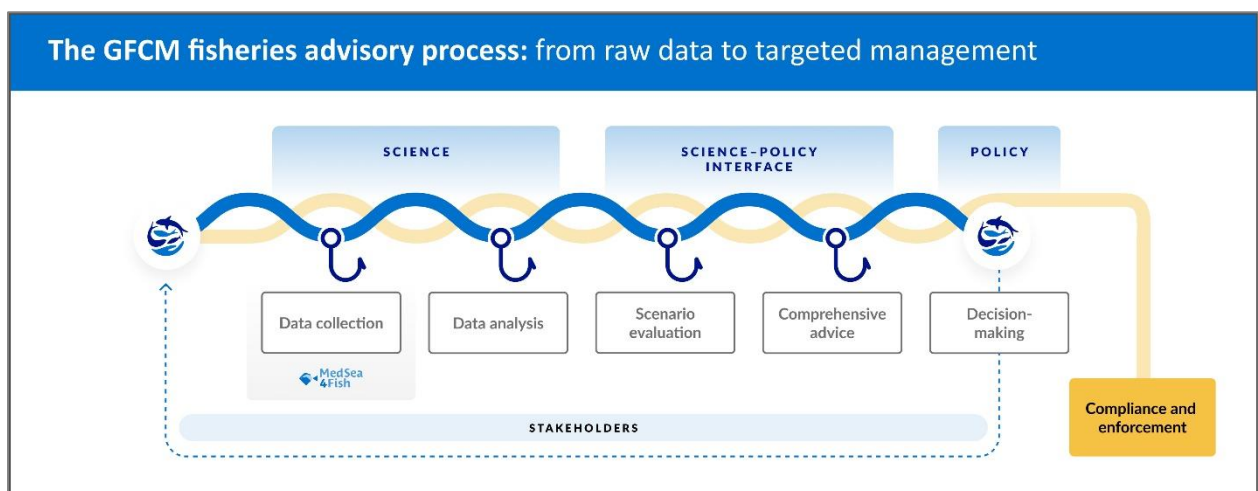


Figure 1. Process for the formulation of scientific advice in support of GFCM decision-making on fisheries

1.1.3. GFCM 2030 Strategy

The GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and Black Sea (Figure 2) was adopted in 2021 after a consultative process with CPCs and partners and offers a common vision and guiding principles to achieve sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the region, uniting efforts to deliver on national, regional and global commitments. It targets the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainability in order to build resilience in responding to global challenges and addresses regional priorities while taking into account local needs and specificities through a subregional approach.

The strategy is articulated around five distinct targets, each contributing to GFCM’s overarching vision for sustainability. Target 5 fosters capacity development through technical cooperation and efficient partnerships across the region, building upon past technical assistance achievements and successful cooperation mechanisms. In particular, output 5.1 aims to streamline capacity development at the subregional level by delivering, through the subregional technical units, on-the-ground technical and scientific support adapted to the various needs of each subregion, assisting CPCs in fulfilling their untapped potential. Actions therein aim to ensure effective and targeted capacity building, including shared cooperative research, in order to support national plans in implementing the strategy and to consolidate national expertise and scientific capacity to ensure a level playing field across the region.

⁵ The BlackSea4Fish project contributes to the sustainable management of Black Sea fisheries: <https://www.fao.org/gfcm/activities/fisheries/blacksea4fish/en/>

The GFCM 2030 Strategy provides the ultimate vision, overall framework and overarching common actions setting the foundations for the implementation of MedSea4Fish. The consultative process leading to the adoption of the strategy and its action plan ensures coherence between the interests and objectives of countries at the national, subregional and regional levels and allows for the combination of a top-down prioritization and bottom-up identification of activities suited to countries' needs in order to achieve agreed objectives.



Figure 2. The GFCM 2030 Strategy

2. Objective, structure and expected results

2.1. Objective

MedSea4Fish is a capacity development programme featuring four subregional projects, with a main goal of supporting Mediterranean riparian countries and relevant stakeholders in fulfilling their fisheries sustainability objectives at the national, subregional and regional scales.

MedSea4Fish intends to bridge regional gaps by assisting countries in addressing both national priorities and GFCM requirements related to the scientific, economic, environmental and social aspects of fisheries. It provides a framework for technical assistance and capacity building towards levelling the playing field in the Mediterranean on the basis of common methodologies, sharing experiences and ensuring that information is collected and analysed at relevant scales, including for shared resources and fisheries. In the GFCM context, MedSea4Fish enhances countries' capacities to address fisheries sustainability, including by providing inputs to the work of the SAC, its subregional committees and expert groups.

In fulfilling its main objectives, MedSea4Fish liaises with all relevant partners, projects, programmes and initiatives in the Mediterranean region with a view to promoting synergies, avoiding redundancies and creating opportunities.

2.2. Principles

The principles defining MedSea4Fish are rooted in the GFCM mandate and framed by instruments such as the GFCM 2030 Strategy, the Regional Plan of Action for Small-scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (RPOA-SSF)⁶, the MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration and other relevant tools, including the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF)⁷.

2.2.1. Key features

MedSea4Fish promotes an integrated and holistic approach, addressing both regular and strategic activities, revolving around three components that address the pillars of capacity development at the national level.

In implementing its workplan and objectives, MedSea4Fish relies as much on a bottom-up approach, whereby national priorities feed into discussions at the subregional and regional levels, as it does on a top-down approach, whereby GFCM binding decisions in place and the GFCM 2030 Strategy provide guidance on priorities to be addressed at the different levels. This structure allows for a cohesive mechanism interlinking the national, subregional and regional levels so that actions are implemented at the relevant scales, depending on the needs and objectives of the countries and stakeholders involved. For this reason, MedSea4Fish is designed as an umbrella programme with one project per subregion, capitalizing on the benefits of the GFCM subregional approach and building upon systems already in place, such as the network of subregional technical units and the SAC subregional committees, among others.

From an operational point of view, a biennial planning of activities is foreseen in order to facilitate implementation, while progress toward achieving agreed targets is analysed annually through different reporting mechanisms. MedSea4Fish is a multi-donor, multi-partner initiative, allowing for the multiplication of opportunities and synergies. In fact, the variety of activities it covers enables different donors to subsidize simultaneously and different partners to collaborate and contribute across the board.

MedSea4Fish is uniquely placed to assist GFCM countries and relevant stakeholders on all sides of the Mediterranean basin, maximizing technical cooperation. Although it is expected to focus additional efforts on countries where capacity development needs are larger, it also pays special attention to harmonizing approaches and joint analyses across all countries, ensuring a level playing field in fisheries monitoring, expertise and implementation capacities. In this context, MedSea4Fish complements other relevant existing support mechanisms in the region, such as the EU fisheries Data Collection Framework, ensuring complementarity, promoting the organization of joint expert groups and enabling, when relevant, the transfer of technology and expertise.

2.2.2. Methodologies

The implementation of MedSea4Fish's activities and vision relies on the application of approaches that are standardized across the region, in order to facilitate production of results that are comparable and effectively underpin regional analyses and scientific advice.

The following methodologies for standardized data collection developed by the FAO/GFCM will be used, among others:

⁶ The [RPOA-SSF](#) was signed as a Ministerial Declaration by high-level representatives from 18 Mediterranean and Black Sea countries, as well as the European Union, on 26 September 2018.

⁷ The [DCRF](#) is the main instrument to collect information requested by the GFCM to inform fisheries management.

- **Carpentieri, P., Bonanno, A. & Scarcella, G.** 2020. *Technical guidelines for scientific surveys in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea*. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Papers No. 641. Rome. FAO.
- **Carpentieri, P. & Gonzalvo, J.** 2022. *Dolphin depredation in Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries – Methodology for data collection*. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No. 688. Rome, FAO
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- **Grati, F., Carlson, A., Carpentieri, P. & Cerri, J.** 2021. *Handbook for data collection on recreational fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea*. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No 669. Rome, FAO
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- **MEDIAS.** 2019. *Common protocol for the MEDiterranean International Acoustic Survey (MEDIAS)*. Athens, Greece, April 2019. (available at <http://www.medias-project.eu/medias/website/handbooks-menu.html>).
- **MEDITS.** 2017. *International bottom trawl survey in the Mediterranean. Medits instruction manual*. Version 9. 2017. MEDITS Working Group.
- **Pinello, D., Gee, J. & Dimech, M.** 2017. *Handbook for fisheries socio-economic sample survey – principles and practice*. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No. 613. Rome, FAO.

2.2.3. Stakeholders

The GFCM, as part of FAO, is committed to ensuring the meaningful, effective and informed participation of stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of its programs and projects. MedSea4Fish cooperates across the extensive GFCM network, which includes government officials, research institutes and relevant organizations.

The main direct beneficiaries along the different project components are scientists and experts, fishers and fish workers and representatives of the national authorities responsible for fisheries (national administration), and the various institutions they represent.

Scientists and experts, mostly belonging to national institutes for fisheries research or working in connection with national administration, are at the root of the GFCM advisory process, as they contribute to establishing the knowledge base upon which scientific advice and technical elements are formulated. Ensuring their needs are met, including in terms of data, expertise and facilities, is crucial to enhance the scientific and technical basis for sound management.

Fishers and fish workers, particularly in small-scale fisheries, which account for around 80 percent of the fleet in the Mediterranean, play a central role in supporting the livelihoods of coastal communities, driving local economies, as well as safeguarding food security and regional traditions. It is crucial to further develop their capacities and skills and to enable exchanges of experiences and their participation in decisions that affect them, thus multiplying fishers' capacities to innovate and their ability to meet minimum requirements for data collection, traceability, monitoring and control. Education, training and technical and financial support are all required to support small-scale fishing

communities in diversifying their activities, increasing their incomes and improving their prospects, particularly for women and young people.

Representatives of the national administration play a central role in designing GFCM policies and objectives as well as channeling them at the national level, guaranteeing correspondence between national plans and regional commitments, coordinating the participation of their respective countries in GFCM processes and ensuring that necessary actions are undertaken to collect, analyse and submit relevant data and information in the appropriate fora. Enabling conditions at this level are key and need to be supported, including by providing the specific means and tools to enhance national fisheries management capacities, plan national contributions and timely deliveries in line with requirements, involving relevant participants at the national level.

In addition, stakeholders other than the ministries and national institutes with mandates related to fisheries research can be involved, as appropriate, in the implementation of project activities or benefit from participation in trainings or awareness-raising initiatives. These include other research institutions and agricultural universities, public and private institutes, national committees, unions and cooperatives, professional associations, civil society organizations, the private sector and relevant national partners, as well as ship owners and the fishing industry. It is not envisaged that any group would be adversely affected by the programme. At the national level, with a view to promoting holistic and effective stakeholder engagement, the programme is expected to interact with existing multisectoral coordination groups or platforms, and/or facilitate their creation, in order to promote synergies amongst stakeholders.

2.2.4. Partnerships

In order to enhance its comparative advantage and effectively achieve results, MedSea4Fish will benefit from the involvement of relevant partner organizations, as appropriate, in the implementation of select activities, building upon the current GFCM network of partners. Partnerships allow for capitalizing on expertise and resources, fostering synergies, avoiding duplications and maximizing the strategic and operational advantages each organization can bring toward both implementing actions on the ground and sharing and developing knowledge and best practices across the region. Cooperation may take numerous forms, including lending expertise, co-organizing and co-sponsoring meetings and workshops, disseminating knowledge, developing documents and technical papers, supporting trainings or contributing to field work.

Past collaboration in this respect has been consistently strong. Several partnerships in place are expected to contribute to the implementation of the MedSea4Fish work plan: the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS), the International Centre for Advanced Agronomic Mediterranean Studies (CIHEAM) International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) International Union for Conservation of Nature – Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation (IUCN-Med), the Mediterranean Advisory Council (MEDAC), the Network of Marine Protected Area Managers in the Mediterranean (MedPAN), OceanCare, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the United Nations Environment Programme – Mediterranean Action Plan for the Barcelona Convention (UNEP-MAP) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). Other partners are also expected to be actively involved, namely BirdLife Europe and Central Asia, the Low Impact Fishers of Europe Platform (LIFE), the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and Oceana. MedSea4Fish leverages transnational cooperation already established in the context of specific platforms or initiatives, including the Friends of Small-Scale Fisheries platform⁸, or networks

⁸ The [Friends of SSF](#) is a regional network of actors sharing common interests and objectives for the sector.

of partners at the national and regional levels created in contexts such as the Medbycatch project⁹ or the GFCM Forum on Fisheries Science¹⁰.

2.3. Components

MedSea4Fish defines three components (Figure 3) directly aimed at operationalizing the links between systematic, tailored, cohesive capacity-building interventions, the formulation of sound scientific advice in support of decision-making and the implementation of actions reinforcing fishers and institutions. One component pilots field work to collect a wide array of data on fisheries and ecosystems; another component tackles the human dimension of sustainability by providing stakeholders with training and capacity-building opportunities; a third component implements lasting change through structural interventions. Across the three components, some actions meet basic monitoring needs of the GFCM that are planned to be regularly carried out in order to assist countries in the collection and transmission of fisheries-related information, whereas others are more strategic in nature.



Figure 3. MedSea4Fish components

Descriptions of the three MedSea4Fish components are found below, including a general list of the types of activities expected to be carried out therein. Other activities may be foreseen within any of the three components, in coordination with concerned countries, as national priorities, as well as MedSea4Fish and its projects, evolve.

⁹ The [Medbycatch project](#) monitored and mitigated incidental catches of vulnerable species in the Mediterranean.

¹⁰ The [Fish Forum](#) is an answer to the need for reinforcement of scientific knowledge in the region.

2.3.1. Component 1: Monitoring of fisheries and ecosystems



The GFCM is the reference organization for all information related to fisheries and their interactions with ecosystems in the Mediterranean and Black Sea. This information is received via responses to official data calls and ad-hoc requests, as well as through dedicated field actions and research programmes.

Component 1 underpins the formulation of comprehensive scientific advice on the status of fisheries, including economic and social aspects, and on the health of the marine environment. It does so by supporting the regular collection of relevant data on marine living resources and ecosystems as well as fisheries activities. This process is achieved through a variety of means and activities, mostly carried out at the national level and then scaled up to contribute to subregional technical discussions and to meet regional management and conservation objectives, as follows:

- basic collection of fleet-related data (e.g. capacity, effort, catches, etc.);
- biological sampling and laboratory analysis for main commercial species (e.g. length, age, sex, weight, maturity);
- harmonized scientific surveys-at-sea, novel parallel sequencing technologies (i.e. DNA metabarcoding) and studies on spatial population structure;
- research programmes for select species and/or fisheries;
- socioeconomic surveys and studies;
- stock assessments for main commercial species and species of national interest, including data preparation and model diagnoses:
- pilot studies for the implementation of new technologies and the testing of technical measures, including both scientific pilot studies and commercial ones;
- bycatch and depredation monitoring and mitigation programmes;
- other relevant programmes, including monitoring of non-indigenous species and related socio-economic impacts, marine pollution, climate change and climate-related pressures on fisheries and the marine environment; and
- ad-hoc data collection.

Activities within this component shall ensure the collection of comprehensive scientific and technical data and information addressing all main fishing sectors, including those currently limited by fragmentary information such as recreational and small-scale fisheries, and they shall address gaps such as, *inter alia*, a detailed socioeconomic characterization along the value chain, the determination of the origin of catches for long-distance fleets and the mapping of fishing activities in relation to the presence of vulnerable or sensitive habitats and species.



2.3.2. Component 2: Training and capacity building

Making new technologies available to enhance fishing products along the value chain, reduce costs and environmental impacts, meet evolving demands from the market, as well as respond to the appearance of new commercial species requires dedicated training, expertise exchange and capacity-building activities for fishers, fish workers and other relevant stakeholders. In parallel, the increasing demand for quality scientific advice and the availability of new tools for monitoring fishing activities

also require intense efforts toward training and expertise exchange for scientists and across research institutes and scientific organizations. Moreover, implementing efficient management measures, including through integrated or complex management plans, calls for dedicated training addressed toward representatives of the administration.

Component 2 promotes the participation and engagement of stakeholders in relevant GFCM processes and activities and enhances, at the national and subregional levels, the expertise of fishers, fish workers, scientists and representatives of the administration through:

- courses and ad-hoc training activities;
- training of trainers;
- study tours and exchanging experiences and best practices;
- participation in the SSF Forum and relevant stakeholder platforms; and
- participation in technical working groups, meetings, initiatives and scientific events organized by the GFCM

Activities within this component shall be inclusive, paying particular attention to the participation of women and younger generations, as well as maximizing knowledge transfer, including by translating knowledge products and training materials into relevant languages.



2.3.3. Component 3: Infrastructure

Improved infrastructure can play an important role in an efficient and sustainable fisheries sector, as it enhances the provision of services and inputs required, equips research institutions and/or relevant stakeholders with necessary materials, means and tools, increases the effectiveness of the value chain and establishes a solid foundation for maximized investments in the future.

Component 3 supports the upgrade, expansion or new construction of relevant sites and provides the technology and tools to boost national facilities and equipment, including structural upgrades towards more cost-efficient, ecologically safe and less polluting fleets and fisheries services, through:

- facilities enhancement and new constructions;
- procurement of equipment and goods; and
- technology and innovation.

Activities within this component shall take due account of issues such as sustainability, maintenance and medium- to long-term expected outcomes and shall ensure the suitability of the proposed actions, including with support from the other two components.

MedSea4Fish's three components are tightly interconnected, for the successful achievement of MedSea4Fish objectives in terms of sustainable fisheries management depends equally on the availability and quality of data and expertise involved in the production of advice and its subsequent use in decision making, on the ability of fishers and fishing communities to address existing challenges, and on the underlying means and infrastructure available to effectively carry out related activities.

The MedSea4Fish structure provides the possibility to exploit cross-sectoral opportunities or design activities that cut across the three components, including by establishing technical cooperation

between institutes on specific topics, exchanging best practices or creating hubs to share expertise and facilities.

2.4. Key expected outcomes

The MedSea4Fish components are designed to address the different needs and priorities of effective resource monitoring and the implementation of activities towards the sustainability of fisheries from three complementary angles, from which the following outcomes are expected:

- Data collection, analysis and monitoring are enhanced and directly contribute to the formulation of advice on the scientific, economic, environmental and social aspects of fisheries.
- Effective learning is maximized, and good practices are captured and shared.
- Infrastructure investments are multiplied to intensify new technology and innovation at the national level.

These results are aligned with the threefold MedSea4Fish objective of capacity building: addressing monitoring needs, enhancing skills and advancing on structural priorities. In order to achieve these outcomes, systems in place must be reinforced to better tackle challenges and meet requirements at different levels, thus ensuring a more adequate alignment between national and subregional priorities and capacity development interventions, eventually bridging gaps at the regional level.

At the national level, MedSea4Fish implements technical activities with the aim of operationalizing the links between national needs and transnational commitments in terms of the data and information needed for scientific advice and for effective fisheries management and sustainable and profitable fishing activities.

At the subregional level, MedSea4Fish gathers data and information, best practices and instruments, scaling up national efforts that contribute to the formulation of technical elements for management, best practices and guidance towards sustainability aligned with subregional specificities.

At the regional level, it promotes policy dialogue and the direct contributions of countries and stakeholders to the decision-making process of the GFCM. Ultimately, MedSea4Fish is to be considered a lasting framework to underpin the GFCM mandate and reach the objectives of the GFCM 2030 Strategy.

3. Management and implementation arrangements

The implementation and management arrangements of MedSea4Fish, including technical and management oversight and coordination mechanisms, rely on the active participation of the relevant bodies in charge of promoting capacity development at the national level as well as on the timely support of existing structures within the GFCM and the capacity to attract the necessary funds to support programme activities.

3.1. Functioning

3.1.1. Subregional projects

MedSea4Fish operates through four subregional projects aligned with the respective priorities of the four Mediterranean subregions, accounting for subregional characteristics that call for tailored actions to make them more effective and capitalizing on mechanisms already established in the context of the

GFCM subregional approach. In particular, each project counts on the support provided by its respective subregional technical unit (Figure 4), being guided by and reporting to the subregional committee(s), as well as any other relevant subregional fora in place.



Figure 4. GFCM subregions and subregional technical units

MedSea4Fish serves:

- Algeria, EU-France, EU-Italy, Monaco, Morocco and EU-Spain in the western Mediterranean;
- EU-Italy, Libya, EU-Malta and Tunisia in the central Mediterranean;
- EU-Cyprus, Egypt, EU-Greece, Israel, EU-Italy, Lebanon, Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye in the eastern Mediterranean; and
- Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, EU-Croatia, EU-Italy, Montenegro and EU-Slovenia in the Adriatic Sea.

In addition, the European Commission (DG MARE) also participates in the programme.

MedSea4Fish activities are primarily planned and implemented at the national level or within and across multiple countries depending on their nature, and related outputs are reviewed both at the subregional and regional levels, as appropriate.

3.1.2. Institutional coordination

Steering Committee

A steering committee is set up to provide guidance and oversight and to coordinate the activities of the four MedSea4Fish projects, facilitating planning, implementation, monitoring, reviews and reporting in alignment with national priorities as well as SRC and SAC needs and with the GFCM 2030 Strategy. The steering committee is composed of MedSea4Fish national focal points from participating countries, representatives from the European Commission (DG MARE), relevant observers, the MedSea4Fish coordinator and the GFCM Secretariat. It meets regularly, in person or online, before the start of each biennium and/or is called on an ad-hoc basis in case of specific needs. It serves as a platform for the joint preparation of subregional work and for its evaluation and revision at the regional level but also provides for subregional sessions to address specific needs and arrive at tailor-made solutions.

The main responsibilities of the steering committee are to follow up on MedSea4Fish's progress and to assess the achievement of results in line with its objectives, to oversee relevant collaborations and

the engagement of stakeholders and to endorse the national plans and final reports of work carried out.

Specific functions of the steering committee are provided in Appendix 2.

MedSea4Fish Coordinator

In order to guarantee a coordinated, smooth, timely and successful implementation of MedSea4Fish and its four subregional projects, a full-time international coordinator is appointed, following a competitive selection process governed by FAO rules and regulations. S/he acts as reference for MedSea4Fish and represents it in relevant fora.

The main responsibilities of the coordinator are to oversee and manage the implementation of MedSea4Fish activities at the national and subregional levels, to assist with the preparation of national plans and final reports and to liaise with national focal points, partners and relevant stakeholders.

The terms of reference of the MedSea4Fish coordinator are detailed in Appendix 2.

GFCM subregional technical units

Dedicated teams based out of the GFCM subregional technical units provide support to the coordinator and to the overall implementation of MedSea4Fish activities, in coordination with relevant FAO country offices and under the oversight of the Secretariat based at GFCM headquarters.

The role of the subregional technical units in relation to MedSea4Fish is described in Appendix 2.

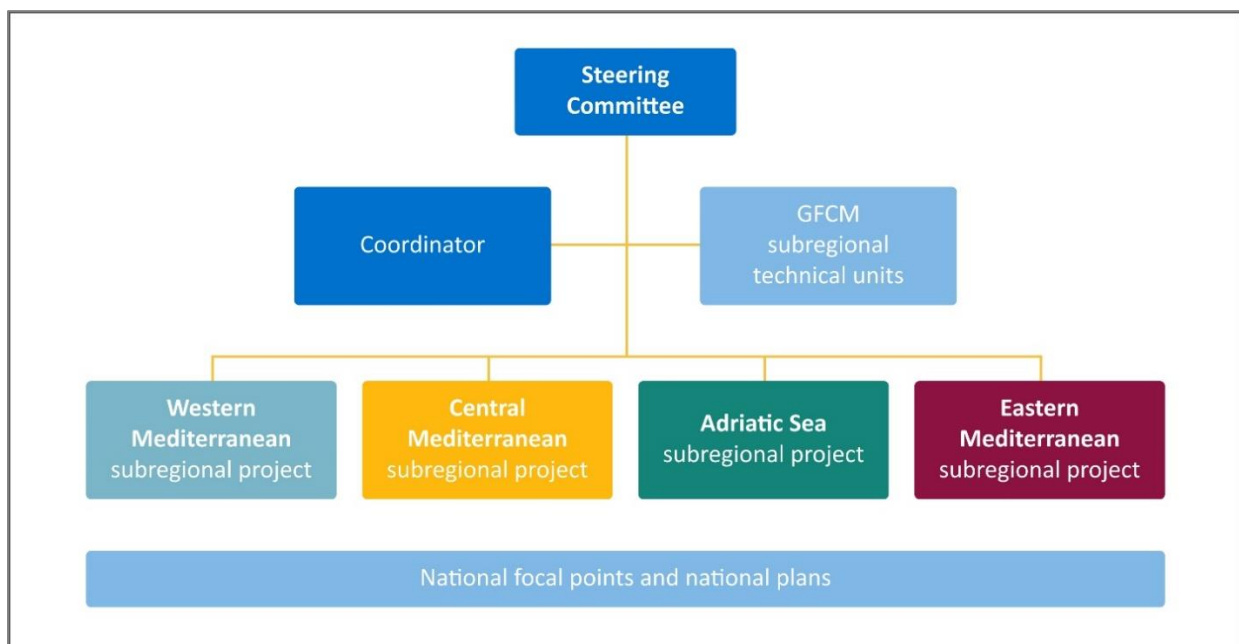


Figure 5. MedSea4Fish organigramme

3.2. Organizational arrangements

GFCM CPCs and relevant observers take part in MedSea4Fish voluntarily and officially renew their willingness to receive MedSea4Fish support at every new biennium with the presentation of national plans. CPCs can also turn to MedSea4Fish following the advice of the GFCM Compliance Committee in

relation to situations of non-compliance with GFCM requirements that can be solved through capacity building or targeted technical assistance.

3.2.1. National inputs

National focal points

To ensure national ownership and sustainability of project results as well as an effective flow of communication over the course of implementation, a MedSea4Fish national focal point is nominated. The main responsibilities of the national focal point are to prepare national plans in coordination with government officials, facilitate the implementation of MedSea4Fish activities at the national level and report on activities.

The terms of reference for the national focal points and the list of nominated national focal points are available in Appendices 2 and 4, respectively. The identification of a MedSea4Fish national focal point does not preclude the nomination of other national component operators to assist in the implementation of specific activities within the project (e.g. for surveys-at-sea, discards monitoring programmes, etc.).

National plans

To guarantee alignment with national priorities while fulfilling GFCM requirements, a set of coordinated activities per country are designed via a national plan covering two years of activities, which are prepared by the national focal points and submitted in September/October so that they can be revised, cleared and operationalized before the start of a new biennium.

The MedSea4Fish national plan template is available in Appendix 5.

3.2.2. Project inputs and budget

The GFCM Secretariat, mainly through selected national and international professional and support staff (including consultants, temporary administrative support staff, interns, etc.) based at each of the four subregional technical units in the Mediterranean, oversees implementation jointly with the MedSea4Fish coordinator.

Building on previous experiences like the Framework Programme, MedSea4Fish operates on the basis of co-financing mechanisms and in-kind contributions. While the GFCM autonomous budget ensures a minimum baseline of resources are allocated for basic technical assistance for CPCs, extra-budgetary funds will provide the core financial source for MedSea4Fish implementation. The flexible nature of the programme allows for multiple types of donors to provide voluntary contributions simultaneously, at different scales and timeframes, and to cover various different activities. Co-financing from the side of the beneficiary countries represents an important opportunity to capitalize on existing national resources, maximizing results and ensuring their longevity. In-kind contributions, either through the lending of expertise or facilities from the part of countries, partners or other stakeholders, also constitute a key feature of MedSea4Fish operations.

The budget necessary for MedSea4Fish to fulfil its objectives in line with the expected deliverables included in its results matrix (available in Appendix 1) is estimated at a minimum of around EUR 10 million per biennium. The overall amount available is expected to be divided according to the activities included in the approved national workplans, ensuring a fair, transparent and logical balance between components and subregional projects, in particular for structural interventions under component 3, and still allowing each country to equally benefit from the support of MedSea4Fish.

Funding is expected to cover:

- national experts, trainers and technical consultants, local assistance, etc.;
- travel and meeting costs associated with technical meetings, trainings, and capacity-building activities, as appropriate;
- procurement of equipment, material, goods and services at field level;
- costs of interpretation and translation into the languages of the region, as relevant;
- contracts to support the smooth execution of each project's meetings and activities, including information technology; and
- administrative costs.

The implementation of MedSea4Fish activities is governed by the FAO regulations, financial guidelines and administrative rules for procurement of goods, works and services, contracts and travel. The instruments that are most commonly used in these contexts are letters of agreement (LoAs), international tenders and contracts, direct procurement, field budget authorizations, personal services agreements and consultancies, travel authorizations and implementation protocols.

3.3. Implementation arrangements

3.3.1. Implementation calendar

MedSea4Fish foresees a January–December timeline for the implementation of activities, with the reporting and planning phases, including the meeting of the steering committee, concentrated within the last quarter of each year.

Generally, some activities under component 1 are expected to collect data throughout the whole year (e.g. biological sampling, bycatch monitoring programmes, etc.), while others are more focused or seasonal (e.g. socioeconomic data collection or surveys-at-sea). Under component 2, trainings or stakeholder workshops, depending on their target audience, will try to capitalize on periods during which beneficiaries are not involved in other conflicting activities, such as peak seasons for small-scale fishers or survey seasons for scientific experts. Infrastructure interventions under component 3 will be planned on an ad hoc basis and are often expected to require a long preparation phase, as they entail tenders, competitive bids and procurement actions.

3.3.2. Knowledge management

MedSea4Fish is conceived to support countries in collecting relevant data and information, to increase national capacity in support of the formulation of scientific advice towards sustainable fisheries, to ensure countries can meet relevant GFCM requirements in terms of type, quantity and quality of data and to exchange best practices among fishers, fish workers, experts and government officials.

The data and information collected at the national level through MedSea4Fish is owned by the country concerned. In line with relevant recommendations and resolutions, or other decisions in place, the collected data is officially submitted to the GFCM in response to data calls or specific requests of various nature, through the DCRF online platform, ad-hoc databases or other means and tools, as appropriate. Other collected information is expected to serve to create joint databases and to organize subregional/regional activities and/or prepare joint products addressing objectives of common interest, as well as to facilitate exchanges of technology and know-how between participating countries, organizations and stakeholders.

3.3.3. Communication

Communication and knowledge sharing is an integral part of MedSea4Fish's implementation arrangements. Good practices, lessons learned and knowledge gained will be organized and documented as guidelines, manuals, toolkits, reports, and training materials to allow for their institutionalization and to ensure their accessibility to stakeholders and partners.

MedSea4Fish is included in GFCM's communication and visibility plan, which is regularly updated and articulated around three phases, namely: i. develop a strong brand and identity; ii. communicate on activities; iii. communicate on impacts.

In the context of MedSea4Fish, specific awareness campaigns and dissemination materials in relevant languages will be developed to accompany the implementation of select activities or to follow up on related conclusions and recommendations emanating from stakeholders.

A public webpage is set up within the GFCM website to contain all relevant information on Medsea4Fish, including upcoming activities, knowledge products and links to relevant news stories. A password-protected MedSea4Fish SharePoint page is also created to host relevant materials and documentation and to be used as an exchange platform.

4. Monitoring, performance assessment and reporting

MedSea4Fish follows a results-based monitoring and reporting approach to ensure that its operations and activities contribute to achieving desired results (main goals, objectives and expected outcomes). A set of integrated and dynamic tools are used for monitoring, performance assessment and reporting and are regularly reviewed and adjusted, if necessary, to enable MedSea4Fish to deliver agreed results even in the face of developing challenges and evolving environments and/or needs.

4.1. Monitoring of results

MedSea4Fish is monitored by continual periodic reviews of its progress toward planned results, which help to assess its performance and to learn and adapt as appropriate to changing needs in order to achieve agreed results.

The results matrix – available in Appendix 1 – describes the entire chain of inputs, activities, outcomes, objectives and strategic goals, providing an effective and transparent link between means and ends. It identifies indicators, their targets and their respective means of verification; causality is defined through the definition of assumptions that may influence success and failure. Revisions of the baseline and targets (as well as the other elements, if deemed necessary) are foreseen every four years to maintain the relevance of the results matrix as a monitoring tool.

MedSea4Fish monitoring arrangements are also integrated into the GFCM institutional setting through various expert groups of a scientific nature reporting to the SAC, which validates the scientific advice and submits it to the GFCM for the adoption of potential measures based thereon. The SAC will advise accordingly whether additional work is required or the advice is solid enough to be submitted to the GFCM to support the decision-making process. In turn, MedSea4Fish, through its steering committee, revises its workplan, adapting and adjusting its targets, ensuring that activities are carried out and delivered in a way that effectively supports the work of the SAC.

4.2. Risk management

The risk management plan – available in Appendix 3 – identifies and manages risks associated with the achievement of MedSea4Fish objectives. The main associated risks are linked to the involvement of national focal points and other stakeholders, potential changes within the Organization, at the international or at the country level.

4.3. Reporting mechanisms

Reporting is expected to occur at regular intervals, overseen by the MedSea4Fish coordinator, with the support of the GFCM Secretariat based out of the subregional technical units and in coordination with the national focal points. Reporting is expected to be useful both at the national level, to analyse the effectiveness of MedSea4Fish in responding to national priorities and in improving countries' capacities to participate and engage in GFCM processes, as well as at the GFCM level, to analyse the contribution of the MedSea4Fish projects to underpinning strengthened scientific advice and achieving GFCM goals.

MedSea4Fish's work is reviewed within the GFCM and relevant subsidiary bodies, as follows:

- ◆ The outcomes of activities undertaken by MedSea4Fish at the national and subregional levels are presented during the meetings of the SAC subregional committees, as appropriate;
- ◆ An update on MedSea4Fish implementation is also provided yearly to the SAC, highlighting its activities at both the subregional and regional levels and presenting future plans;
- ◆ After each biennium, a brochure on MedSea4Fish achievements at the national, subregional and regional levels is produced and put at the disposal of the Commission.

Additional reporting mechanisms are foreseen within FAO instruments and tools used for project implementation (such as reports required to release payments in the context of LoAs or contracts), mainly under the responsibility of the participating countries, as well as within donor agreements to report on grant advances and the use of funds, mainly under the responsibility of the GFCM Secretariat.

Results matrix

Results	Targets ¹	Indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
GOAL: Sustainability of fisheries improved in the Mediterranean	New decisions (recommendations or resolutions) adopted yearly by the GFCM are based on enhanced SAC advice formulated with the support of MedSea4Fish.	Number of pieces of advice emanating from priority activities undertaken through MedSea4Fish Number of new decisions adopted based on updated/enhanced SAC advice	MedSea4Fish achievements brochure; reports of the SAC and GFCM	CPCs do not face unexpected obstacles, such as political instability, and capacity building needs are correctly identified and able to be addressed efficiently. CPCs actively participate in MedSea4Fish implementation.
	More than 30% of data on fishing activities submitted in line with GFCM requirements improve in terms of quantity and quality (timeliness, completeness, conformity, stability, consistency).	Number of datasets submitted, following the support provided by MedSea4Fish, that fully meet at least two quality indicators	Data quality assessments and dashboards	CPCs comply with the obligation to submit data and information through the DCRF online platform.
	New GFCM data requirements are adopted or recommendations in place are updated to include data variables better targeted to assist with management measures.	Number of DCRF subtasks and/or tasks modified to foresee the submission of better targeted data	Updated DCRF manual	CPCs commit to upscale the scientific advice formulated in the context of MedSea4Fish and adopt binding decisions regarding data and information.

¹ Targets are currently set for 2026 and revised as appropriate every four years.

Results	Targets ¹	Indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
OBJECTIVE: The provision of technical assistance and capacity-building activities is coordinated at the national, subregional and regional levels, in support of sound fisheries management	MedSea4Fish is recognized as a successful programme and at least two countries per subregion rely on it to further national priorities and meet regional objectives.	Number of countries presenting national plans and directly benefiting from MedSea4Fish	National plans, MedSea4Fish reports and presentations to SAC	National focal points are nominated and national plans are drawn up.
	MedSea4Fish multiplies the types and frequency of key capacity-development initiatives and attracts increasing investments.	Number of MedSea4Fish awareness materials and/or communication products developed Percentage increase in overall funding and/or number of donors (including in-kind)	Awareness materials, MedSea4Fish achievements brochure	There is enough relevant information to produce awareness/communication material. Prospective donors see the added value of the programme.
EXPECTED OUTCOME – COMPONENT 1: Data collection and monitoring is enhanced and directly contributes to the formulation of advice on the scientific, economic, environmental and social aspects of fisheries.	Data collection processes, mechanisms and systems in place at the national level are efficient, sustainable and fit their purpose.	Number of assessments of data collection systems undertaken against national and regional needs Number of countries where data collection systems have been upgraded through MedSea4Fish	National plans, assessment reports	CPCs facilitate the assessment of national data collection processes, mechanisms and systems in place, as well as related interventions.
	All GFCM priority species are subject to a specific action within MedSea4Fish to support the formulation of technical advice.	Percentage of main commercial species by subregion for which regular or specific data collection actions are carried out at the national and subregional levels Number of data preparation and benchmark assessment meetings organized per year	Stock assessment forms, meeting reports	Data collection in the field is feasible; CPCs comply with the obligation to submit the information for priority species required to perform stock assessments; CPCs are willing to collaborate towards the implementation of the programme.

Results	Targets ¹	Indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
	At least one country per subregion undertakes regular monitoring by implementing bycatch programmes (discards and/or incidental catch of vulnerable species), socio-economic surveys and scientific surveys-at-sea (demersal and/or pelagic) annually or biennially, as appropriate.	Number of bycatch monitoring programmes implemented per subregion Number of surveys-at-sea implemented per subregion Number of socio-economic surveys implemented per subregion	National plans, MedSea4Fish reports and presentations to the SAC	Data collection in the field is feasible and the organization of different monitoring activities is facilitated; National focal points facilitate the organization of monitoring activities; procurement actions are facilitated within the Organization; relevant observers are available and trained.
	Effective selectivity and/or mitigation measures have been identified and tested and related information is made available to stakeholders and decision-makers.	Number of selectivity pilot studies and/or mitigation trials conducted	National plans, MedSea4Fish reports and presentations to the SAC	National focal points facilitate the organization of pilot studies and the mitigation trials; procurement actions are facilitated within the Organization.
EXPECTED OUTCOME – COMPONENT 2 Effective learning is maximized, good practices are enshrined and shared.	Training and capacity building is enhanced at the national, subregional and regional levels, and requests multiply.	Number of trainings and capacity-building activities delivered on GFCM data requirements and the DCRF online platform Number of trainings and capacity-building activities delivered on stock assessment Number of exchanges of experiences or collaborations between institutes	National plans, MedSea4Fish reports and presentations to the SAC, training agendas	National focal points help to identify exact needs in terms of training; Targeted beneficiaries are willing to participate in capacity-building activities; Institutes are willing to take part in relevant initiatives and/or share expertise.
	At least 20% more fishers and/or fish workers are reached and involved in relevant initiatives, enabling their participation in the decision-making process.	Number of exchanges of experience or collaborations between fishers and stakeholders, including through the SSF Forum, organized yearly	Relevant news stories, MedSea4Fish reports, SSF Forum programme	Stakeholders agree to participate in and engage, including within the context of the SSF Forum initiative.

Results	Targets ¹	Indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
	Regional analyses and comparisons of results between subregions are facilitated as relevant data across the Mediterranean is collected in line with GFCM methodologies.	Number of trainings delivered or materials developed on GFCM data analysis methodologies Number of joint data analysis meetings carried out	Training agendas or dissemination materials, MedSea4Fish reports	Targeted beneficiaries are willing to participate in capacity-building activities; there is enough relevant information to produce material. CPCs provide data in advance of the meeting.
	Science (i.e. data quality), compliance (i.e. enforcement of conservation measures) and appropriate safe handling and release procedures are improved as at least 20% more fishers, onboard observers or other relevant actors are able to participate in bycatch monitoring or mitigation actions	Number of trainings and capacity-building activities delivered on vulnerable species identification and handling	Training agendas	Targeted beneficiaries are willing to participate in capacity-building activities; there is enough relevant information to produce materials.
EXPECTED OUTCOME – COMPONENT 3 Infrastructure investments multiply to intensify new technologies and innovation.	National fisheries sectors and/or relevant research or institutional fisheries organizations become more efficient and dynamic as at least one country per subregion upgrades its infrastructure through MedSea4Fish.	Percentage of national infrastructure upgraded in select countries Number of pieces of equipment and goods provided by subregion	National plans, MedSea4Fish reports and presentations to the SAC, technical specifications of new equipment or goods	Needs for infrastructure upgrades exist, are identified and are manageable; equipment or goods identified are eligible for funding; procurement actions are facilitated within the Organization.
	The GFCM consolidates its role as the reference organization in the Mediterranean for data and knowledge on fishing activities.	Number of databases developed and/or enhanced	Features of the database(s)	IT rules within the Organization allow for the development/upgrade of database(s).

Terms of reference

The **steering committee** coordinates, facilitates and guarantees the implementation of the activities of MedSea4Fish and its four subregional projects. Functions include to:

- a) review outcomes of the planning phase and kick-off new biennium;
- b) facilitate the implementation of MedSea4Fish activities by ensuring, as appropriate, cross-sectoral collaboration between subregional projects and/or advising on stakeholder engagement and relevant partnerships;
- c) follow up on MedSea4Fish's progress and assess achievements of results against its objectives (using the results matrix), including strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats;
- d) weigh in on ad-hoc major issues that may arise and affect the planning or implementation of activities;
- e) analyze reports and evaluate recommendations and new needs, as relevant;
- f) report, through the coordinator, on MedSea4Fish workplans and achievements in relevant fora, both within and outside the GFCM context;
- g) monitor MedSea4Fish funds and discuss allocations;
- h) revise, every four years, the baseline and targets of the MedSea4Fish results matrix, taking into account requests from the GFCM and relevant subsidiary bodies, as well as updates to the GFCM 2030 Strategy Action Plan;
- i) agree on visibility, dissemination and communication actions to promote MedSea4Fish's work, and be responsible for the MedSea4Fish guiding document and related updates; and
- j) maintain the list of MedSea4Fish national focal points.

The **MedSea4Fish Coordinator** provides direct support for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project activities and the day-to-day management of the projects. In particular, s/he:

- a) acts as reference person for MedSea4Fish vis-à-vis national focal points, relevant national authorities, relevant partners, stakeholders and observers, as well as the GFCM as a whole, by providing an open channel of communication;
- b) interacts with relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies and subregional technical units, as well as with the BlackSea4Fish project, where relevant, to ensure coordinated implementation and delivery and to foster collaboration on regional priorities, including methodological issues;
- c) liaises with national focal points ahead of each new biennium to prepare national plans, offering guidance and assistance as appropriate;
- d) oversees and manages, as appropriate, the implementation of MedSea4Fish activities at the national and subregional levels, including by facilitating necessary arrangements for their successful implementation in a timely manner;
- e) monitors progress and level of results on the basis of the MedSea4Fish workplan and objectives, and proposes solutions, re-adjustments and amendments, if necessary;
- f) liaises with national focal points and the staff at GFCM headquarters and at the subregional technical units as well as relevant partners and stakeholders to ensure the flow of cooperation and facilitate the coordination of joint activities;

- g) organizes the meetings of the steering committee and prepares, on the basis of national plans and reports, relevant subregional and regional syntheses of MedSea4Fish plans and activities;
- h) reports, on behalf of the steering committee, on MedSea4Fish workplans and achievements in relevant fora, both within and outside the GFCM context, by preparing relevant materials and delivering presentations;
- i) reviews lessons learned and offers recommendations for improving performance and making necessary adjustments to the workplan and budget; and
- j) prepares the contents of the biennial brochure on MedSea4Fish achievements.

The **MedSea4Fish national focal points** are in charge of their country's participation in MedSea4Fish activities. It is their responsibility to:

- a) act as the main point of contact for the planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting on MedSea4Fish at the national level;
- b) prepare and submit, biennially, the MedSea4Fish national plan for their respective countries; and
- c) facilitate the implementation of MedSea4Fish activities at the national level, including by liaising with other focal points nominated for specific actions, if relevant.

The role of the **GFCM subregional technical units** in supporting MedSea4Fish is to:

- a) ensure in a timely manner – in consultation with the coordinator and in coordination with relevant teams at GFCM headquarters – the planning and implementation of agreed field activities, including through the preparation and finalization of LoAs, contracts, procurements and other administrative actions, the identification of personnel, the selection of equipment and the necessary coordination to access data and information required to carry out the activities;
- b) assist in the preparation and delivery of trainings and technical assistance or relevant workshops and initiatives, including all necessary local arrangements and logistics, travel arrangements, recruitment of trainers and relevant support staff, identification of participants, preparation and distribution of materials, organization of translation and interpretation, as appropriate; and
- c) organize coordination meetings with relevant stakeholders, at the national or subregional level, both in the field or at the technical unit, to ensure a smooth and harmonized planning and implementation of MedSea4Fish activities.

Risk management plan

Risk description	Worst case consequence for the project	Risk Score		Mitigating action
		Impact	Likelihood	
MedSea4Fish national focal points do not submit national plans or do not properly oversee implementation of MedSea4Fish activities.	Effective coordination and implementation of activities is compromised, causing delays.	High	Low	MedSea4Fish national focal points will be constantly assisted by the MedSea4Fish coordinator and staff at the subregional technical units in order to avoid unnecessary burdens. It will also be possible to nominate other focal points to follow up on specific activities, so that the responsibility of the MedSea4Fish national focal point remains that of overseeing and facilitating project implementation without having to be involved first-hand in the individual activities. Direct communication will be established with the focal point so that any difficulty encountered can be brought to attention and timely addressed. Compensation mechanisms can also be taken into account to ensure expected deliverables are appropriately framed. In case project implementation is at risk, escalation and involvement of the national GFCM delegate(s) will be ensured to facilitate a harmonized response.
Key stakeholders are not adequately involved or do not engage in the context of MedSea4Fish activities.	Activities do not meet desired objectives and affect MedSea4Fish's effectiveness.	High	Low	Thorough stakeholder identification is carried out and stakeholder engagement will be undertaken throughout project implementation, evolving as needed. Planned and significant networking and coordination, collaborative activities, regular meetings between the relevant parties and constant sharing of information and progress will ensure that activities are well-designed and meaningful, so as to keep on attracting the appropriate audience. Awareness work is also foreseen to help engage fishers and other relevant stakeholders.

Risk description	Worst case consequence for the project	Risk Score		Mitigating action
		Impact	Likelihood	
Changes in decision-makers, or other events beyond the control of the programme	Changes in policies and/or political will to support the programme diminishes	High	Low	Mediterranean CPCs have already committed to conduct such work by adopting the GFCM 2030 Strategy, establishing MedSea4Fish and endorsing its guiding document. They are constantly updated on project development and implementation will be conducted closely with them (through national focal points) to foster buy-in and commitment.
Changes in internal FAO rules and regulations governing the implementation of activities, changes in procedures at the national level (e.g. increased bureaucracy)	Planning of activities to be revised, timeframes to be extended, implementation jeopardized if time-sensitive	High	Medium	The MedSea4Fish national plans governing implementation cover two years, which will ensure a timely planning of activities so as to avoid any potential change in the FAO rules or bureaucratic steps at the national level significantly impacting implementation. Relevant support teams will monitor and keep themselves constantly updated on FAO and – through focal points – national rules so as to be able to react immediately in case of changes and adapt the preparation of relevant activities accordingly.
COVID-19 cases are again on the rise or conflicts erupt in the region and countries begin implementing lockdowns or restrictions.	Field activities are compromised.	High	Medium	MedSea4Fish will capitalize on lessons learned over the first two years of the pandemic, during which the GFCM managed to keep on organizing field work remotely. It will capitalize on national focal points, established networks and trainings to ensure field activities continue at the national level as much as possible. It will also provide PPE materials as appropriate. Where impossible to proceed, activities will be postponed while all preparatory work (including the signature of contracts, etc.) continues so as to be immediately operational once restrictions are lifted.

National focal points

MedSea4Fish national focal points are nominated by the relevant authorities through their focal point to the GFCM and operate in the context of MedSea4Fish in line with the terms of reference provided in Appendix 3.

The below list is updated every time a change is communicated to the GFCM Secretariat.

1. Albania – Marco Kule
2. Algeria – Souad Ben Boussetta
3. Croatia –
4. Cyprus –
5. Egypt – Alaa El Haweet
6. European Union –
7. France –
8. Greece – Alexandria Chrysochoou
9. Israel – Nir Froyman
10. Italy – Maria Vittoria Briscolini
11. Lebanon – Ali Nassar
12. Libya – Hisham Ghmati
13. Malta –
14. Montenegro – Milica Divanovic
15. Morocco – Fatima Zohra Hassouni; Bouchra Haoujar
16. Palestine – Yaser Shtaya
17. Slovenia –
18. Spain – Rafael Gonzalez Cano
19. Syria – Ali Othman
20. Tunisia – Hajer Ben Dhiab; Adel Gaamour
21. Türkiye – Ezra Fatma Denizci Cakmak

MedSea4Fish national plan template



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



General Fisheries
Commission for
the Mediterranean

MedSea4Fish

M E D S E A 4 F I S H N A T I O N A L P L A N

COUNTRY

name of country

BIENNIUM

biennium years

MEDSEA4FISH FOCAL POINT

name

AGREED ON

date of finalization of the national plan

MONITORING OF FISHERIES AND ECOSYSTEMS

Category	Sub-category	Type of activity	Details	Year(s) and period	Modality of implementation
BIOLOGICAL DATA	Main commercial species	Data collection			
		Other (please specify)			
	Discards	Observation programme			
		Selectivity trials			
		Other (please specify)			
	Vulnerable species	Observation programme (specify if incidental catch/depredation/VME)			
		Mitigation trials (specify if incidental catch / depredation)			
		Other (please specify)			
	Recreational fisheries	Pilot study			
		Other (please specify)			
	Additional species	Red coral			
		European eel			
		Non-indigenous species			
		Dolphinfish			
		Other (please specify)			
	Scientific surveys-at-sea	Demersal trawl survey			
		Pelagic acoustic survey			
		Other (please specify)			

Category	Sub-category	Type of activity	Details	Year(s) and period	Modality of implementation
	Stock assessment				
FLEET DATA	Capacity	Data collection			
		Other (please specify)			
	Effort	Data collection			
		Other (please specify)			
	Landing	Data collection			
		Other (please specify)			
SOCIOECONOMIC DATA		Socioeconomic survey			
		Other (please specify)			
OTHER DATA	Marine pollution	Marine litter trials			
	Climate change	Vulnerability assessments			
		Other (please specify)			

TRAINING and CAPACITY-BUILDING

Category	Type of training / capacity-building	Target audience	Details
COURSES; AD-HOC TRAINING ACTIVITIES			
TRAINING OF TRAINERS			
STUDY TOURS; EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES			
PARTICIPATION IN STAKEHOLDER PLATFORMS	SSF Forum		

INFRASTRUCTURE

Category	Type of intervention	Specific need(s)	Area/Location	Details	Modality of implementation
FACILITIES ENHANCEMENT; NEW CONSTRUCTIONS					
PROCUREMENT OF EQUIPMENT AND GOODS					
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION					