

REGIONAL AQUACULTURE CONFERENCE

Shaping the future of sustainable aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea

HERAKLION, GREECE 4-5 DECEMBER 2024



CONCEPT NOTE

Following the High-level conference on MedFish4Ever initiatives (Malta, 3–4 October 2023) organized by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and ten years after the Bari [Regional Aquaculture Conference “Blue Growth in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea: developing sustainable aquaculture for food security”](#) (Italy, 9–11 December 2014), this conference aims to take stock of national and regional advances in sustainable aquaculture development towards achieving the objectives of the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea ([GFCM 2030 Strategy](#)), while addressing existing and emerging challenges. It is expected to chart the future of aquaculture in the region and discuss tools and solutions to achieve the objectives set within the GFCM 2030 Strategy. This event is organized by the GFCM and the Government of Greece, with the financial support of the European Union.

Objective and overview

The main objective of this [regional aquaculture conference](#) is to highlight and discuss the importance of aquaculture within existing political commitments and provide insights and solutions to strengthen future action towards a sustainable and resilient sector in the region.

The event will start with a high-level segment where high-level representatives from Mediterranean and Black Sea countries will assess progress and outline emerging needs and future priorities for sustainable aquaculture development in the region. This section will be followed by thematic sessions addressing priority topics in aquaculture, with a particular emphasis on climate change and food security. The interactive format of the event will enable the participants to actively engage with panelists in order to foster meaningful contributions and discussions.

Participants

The conference will involve partners from the region and is expected to attract high-level representatives from Mediterranean and Black Sea countries, as well as aquaculture experts, representatives from relevant departments and government agencies, international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and stakeholders from aquaculture platforms and aquaculture farmer organizations across the region.

Expected outputs

- Updated vision for sustainable aquaculture development in light of recent advances and existing and emerging challenges;
- Enhanced collaboration fostered among the sector's stakeholders, including aquaculture farmer organizations, scientists, policymakers, and non-governmental organizations, including through the GFCM Aquaculture Demonstration Centres;
- Contribution towards the dissemination and implementation in the Mediterranean and Black Sea region of the FAO Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture (GSA).
- Identification of existing gaps and needs and updated technical guidance in key fields such as climate change, environmental monitoring, marine spatial planning and animal welfare, with focus on the implementation of nature-based solutions and responsible investment, towards supporting equitable, profitable and sustainable livelihoods along the aquaculture value chain;
- Identification of capacity development needs to level the playing field towards sustainable aquaculture development in the region.

DRAFT PROGRAMME

Wednesday, 4 December 2024

High-level segment “Towards sustainable aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea”

Welcome addresses

Keynote address “From Bari 2014 to Heraklion 2024: a journey towards sustainable aquaculture”

This presentation will explore the transformative decade-long journey from Bari to Heraklion, highlighting the substantial progress made, as well as remaining and emerging challenges to meet the objectives set by the GFCM 2030 Strategy.

Vision and commitments for a sustainable aquaculture sector by 2030

High-level representatives from Mediterranean and Black Sea countries will assess progress and future priorities in their countries and present their vision and contributions to the objectives set by GFCM 2030 Strategy, outlining emerging and future priorities.

Thematic session 1.

Aquaculture food production systems of today and tomorrow

Keynote address

This presentation will discuss the role of aquaculture in contributing to food security, ensuring the sector is rooted in responsible practices and meets adequate standards, including animal well-being.

Panel 1. Promoting food security in a changing world

Panel 2. Promoting responsible investment for a thriving aquaculture sector

Thursday, 5 December 2024

Thematic session 2.

Advancing towards ecologically sustainable aquaculture food production systems

Keynote address

This presentation will explore restorative aquaculture and ecosystem health, revealing innovative strategies designed to revitalize aquaculture practices and improve the overall ecosystem well-being.

Panel 3. Restorative aquaculture: nurturing ecosystem health

Panel 4. Building resilient aquaculture in the face of a changing climate

Thematic session 3.

Navigating change: strategies facing current and emerging challenges

Keynote address

This presentation will delve into strategies and insights for a transformative journey, with emphasis on the FAO Blue Transformation vision as a catalyst for the aquaculture sector, involving enhanced social acceptability, responsible investment and adequate market access.

Panel 5. Blue Transformation as a catalyst for sustainable aquaculture development

Panel 6. Ensuring the well-being of farmed aquatic species
