

**MEDSEA4FISH**  
**Capacity development for sustainable fisheries management**  
**in the Mediterranean**

**GUIDING DOCUMENT**

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## Summary

MedSea4Fish is the GFCM **capacity development programme for the Mediterranean Sea**, with a main objective to support riparian countries and relevant stakeholders in fulfilling their objectives in line with the **GFCM 2030 Strategy**, and creating a level-playing field that facilitates addressing the **sustainability of fisheries at the national, subregional and regional levels**.

MedSea4Fish is fully integrated within the framework of the GFCM, which provides the **ultimate goals, means and tools for it to operate effectively** and confers overall sustainability to its purpose. It builds on accumulated experience from FAO and GFCM capacity building and technical support actions in the region and recent experiences in the Black Sea, through the BlackSea4Fish project, as well as enhanced mechanisms in the Mediterranean within the context of the subregional approach. These include the SAC subregional committees, the newly implemented subregional technical units as well as the established network of government officials and stakeholders.

The programme revolves around three components that address the pillars of capacity development at national level, namely **fisheries monitoring, training and infrastructure** and relies on a combination of 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 in place and the GFCM 2030 Strategy provide guidance on priorities to be addressed at the different levels. It is implemented as an **umbrella programme with one project per GFCM subregion**, on the basis of a **biennial planning of activities** discussed with countries, and a **steering committee** to provide guidance and a **general coordinator**. MedSea4Fish operates on the basis of co-financing mechanisms and in-kind contributions, with financial means for the first two years already secured through the support of its current main donor, the European Commission.

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

## Introduction and rationale

Fisheries are at the heart of Mediterranean communities, for they are a source of quality food and jobs, and an intrinsic element of the culture of coastal livelihoods. As a semi-enclosed sea with low productivity and subject to large anthropogenic pressures, with a long fisheries tradition and very diverse geopolitically, the Mediterranean and its natural resources are under pressure and the sustainable management of human activities poses 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 contribute to the formulation of scientific and management advice, supporting its Membership's policy commitments and conducive to sustainable and responsible fisheries in the region. In the last decade, despite existing challenges, thanks to reinforced action from its contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) and growing support from donors, the GFCM has put in place **strategies that have managed to reverse the negative trends** observed in the region's fishing sector. 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 capacity-building and technical assistance mechanisms already enshrined in 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)<sup>1</sup>. In particular, MedSea4Fish reinforces technical capacity at the national level with a view to further enable GFCM countries in enhancing the management of key fisheries, meeting existing and future GFCM requirements, actively participate in strategic initiatives as well as abide by their regional and international commitments. It replicates 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** (subregional approach) by multiplying effective tools to improve 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 the transformation of agrifood systems, in particular 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 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 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 stays as 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 the accumulated experience since the establishment of the subregional approach, thus 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 in fulfilling its mandate, as it support contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties in meeting the requirements emanating from adopted recommendations and resolutions<sup>2</sup>. Relevant instruments adopted at GFCM level reflect the importance given to capacity-building and technical assistance as pillars for the development of the sector and the creation of a level playing field in the region: the Framework Programme<sup>3</sup> 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 fisheries<sup>4</sup> and 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 regional mechanisms can feed into national priorities and accelerate objectives at the national, subregional and regional levels. MedSea4Fish capitalizes on these concepts and scales out by replicating successful mechanisms, scales up by consolidating a permanent framework for capacity development within the GFCM, and scales 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, which aims to **reinforce regional fisheries governance** (GFCM advisory process in Figure 1) **by accounting for the specificities** of the GFCM area. It was first piloted, following the amendment of the reference framework of GFCM subsidiary bodies in 2015, during a feasibility study which aimed to evaluate how to better address the mandate of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) and Working Group

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

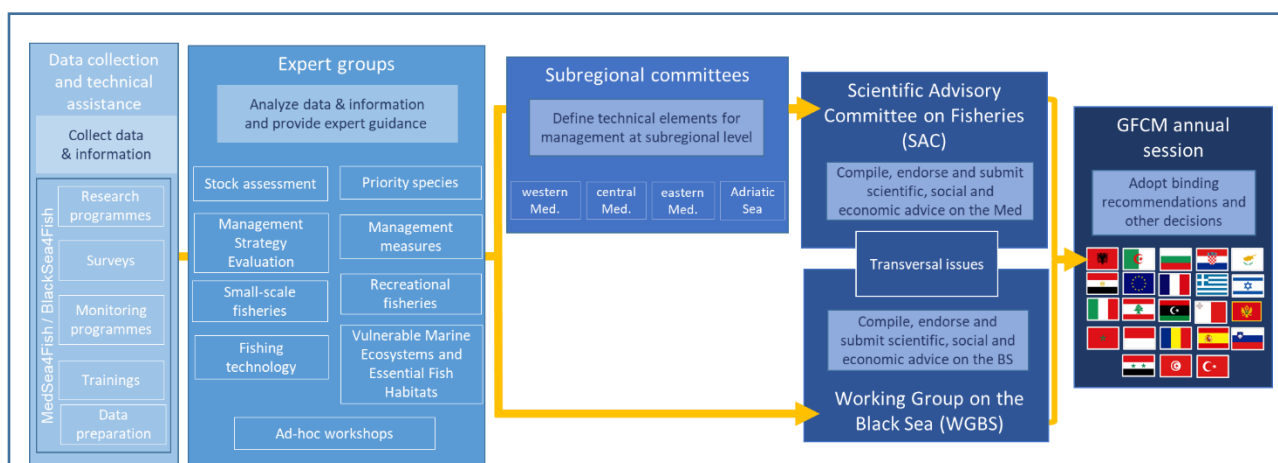
<sup>3</sup> The [Framework Programme](#) was a result of the modernization of the GFCM legal and institutional framework

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

on the Black Sea (WGBS) and ultimately underpinning fisheries management in a more comprehensive and effective way.

In the context of the SAC, **four subregional committees (SRCs)** were established, one per Mediterranean subregion, which, since their creation, have put together experts and representatives of the administrations – acting in a technical capacity – and supported enhanced scientific advice. In particular, the SRCs have been able to provide and update technical elements for the management of key fisheries, address increasing requests on a variety of technical aspects related to fisheries management and ensure workplan proposals covered priorities identified at the subregional level.

In the Black Sea, the WGBS was reinforced with the necessary resources to efficiently execute its priority actions and supporting the implementation of relevant strategies through the establishment in 2016 of the **BlackSea4Fish project**<sup>5</sup>.



**Figure 1.** Process for the formulation of scientific advice in support of GFCM decision making

In parallel, **subregional technical units** were set up in order 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 counts on 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).

It is worth noting that in 2021, the WGBS underlined that the maturity reached by the BlackSea4Fish project and the crucial support provided by the subregional technical unit for the Black Sea had set an **important precedent** in the implementation of the subregional approach: they had proven to be a dynamic and transparent platform facilitating advances on key management issues through targeted capacity development, promoted synergies and productive knowledge-sharing practices. BlackSea4Fish was referred to as a flagship project that could lead regional technical contributions towards sustainability objectives and provided the basis for replication in the Mediterranean.

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

### 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, federating efforts to deliver on national, regional and global commitments. It targets the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainability in order to build resilience to respond to global challenges, and addresses regional priorities while taking into account local needs and specificities through a subregional approach.



Figure 2. The GFCM 2030 Strategy

Articulated around five distinct targets each contributing to GFCM's overarching vision for sustainability, the strategy's **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 intends 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 contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties in fulfilling their untapped potential. Actions therein aim to ensure effective and targeted capacity-building, including shared cooperative research, to support national plans in implementing the strategy as well as consolidate national expertise and scientific capacity to ensure a level playing field across the region. The GFCM 2030 Strategy is complemented by a list of activities (Action Plan), regularly reviewed and readjusted, showing how the objectives of each target and action are expected to be delivered.

The GFCM 2030 Strategy provides the ultimate vision, overall framework and overarching common actions **setting the scene for the implementation of MedSea4Fish**. The consultative process leading to the adoption of the strategy and its action plan ensures coherence between the interest and objectives



of countries at national, subregional and regional levels, and allows to have a combination of a top-down prioritization while a bottom-up identification of activities, suited to countries' needs, to achieve agreed objectives.

## 2. Objective, structure and expected results

### 2.1. Objective

MedSea4Fish is a **capacity development programme featuring four subregional projects**, with a main goal to support Mediterranean riparian countries and relevant stakeholders in fulfilling their objectives in relation to the GFCM 2030 Strategy, in particular towards the sustainability of fisheries at the national, subregional and regional scales.

MedSea4Fish purports 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 and sharing of experiences, and ensuring information is collected and analysed at relevant scales, including for shared resources and fisheries. In the GFCM context, MedSea4Fish enhances the capacity of countries to address fisheries sustainability, including by providing inputs to the work of the SAC, its subregional committees and expert groups.

In fulfilling its main objective, MedSea4Fish **liaises with all relevant partners, projects, programmes and initiatives** in the Mediterranean region with a view to promote synergies, avoid duplicities and create 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)<sup>6</sup>, the MedFish4Ever Ministerial Declaration and other relevant tools such as the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF)<sup>7</sup>.

#### 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 allows for a cohesive mechanism in which the national, subregional and regional levels are interlinked so 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, allowing

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<sup>6</sup> 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.

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



to capitalize on the benefits of GFCM subregional approach and build 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 in achieving agreed targets is analysed annually through different reporting mechanisms and revised regularly. MedSea4Fish is a **multi-donor multi-partner** initiative, allowing to multiply opportunities and synergies. In fact, the variety of activities it covers provides for different donors to subsidise simultaneously and for different partners to collaborate and contribute across the board.

Uniquely, MedSea4Fish is targeted to assist GFCM countries and relevant stakeholders on **all sides of the Mediterranean basin**, which is meant to maximize technical cooperation. Although it is expected to focus additional efforts in countries where capacity development needs are larger, it also pays special attention on **harmonization of approaches and joint analysis** 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 seeking, when relevant, technology and expertise transfer.

### 2.2.2. Methodologies

Implementing MedSea4Fish's activities and vision relies on the application of **approaches that are standardized** across the region, so to facilitate the 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:

- GFCM, 2018. GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF). Version 22.1
- 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
- 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.
- FAO. 2019. *Monitoring the incidental catch of vulnerable species in Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries: Methodology for data collection*. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No. 640. Rome, FAO.
- FAO. 2019. *Monitoring discards in Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries: Methodology for data collection*. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No. 639. Rome.
- 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.

Standard methodologies for the collection of depredation data and for the collection and analysis of the DNA metabarcoding in the context of surveys-at-sea are forthcoming.

### 2.2.3. Stakeholders

The GFCM, as part of FAO, is committed to ensuring meaningful, effective and informed participation of stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of its programs and projects. MedSea4Fish works with the **extensive GFCM network**, including from government officials, research institutes and relevant organizations.

The main direct beneficiaries across the different project components are scientists and experts, fishers and fish workers and representatives of the administration, and the various institutions they represent.

**Scientists and experts**, mostly belonging to national institutes for fisheries research or linked to national authorities in charge of fisheries, are at the root of the GFCM advisory process, for 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 base for sound management.

**Fishers and fish workers**, in particular small-scale fisheries which make around 80 percent of the fleet in the Mediterranean, have a central role supporting livelihoods in coastal communities, driving local economies, as well as for food security and regional traditions. It is crucial to further develop their capacities and skills, to enable exchanges of experiences and participation in decisions that affect them, thus multiplying fishers' capacity 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 in the case of women and young people.

**Representatives of the 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 country in GFCM processes, ensuring the necessary actions are undertaken to collect, analyze 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 capacity, plan national contributions and timely delivery against requirements, sensitize relevant participants at national level and report through governmental channels to promote involvement and ownership.

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 the 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 organisations, the private sector and relevant national partners, as well as ship-owners and the fish industry. It is not envisaged that any group would

be adversely affected by the programme. At the national level, with a view to promote holistic and effective stakeholder engagement, the programme is expected to interact with existing multisectorial coordination groups or platforms, and/or facilitate their creation, in order to promote synergies across stakeholders.

#### 2.2.4. Partnerships

In order to enhance its comparative advantage and effectively manage for results, MedSea4Fish will benefit from the involvement of **relevant partner organisations**, as appropriate in the implementation of select activities, building upon the current GFCM network of partners, in particular those with which a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed. Partnerships allow to **capitalize on expertise and resources, fostering synergies and avoiding duplications**, maximizing the strategic and operational advantages each organization can bring, both to implement actions on the ground or to share and develop knowledge and best practices across the region. Cooperation may take numerous forms, including by 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 MoU 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), 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, Low Impact Fishers of Europe Platform (LIFE), the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and Oceana. MedSea4Fish will also leverage on transnational cooperation established in the context of specific platforms or initiatives, such as the Friends of Small-Scale Fisheries platform<sup>8</sup> or the networks of partners at the national and regional levels created in contexts such as the Medbycatch project<sup>9</sup> or the GFCM Forum on Fisheries Science<sup>10</sup>.

#### 2.3. Components

MedSea4Fish defines **three components** (Figure 3) directly aiming at operationalizing the linkages 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, planned to be carried out regularly in order to assist countries in the collection and transmission of fisheries related information, whereas others are more strategic in nature.

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

<sup>9</sup> The [Medbycatch project](#) monitors and mitigates incidental catches of vulnerable species.

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



**Figure 3.** MedSea4Fish components

The three MedSea4Fish components are described below, inclusive of a general list of the type of activities expected to be carried out therein. It is worth noting that other activities may be foreseen within any of the three components, in coordination with the country concerned, as national priorities, as well as MedSea4Fish and its projects, evolve.

### **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, received as a response 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 is achieved through a variety of means and activities, mostly carried out at national level and then scaled up to contribute to subregional technical discussions and 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
- Socio-economic surveys and studies
- Stock assessment for main commercial species and species of national interest, including data preparation and model diagnosis
- 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
- 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 **with fragmentary information such as recreational and small-scale fisheries**, and address gaps such as, *inter alia*, the detailed socio-economic 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

The availability of new technologies 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 the monitoring of fishing activities also require intense efforts on training and exchange of expertise for scientists and across research institutes and scientific organizations. Moreover, implementing efficient management measures, including through integrated or complex management plans, requires dedicated training addressed to 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** on aspects such as the implementation of new fishing technologies, the capacity to collect and analyse data on all aspects of fisheries, and the implementation of complex management plans, through:

- Courses and ad-hoc training activities
- Training of trainers

- Study tours and exchange of experiences and best practices
- Participation in the SSF Forum and relevant stakeholder platforms
- 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 young generations, as well as maximizing knowledge transfer, including by translating knowledge products and training material 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 the 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 pollutant fleets and fisheries services, through:

- Facilities enhancement and new constructions
- Procurement of equipment and goods
- 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 ensure that suitability of the proposed actions is ensured, including with support from the other two components.

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

The MedSea4Fish structure warrants for the possibility to exploit cross-sectoral opportunities or design activities that are transversal 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 in terms of effective monitoring of resources and implementation of activities towards sustainability of fisheries from three complementary angles, on the basis of which the following outcomes are expected:



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

These are aligned with the threefold MedSea4Fish objective to strengthen capacities: address monitoring needs, enhance skills and advance on structural priorities. In order to achieve these outcomes, systems in place are 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 existing gaps at the regional level.

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

At the subregional level, MedSea4Fish brings together **data and information, best practices and instruments**, scaling up national efforts to 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 contribution of countries and stakeholders into 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 the programme activities**.

#### 3.1. Functioning

##### 3.1.1. Subregional projects

MedSea4Fish operates through **four subregional projects**, aligned with the four Mediterranean subregions, owing to subregional characteristics that call for tailored actions for them to be more effective, and capitalizing on the mechanisms already established in the context of the GFCM subregional approach. In particular, each project counts on the support provided by the relative **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, Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye** in the eastern Mediterranean;
- **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 coordinate** the activities of the four MedSea4Fish projects, facilitating planning, implementation, monitoring, review and reporting in alignment with national priorities as well as SRC and SAC needs and 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 ad-hoc basis in case of specific needs. It serves as a platform where the

subregional work is jointly prepared, evaluated and revised at the regional level, but also provides for subregional sessions to address specific needs and tailor make solutions.

The main responsibilities of the steering committee are to follow-up on MedSea4Fish's progress and assess achievements of results against its objectives, oversee relevant collaborations and the engagement of stakeholders and endorse the national plans and final reports of work carried out.

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

#### *MedSea4Fish Coordinator*

In order to **warrant 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.

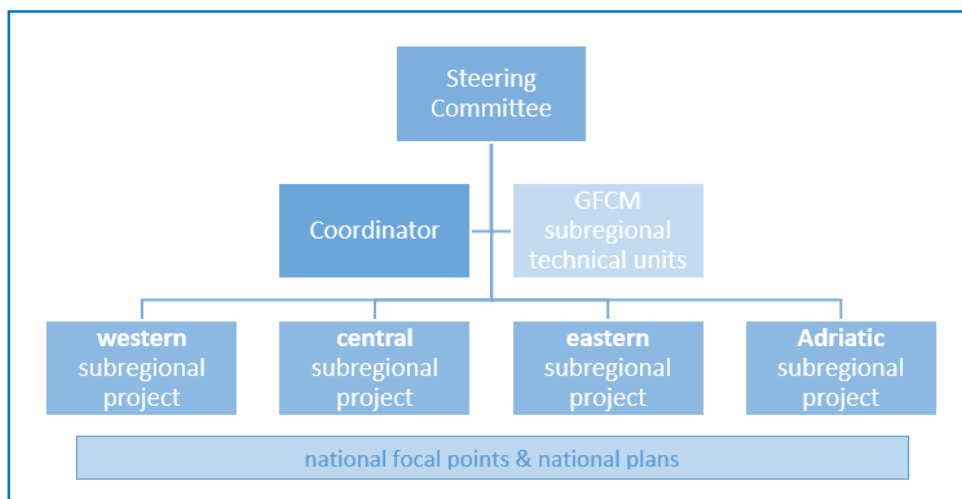
The main responsibilities of the coordinator are to oversee and manage the implementation of MedSea4Fish activities at the national and subregional levels, assist the preparation of national plans and final reports and liaise with national focal points, partners and relevant stakeholders.

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

#### *GFCM subregional technical units*

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

Terms for the role of the subregional technical units in relation to MedSea4Fish are provided in Appendix 2.



**Figure 5.** MedSea4Fish organigramme

### 3.2. Organizational arrangements

GFCM contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties and relevant observers take part in MedSea4Fish voluntarily and 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 during implementation, a MedSea4Fish national focal point is nominated. The main responsibilities of the national focal point are to prepare the national plans in coordination with government officials, facilitate the implementation of MedSea4Fish activities at the national level and provide inputs to the final reports of activities.

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

##### *National plans*

To **guarantee alignment with national priorities while replying to GFCM requirements**, a set of coordinated activities per country is designed via a national plan covering two years of activities, prepared by the national focal points and submitted in September/October, so 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 of resources are allocated to basic technical assistance for CPCs, extra-budgetary funds will be the core 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 is an important opportunity to capitalize on existing national resources, maximizing results and making them more sustainable. In-kind contributions, either through the lending of expertise or facilities from the side 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 base of around 10 million Euro per biennium**. The overall amount available is expected to be split 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: a. national experts and relevant stakeholders, including fishers, to coordinate, execute or participate in the implementation of relevant activities at the national level; b. technical consultants, including ad-hoc support on specific scientific issues, local assistance, communications, etc.; c. travel costs for national experts and stakeholders' participation in meetings and capacity building activities, as appropriate; d. technical equipment, including in support to scientific surveys, monitoring programmes and pilot studies; e. expendable procurement, for miscellaneous expenses and material; f. interpretation and translation costs in the languages of the region, as relevant to the project for meetings and activities; g. contracts to support the smooth execution of project's meetings and activities, e.g. SharePoint licenses, Azure resources and visualization tools, technical tools to support the set-up of relevant databases, etc.; h. 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, international tenders and contracts, direct procurement, field budget authorizations, personal services agreements and consultancies, travel authorizations, implementation protocols.

### 3.3. Implementation arrangements

#### 3.3.1. Implementation calendar

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

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

**National workplans** are developed on the basis of the list of activities included in the MedSea4Fish national plans and provide a detailed two-year calendar of implementation, inclusive of planning, execution and reporting phase for each activity.

#### 3.3.2. Knowledge management

MedSea4Fish is conceived to support countries in collecting relevant data and information, increase national capacity to support the formulation of scientific advice towards sustainable fisheries, ensure

countries can meet relevant GFCM requirements in terms of type, quantity and quality of data and 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, some of 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 information collected is expected to serve to create joint databases and organize subregional / regional activities and/or prepare joint products addressing objectives of common interest, as well as facilitate technological and know-how exchanges between participant countries, organizations and stakeholders.

### 3.3.3. Communication

Communication and knowledge sharing is an integral part of the MedSea4Fish implementation arrangements. **Good practices, lessons learned and knowledge gained** will be organized and documented as guidelines, manuals, toolkits, reports, and training materials to allow its institutionalization and to ensure its access by stakeholders and partners.

MedSea4Fish is included into GFCM's communication and visibility plan, which is regularly updated and articulated around four steps, namely: i. *Identify* (map the key audiences and identify success stories); ii. *Inform* (actively inform the key audiences about the activities); iii. *Engage* (detect opportunities for the reinforcement of ties with stakeholders); iv. *Monitor* (follow the actions put in place, adapt and recommend).

In the context of MedSea4Fish, specific **awareness campaigns** and **dissemination material** 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. It displays the brochure prepared biennially on MedSea4Fish achievements as well as the visuals and presentations prepared yearly for the SAC.

A **password-protected MedSea4Fish SharePoint page** is also created to host relevant material and documentation and be used as an exchange platform. All national plans and reports, per year and per country, are stored in an ad-hoc repository of the same SharePoint page and solely accessible by the relevant national focal point, to ensure all can be consulted and is retrievable in one place.

## 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 the desired results (main goal, objectives and expected outcomes). A set of integrated and dynamic tools – such as the results matrix, national workplans and risk log – are used for monitoring, performance assessment and reporting; these are regularly reviewed and adjusted, if necessary, to enable MedSea4Fish to deliver agreed results even in the face of developing challenges and changing environments and/or needs.

#### 4.1. Monitoring of results

MedSea4Fish is monitored by a continuous periodic reviewing of its progress against planned results, assessing its performance, learning and adapting 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, objective and strategic goal, providing an **effective and transparent linkage between means and ends**. It identifies the indicators, their targets and their respective means of verification; causality is defined through the definition of assumptions that may influence success and failure. It is foreseen to revise the baseline and targets (as well as the other elements, if deemed necessary) **every three years** to maintain the relevance of the results matrix as monitoring tool.

With the approval of the national plans developed at country level and detailing the activities expected to be carried out over the course of two years, a **workplan and budget specific to the given national plan** are drawn up and appended to the inception report (see section 4.2). The national workplan and related budget ‘operationalize’ the MedSea4Fish results matrix at country level, and is used to monitor the implementation of agreed activities in a given biennium and within the allocated budget.

MedSea4Fish monitoring arrangements are also integrated into the GFCM institutional setting whereby various **expert groups of scientific nature report to the SAC, which validates the scientific advice** and submits it to the GFCM for the adoption of potential measures based thereon. This means that the SAC will advise accordingly whether additional work is required or if 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, adapt and adjust its targets, ensuring the activities are carried out and deliver 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 for 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 international or country level (such as rules governing the implementation of activities; a negative evolution of the sanitary situation worldwide or changes in decision-makers at national level).

#### 4.3. Reporting mechanisms

Reporting is expected to happen at regular intervals, overseen by the MedSea4Fish coordinator, with the support of the GFCM Secretariat within the subregional technical units and in coordination with the national focal points. The reports are expected to be useful both at the national level, to analyse the effectiveness of MedSea4Fish in responding to national priorities and in improving the country’s capacity to participate and engage in GFCM processes, as well as at GFCM level to analyse the contribution of the MedSea4Fish projects in underpinning strengthened scientific advice and achieving GFCM goals.

During **each biennium**, on the basis of the national plans submitted (in September/October before the start of a new biennium), two reports are foreseen to be prepared by the subregional technical units and the MedSea4Fish coordinator and shared with the national focal point, namely:

- one **inception report** before the start of the biennium which appraises the conformity and feasibility of the activities included in the national plans and draws up a specific two-year workplan of implementation, calculating overall expected costs; and
- one **final report** at the end of the biennium which analyses the work done against the original workplan, actual overall expenditures, recommendations and way forward.

Reports are prepared on the basis of a common template in order to facilitate the compilation of subregional and regional overviews, to be used by the steering committee and in relevant fora.

In parallel, the outcomes of MedSea4Fish's work are reviewed within the GFCM and relevant subsidiary bodies, as follows:

- The **outcomes** of activities undertaken by MedSea4Fish at 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 action at both the subregional and regional levels and presenting future plans;
- At the end of each biennium, a **brochure on MedSea4Fish achievements** at the national, subregional and regional levels is produced and put at 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 use of funds, mainly under the responsibility of the GFCM Secretariat.



Results Matrix

Results	Targets <sup>1</sup>	Indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
<b>GOAL:</b> 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 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 is improved 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 2 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 more targeted to assist management measures	Number of DCRF subtasks and/or tasks modified to foresee the submission of more 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

<sup>1</sup> Targets are currently set at 2025 and revised as appropriate every three years.

Results	Targets <sup>1</sup>	Indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
<b>OBJECTIVE:</b> The provision of technical assistance and capacity-building activities is coordinated at the national, subregional and regional levels, in support to 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 of increase in overall funding and/or number of donors (including in-kind)	Awareness material, MedSea4Fish achievements brochure	There is enough relevant information to produce awareness/communication material. Prospective donors see the added value of the programme
<b>EXPECTED OUTCOME – COMPONENT 1:</b>  Data collection and monitoring enhanced and directly contributing 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 for 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 assessment of national data collection processes, mechanisms and systems in place and 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 information for priority species required to perform stock assessment; CPCs are willing to collaborate towards the implementation of the programme.

Results	Targets <sup>1</sup>	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 SAC	Data collection in the field is feasible and the organization of different monitoring activities is facilitated; National focal points facilitate the organization of the 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 trialed and related information is available to stakeholders and decision-makers	Number of selectivity pilot studies and/or mitigation trials conducted	National plans, MedSea4Fish reports and presentations to SAC	National focal points facilitate the organization of the pilot studies and the mitigation trials; procurement actions are facilitated within the Organization;
<b>EXPECTED OUTCOME – COMPONENT 2</b>  Effective learning maximized, good practices captured and shared	Training and capacity-building is enhanced at the national, subregional and regional levels and requests multiply	Number of trainings and capacity-building delivered on GFCM data requirements and the DCRF online platform  Number of trainings and capacity-building delivered on stock assessment  Number of exchange of experiences or collaborations between institutes established	National plans, MedSea4Fish reports and presentations to SAC, training agendas	National focal points help identify the 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 collaboration 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 <sup>1</sup>	Indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
	Regional analyses and comparison of results between subregions are facilitated as relevant data across the Mediterranean is collected in line with GFCM methodologies	Number of trainings delivered or material developed on GFCM data analysis methodologies Number of joint data analysis meetings carried out	Training agenda or dissemination material, 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 delivered on vulnerable species identification and handling	Training agenda	Targeted beneficiaries are willing to participate in capacity-building activities; there is enough relevant information to produce material
<b>EXPECTED OUTCOME – COMPONENT 3</b> Infrastructure investments multiplied to intensify new technology and innovation	National fisheries sectors and/or relevant research or institutional fisheries organizations are more efficient and dynamic as at least one country per subregion has upgraded 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 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 development/upgrade of database(s)

### Terms of reference

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

- a) Review and timely clear national plans ahead of the start of a new biennium, including their relevance, alignment and feasibility;
- b) Facilitate 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 planning or implementation of activities;
- e) Review final 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 three years, the baseline and targets of the MedSea4Fish results matrix, also taking into account requests from the GFCM and relevant subsidiary bodies, as well as updates of the GFCM 2030 Strategy Action Plan;
- i) Agree on visibility, dissemination and communication actions to promote MedSea4Fish's work, and is responsible for the MedSea4Fish guiding document and related updates;
- j) Maintain the list of MedSea4Fish national focal points.

The **MedSea4Fish coordinator** provides direct support to 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 and relevant national authorities, relevant partners, stakeholders and observers as well as the GFCM as whole, by providing an open channel of communication;
- b) Interacts with relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies, subregional technical units as well as with the BlackSea4Fish project, where relevant, to ensure coordinated implementation and delivery and foster collaboration on regional priorities, including methodological issues;
- c) Liaises with national focal points ahead of a new biennium for the preparation of the national plans, ensuring guidance and assistance as appropriate;

- d) Leads the revision process of national plans submitted, including the preparation of inception reports;
- e) Oversees and manages, as appropriate, implementation of MedSea4Fish activities at the national and subregional levels, including by facilitating the necessary arrangements for their successful implementation in a timely manner;
- f) Monitors progress and level of results on the basis of the MedSea4Fish workplan and objectives, and propose solutions, re-adjustments, as well as amendments if necessary;
- g) Liaises with the national focal points, the staff at GFCM headquarters and at the subregional technical units, relevant partners and stakeholders to ensure the flow of cooperation and facilitate coordination of joint activities;
- h) Works with national focal points to prepare the final reports;
- i) Organizes the meetings of the steering committee and prepare, on the basis of the national plans and reports, relevant subregional and regional syntheses of MedSea4Fish plans and activities for consideration of the committee;
- j) 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 material and delivering presentations;
- k) Reviews lessons learned and make recommendations for improving the performance and the necessary adjustments to the workplan and budget.
- l) Prepares the contents of the biennial publication 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 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 country;
- c) Prepare final reports of MedSea4Fish activities undertaken, in collaboration with the MedSea4Fish coordinator;
- d) 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 letters of agreement, contracts, procurement and other

administrative actions, the identification of personnel, selection of equipment and the necessary coordination to access data and information necessary 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 material, organization of translation and interpretation, as appropriate;
- 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 and causes 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 first-hand involved in the single activities. Direct communication will be established with the focal point so that any difficulty encountered can be raised 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 involved adequately or do not engage in the context of MedSea4Fish activities	activities do not meet desired objective and affect MedSea4Fish effectiveness	High	Low	Thorough stakeholder identification was 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 activities are well designed and meaningful, so to keep on attracting the appropriate audience. Awareness work is also foreseen to help engage fishers and other relevant stakeholders.

Changes in decision-makers, or other events beyond the control of the project	changes in policies and or political will diminished to support the project	High	Low	Mediterranean CPCs have already committed to conduct such work by adopting 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.
Risk description	Worst case consequence for the project	Risk Score		Risk description
		Impact	Likelihood	
Changes in internal FAO rules and regulations governing the implementation of activities, changes in procedures at 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 allow to ensure a timely planning of activities so to avoid that any potential change in the FAO rules or bureaucratic steps at the national level could significantly impact the implementation. Relevant support teams will monitor and keep themselves constantly updated on FAO and, through the focal points, national rules so to be able to react immediately in case of change and adapt the preparation of relevant activities accordingly.
COVID-19 cases are again on the rise or conflicts erupt in the region and countries are implementing lockdowns or restrictions	Field activities are compromised	High	Medium	MedSea4Fish will capitalize on lessons learned during two years of pandemic, in the context of which the GFCM managed to keep on organizing field work remotely. It will capitalize on national focal points, networks established and trainings to ensure field activities continue at national level as much as possible. It will also provide PPE material as appropriate. Where impossible to proceed, activities will be postponed while all preparatory work (including signature of contracts, etc.) continues so to be immediately operational once restrictions are lifted.

### National focal points

MedSea4Fish national focal points are nominated by the relevant national 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 MedSea4Fish steering committee.

Country: National focal point:	Country: National focal point:	Country: National focal point:
Country: National focal point:	Country: National focal point:	Country: National focal point:
Country: National focal point:	Country: National focal point:	Country: National focal point:
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MedSea4Fish National Plan template



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



General Fisheries Commission  
for the Mediterranean  
Commission générale des pêches  
pour la Méditerranée

# MEDSEA4FISH NATIONAL PLAN

COUNTRY

**Name of country**

BIENNIUM

**2023-24**

MEDSEA4FISH FOCAL POINT

**Name**

TRANSMITTED ON

**date of final transmission**

### Rationale:

MedSea4Fish is set up to coordinate the provision of capacity development across all Mediterranean countries, with a view to ultimately support sound fisheries management within the GFCM.

The national plans guarantee alignment between national and regional priorities while replying to GFCM requirements and strategic objectives. They include a set of coordinated activities designed against the MedSea4Fish components and cover two years of activities. The national plans are submitted by the national focal point, then revised and cleared, inclusive of a detailed national workplan and estimated budget, and then timely operationalized (through specific instruments such as contracts, letters of agreement, etc.).

On the basis of the national plans submitted, an inception report before the start of the related biennium is prepared under the guidance of the MedSea4Fish coordinator, appraising the conformity and feasibility of the activities included in the national plans and drawing up a specific two-year workplan of implementation, inclusive of overall expected costs (the level of funding provided by the GFCM will depend on alignment and availability of funds).

### Instructions:

- the template is divided in three tables, in line with the three MedSea4Fish components (monitoring of fisheries and ecosystems; training and capacity-building; infrastructure). A legend is provided at the bottom of each table with instructions on how to fill relevant columns;
- relevant contacts for specific activities can be inserted in the separate table available in Appendix 1;
- Other relevant appendices (complementary information, documents, links, etc.) can be added at the end of the document, as deemed appropriate and useful;
- the deadline for the submission of national plans to MedSea4Fish is **30 September of the year preceding the start of a new biennium**;
- national plans need to be submitted to the MedSea4Fish coordinator through the relevant GFCM subregional technical unit (GFCM-Secretariat@fao.org - *contact details to be updated*). Any question related to the national plan can be directed to the same contacts;

Name of implementing institute and related centres: *(to be filled by country)*

MedSea4Fish focal point contact details: *(to be filled by country)*

Date and e-signature of focal point

## MONITORING OF FISHERIES AND ECOSYSTEMS

Category	Sub-category	Type of activity	Year(s) and period	Level of co-financing	Comments
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			
		Beam trawl survey			
		Other (please specify)			



Category	Sub-category	Type of activity	Year(s) and period	Level of co-financing	Comments
	Stock assessment	Data preparation meetings			
FLEET DATA	Capacity	Data collection			
		Other (please specify)			
	Effort	Data collection			
		Other (please specify)			
	Landing	Data collection			
		Other (please specify)			
SOCIO-ECONOMIC DATA		Socio-economic survey			
		Other (please specify)			
OTHER DATA	Marine pollution	Marine litter trials			
	Climate change	Vulnerability assessments			
		Other (please specify)			

## LEGEND

Type of activity: the list provided is indicative based on the components, as described in the MedSea4Fish document. Please add/remove activities as appropriate.

Year(s) and period: insert which year(s) of the biennium is concerned by the activity and tentative months or season of the year

Level of co-financing: insert indicative percentage (%) of country contribution to activity implementation. This can be a budgetary or in-kind contribution of any kind (e.g. partial costs of vessel rental, use of lab materials, provision of samplers, etc.). By inserting 0% it is understood the proposed activity is requested to be fully funded by the GFCM. By inserting N/A (not applicable), it is understood the activity is already fully financed in the context of other project/initiatives and is reported here for information.

## TRAINING and CAPACITY-BUILDING

Category	Type of training / capacity-building	Target audience	Number of experts involved	Year(s) and period	Level of co-financing	Comments
COURSES; AD-HOC TRAINING ACTIVITIES						
TRAINING OF TRAINERS						
STUDY TOURS; EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES						
PARTICIPATION IN STAKEHOLDER PLATFORMS	SSF Forum					

### LEGEND

Target audience: indicate profiles to be trained (e.g. scientists, representatives of administration, data collectors, fishers, etc.). A single training can cover multiple profiles. The information provided should help determine whether the training is expected to be provided at beginner, intermediate or advanced level

Year(s) and period: insert which year(s) of the biennium is concerned by activity and tentative months or season of the year

Level of co-financing: insert indicative percentage (%) of country contribution to training implementation. This can be a budgetary or in-kind contribution of any kind (e.g. use of lab spaces, participation of trainers, etc.). By inserting 0% it is understood the proposed training is requested to be fully funded by the GFCM. By inserting N/A (not applicable), it is understood the training is already fully financed in the context of other project/initiatives and is reported here for information.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

Category	Type of intervention	Specific need(s)	Area/Location	Level of co-financing	Comments
FACILITIES ENHANCEMENT; NEW CONSTRUCTIONS					
PROCUREMENT OF EQUIPMENT AND GOODS					
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION					

### LEGEND

Type of intervention: insert, in general terms, which kind of intervention is needed (e.g. procurement of fishing gear)

Specific need(s): insert details, including amounts and technical specifications, of the intervention requested (e.g. two MEDITS-type nets with codend)

Level of co-financing: insert indicative percentage (%) of country contribution to intervention implementation. This can be a budgetary or in-kind contribution of any kind (e.g. partial coverage of costs for renovation, etc.). By inserting 0% it is understood the proposed intervention is requested to be fully funded by the GFCM. By inserting N/A (not applicable), it is understood the intervention is already fully financed in the context of other project/initiatives and is reported here for information.

## APPENDIX 1

Relevant contacts (in addition to MedSea4Fish focal point) for specific activities:

Name(s) and last name(s)	Reference activity	Contact details	Comments

## APPENDIX 2

*Please add relevant complementary information, documents or links in as many new appendices as needed*