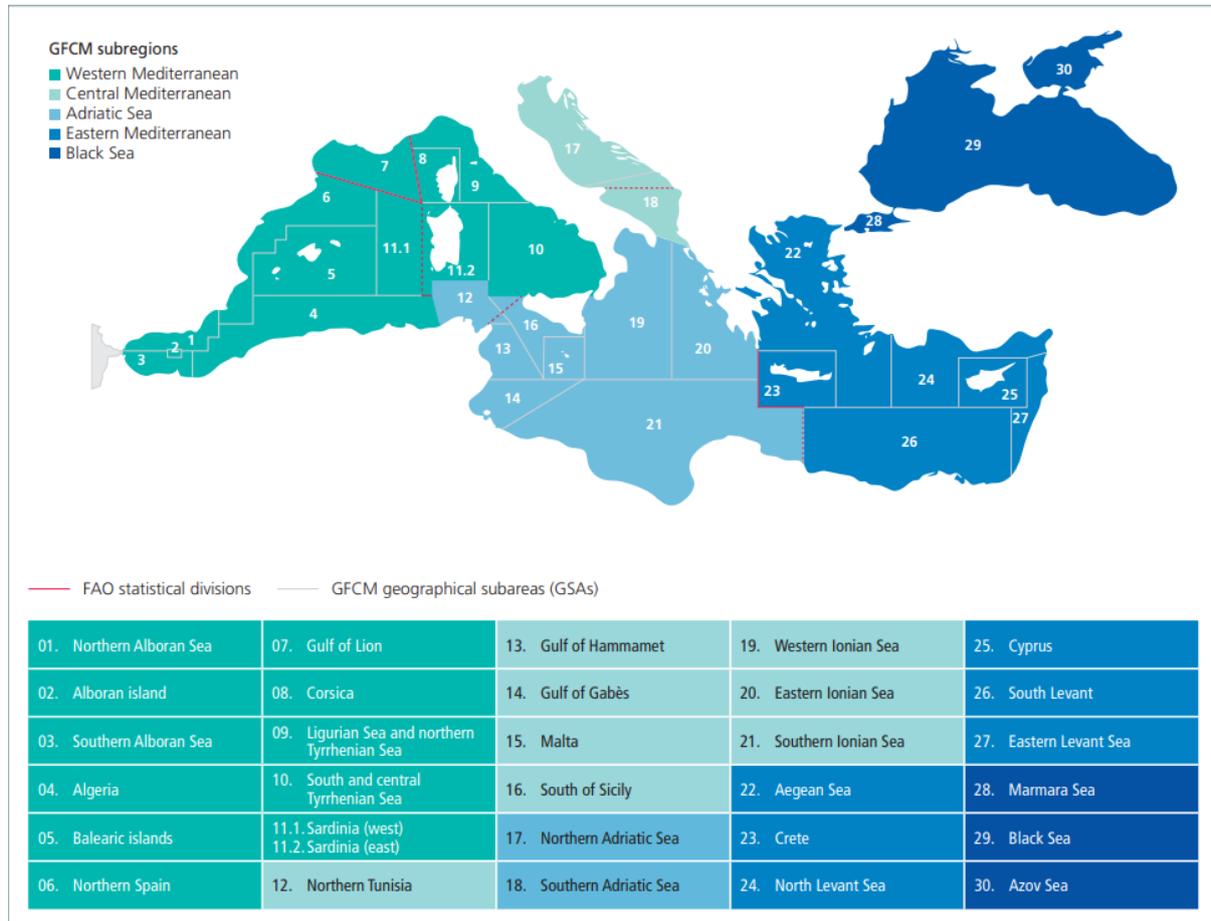


**Chapter 1 - The need for a Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF)**

The GFCM has the responsibility and authority to oversee the full process of fisheries management, undertake scientific evaluations and take decisions to ensure sustainability of fisheries resources in its area of application (Figure 1 and Appendix L). The collection of data required to achieve an appropriate management of fisheries is crucial and countries should therefore provide their best available information in terms of quality and comprehensiveness.



**Figure 1:** Map of the GFCM area of application (Subregions and Geographical Subareas)

On basis of the new GFCM Agreement<sup>10</sup> that refers to the “subregional approach to fisheries management and aquaculture development in order to better address the specificities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea”, the concept of subregions has been introduced during the revision process of the fishery data collection framework of GFCM and then reflected into the DCRF manual. As agreed at several GFCM technical meetings held during the intersessional period 2013-2015, the subregional approach answers specific needs in managing the Mediterranean and Black Sea by considering the specificity of each identified area, including its fisheries. The identified five subregions (Western Mediterranean Sea, Central Mediterranean Sea, Adriatic Sea, Eastern Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea) aim at facilitating the integration between data collection and subregional multiannual management plans.

<sup>10</sup> [www.fao.org/gfcm/background/legal-framework](http://www.fao.org/gfcm/background/legal-framework)

The need to establish functional data collection systems in the GFCM area of application has always been a key issue for internal discussion. Many efforts have been made to develop useful tools for the creation of GFCM information systems, associated databases and protocols for data transmission. However, notwithstanding the steps taken since 2010 to encourage and support CPCs to transmit data, the level of compliance still needs to be enhanced. Many datasets have been received in an incomplete state, thus hindering the capacity of the GFCM to use these data to fulfil its mandate.

The rationale behind the design of this framework is to reduce data requirements and encompass them into a single, simple and easy-to-understand manual, providing CPCs with the necessary indications for the collection and transmission of data related to fisheries to the GFCM Secretariat. Moreover, the information gathered should be sufficient and reliable enough to review the status of the different resources, to assess the economic and social dimensions of the fleets and to provide scientific advice on the status of the resources, as well as to allow CPCs to prepare recommendations to manage those resources.

In order to fulfil the GFCM objectives, the data collected within the DCRF encompass area-based information on national fleets and their activities, catch and effort and biological information on main species, including discards and incidental catch of vulnerable species. Socio-economic data is also required in order to assess the economic situation of fishing enterprises and employment trends. Within the DCRF, CPCs should guarantee the quality and completeness of the data at the requested aggregation level and, according to an agreed format, transmit them in a timely manner to the GFCM Secretariat.

The DCRF is based on seven different tasks:

- T1 - Global figures of national fisheries
- T2 - Catch (landing data, catch data per species)
- T3 - Incidental catch of vulnerable species
- T4 - Fishing fleet
- T5 - Fishing effort
- T6 - Socio-economics
- T7 - Biological information (stock assessment input data, length data, other biological data, dolphin fish, red coral, European eel, ecosystem indicators)