



ENHANCING CAPACITY FOR FISHERIES PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT IN THE STRAIT OF SICILY (YEAR 7)

The Strait of Sicily is a transition area connecting the western and eastern Mediterranean basins. Most of the pelagic and demersal fisheries resources in the area are shared between the fisheries of at least three bordering countries. The shared fisheries resources are exploited under different regimes in each country, while their transboundary nature justifies harmonized management approaches. Achieving the optimal use of fisheries resources in this region requires an effective cooperative management framework based on accepted concepts like the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF). However, the countries in the subregion require dedicated support to allow them to develop the capacities required to cooperate and effectively manage the fisheries in accordance with the EAF. Against this background, the European Union-supported action, which was part of the longer-lasting MedSudMed project, aimed to consolidate and develop the basis for establishing and implementing in each of the four participating countries (Italy, Libya, Malta and Tunisia), and/or at multilateral level, updated management strategies for relevant specific fisheries, through coordinated scientific investigations and data gathering, as well as through joint multidisciplinary analysis and multistakeholder discussion.



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WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The project contributed to reinforcing the basis for cooperative research and management of the shared multispecies fisheries in the south-central Mediterranean Sea. The capacities of fisheries experts and administrations of participating countries in fisheries assessment methods and management were enhanced. Capacity-development activities included, among others, the third edition of the Summer School in Quantitative Fisheries Stock Assessment, improving capacities at national and subregional level on fisheries sciences, standardizing methods and approaches used for data processing, and broadening and strengthening the group of experts involved in stock assessment, among other things. In addition, some institutions improved their fisheries data collection programmes, and conducted socio-economic surveys to be used for informing fisheries policies, thus supporting the widening of the management framework to fully incorporate the EAF and the Blue Growth initiatives in the subregion. A number of technical meetings was organized, providing an opportunity for fishery stakeholders to share information, knowledge and expertise, and identify priorities among all the MedSudMed participating countries.

IMPACT

It is expected that the project will contribute to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 (Zero hunger) and SDG 14 (Life below water) and related targets, as a result of supporting the four participating countries to develop their national capacity on data and information systems to produce indicators for the SDGs targets.

KEY FACTS

Contribution
USD 569 350

Duration
March 2019 - March 2020

Resource Partner
European Union (EU)

Partners
Istituto per le Risorse Biologiche e le Biotecnologie Marine - Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (the Institute for Marine Biological Resources and Biotechnology - National Research Council), Italy; Marine Biology Research Centre, Libya; Ministry for the Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change, Malta; *Institut National des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer* (National Institute of Marine Science and Technologies), Tunisia

Beneficiaries
Fisheries scientists and staff in fisheries research institutions/administration from the participating countries (Italy, Libya, Malta and Tunisia); General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) members

ACTIVITIES

- The socio-economic survey conducted on socio-economic data collection for fisheries exploiting *Merluccius merluccius* and *Parapenaeus longirostris* in north Tunisia was expanded to the whole of the country.
- A standardized experimental bottom trawl survey in Tunisia was implemented, to gather data on spatial distribution and abundance of demersal fisheries resources and biocoenoses.
- A pilot action for the collection of fishery dependent data (catch, effort and biological sampling) in Tunisia was launched in 2018, focusing on some selected species in north Tunisia. The activity was further expanded in 2019, and resulting data was used to provide scientific advice for fisheries management.
- A study was conducted on the occurrence of elasmobranchs in fisheries of the Kerkennah Island, Gulf of Gabès (south Tunisia).
- Joint data processing was supported for the production of thematic maps in the project area, on the areas of concentration of eggs, larvae and recruits of *Sardinella aurita* and *Engraulis encrasicolus*.
- Some case studies in the participating countries in compiling information on small-scale fisheries were supported in 2017 and finalized in 2019, with the production of thematic maps as background for spatial-based fisheries management.
- Discussion on fishing gear selectivity and fishing technology in the four participating countries was promoted, in support of fisheries management.
- Ad hoc meetings were jointly organized to explore data and options to perform an appraisal of the state of the stocks and fisheries of European hake, Deep-water rose shrimps, Deep-water red shrimps, to address the emerging priority of managing fisheries in the central and eastern Mediterranean Sea.
- Progress was made in developing a framework for enhancing the biomass estimates and overall stock assessment for *Coryphaena hippurus*.
- Ten documents, scientific reports and papers were produced.



Project Code

FAO: GCP/INT/364/EC
ID donor: SI2.794545

Project Title

MedSudMed Year 7 - Assessment and Monitoring of the Fishery Resources and the Ecosystems in the Straits of Sicily

Contact

Enrico Arneri (MedSudMed Project Coordinator)
enrico.arneri@fao.org

Partnerships and Outreach

For more information, please contact: Reporting@fao.org

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, Italy