



**REPORT OF THE 5th MEETING OF THE EASTMED
CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE
ROME, ITALY 6 - 7 MAY 2014**



**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS**



REPORT OF THE 5th MEETING OF THE EASTMED CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

**ROME, ITALY
6 – 7 MAY 2014**



**ITALIAN MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD
AND FORESTRY POLICIES**



**Hellenic Ministry of
Foreign Affairs**

**Hellenic Ministry of Rural
Development and Food**



GCP/INT/041/EC – GRE – ITA

Athens (Greece), May 2014

The conclusions and recommendations given in this and in other documents in the *Scientific and Institutional Cooperation to Support Responsible Fisheries in the Eastern Mediterranean* series are those considered appropriate at the time of preparation. They may be modified in the light of further knowledge gained in subsequent stages of the Project. The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of FAO or donors concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or concerning the determination of its frontiers or boundaries.

Preface

The Project “Scientific and Institutional Cooperation to Support Responsible Fisheries in the Eastern Mediterranean- EastMed is executed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and funded by Greece, Italy and EC.

The Eastern Mediterranean countries have for long lacked a cooperation framework as created for other areas of the Mediterranean, namely the FAO sub-regional projects AdriaMed, MedSudMed, CopeMed II and ArtFiMed. This made it more difficult for some countries in the region to participate fully in international and regional initiatives for cooperation on fishery research and management. Following the very encouraging experience of technical and institutional assistance provided to countries by the other FAO sub-regional Projects,

EastMed

was born to support the development of regional cooperation and the further development of multidisciplinary expertise necessary to formulate appropriate management measures under the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the principles of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) to ensure rational, responsible and participative fisheries management

The project’s **longer-term objective** is to contribute to the sustainable management of marine fisheries in the Eastern Mediterranean, and thereby to contribute to supporting national economies and protecting the livelihoods of those involved in the fisheries sector.

The project’s **immediate objective** is to support and improve the capacity of national fishery departments in the sub-region to increase their scientific and technical information base for fisheries management and to develop coordinated and participative fisheries management plans in the Eastern Mediterranean sub-region.

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Publications

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Occasionally, relevant documents may be translated into national languages as EastMed Translations (GCP/INT/041/EC – GRE – ITA/ET-00)

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ABSTRACT

The fifth Coordination Committee Meeting of the EastMed Project was held in FAO HQ, Rome, Italy from 6 to 7 May 2014. The meeting was attended by delegations from Cyprus, Egypt, Gaza Strip & West Bank, Greece, Italy, Lebanon and Turkey, as well as staff from FAO HQ, FAO Mediterranean sub-regional projects and the GFCM. After the opening of the meeting and election of the chairperson, the activities during the 4th year of the project were presented, followed by the workplan of activities for the next period. The participants expressed their satisfaction with the project and thanked both the staff of the project and the donors for their contribution. The agreed work plan for the next period includes training and support in data collection, data analyses, activities aiming in strengthening stakeholders' awareness and activities in promoting regional participation and cooperation. The tasks of the project will be the follow up of the activities which had started in the previous years' such as activities in fisheries data collection and analysis, in institutional strengthening and capacity building, as well as new activities which are focused more on the regional co-operation between the countries such as the permanent Working Group on Stock Assessment in the Eastern Mediterranean and the workshop on *Lagocephalus sceleratus*. EastMed, finally, will continue to support the participation of experts from the project's area at the meetings of the FAO-GFCM and other relevant regional/international organizations. The EastMed Project, in close cooperation with the other Mediterranean sub-regional projects, will continue to find synergies among the various activities in the region.

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REPORT OF THE 5TH MEETING OF THE EASTMED CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

Rome, ITALY

6 – 7 May 2014

Opening of the meeting and election of the Chairman

1. The fifth Meeting of the Coordination Committee of the FAO EastMed sub-regional Project “Scientific Cooperation to Support Responsible Fisheries in the Eastern Mediterranean” was held in Rome, Italy, from the 6th to 7th May 2014, hosted by FAO headquarters in Rome.
2. The meeting was attended by representatives of Donors, delegations from countries participating in the project (Cyprus, Egypt, Gaza Strip & West Bank, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, and Turkey), representatives of the FAO Marine and Inland Service of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Resources Use and Conservation Division (FAO-FIRF), the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and staff of the other FAO Mediterranean Regional Projects CopeMed II, AdriaMed and MedSudMed. The list of participants is given in Annex I.
3. The FAO lead technical officer, Ms Gabriella Bianchi for the Mediterranean projects took the floor and gave a brief overview of the last phase of the EastMed project and the continuation of the Mediterranean projects. She mentioned that due to the short interim period until the end of the project a new coordinator was not appointed but instead the co-ordination was taken up by senior FAO officers from HQ. For the new Mediterranean projects she emphasized the importance of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF), and the increase of attention given to fisheries in the international arena, especially due to recent conferences, like the Global Oceans Action Summit on Food Security and Blue Growth (Den Hague, The Netherlands, 22-25 April 2014) where the major role of fisheries in ocean governance and the role of the “blue growth initiative” for the sustainable use of the oceans were discussed.
4. The new acting coordinator of the project, Mr. Pedro de Barros then took the floor and welcomed the participants at the FAO HQ. He was appointed as a chairperson by the participants after which all the members of the co-ordination committee introduced themselves.
5. The chairman then moved onto the adoption of the agenda. A point was introduced in any other matters for the presentation on the future Mediterranean programme. An issue was raised on interest of discussing the date and venue of the next meeting, and it was clarified that this is only tentative, and would be conducted once the new Mediterranean programme would be confirmed.

Report on the project's progress

6. The project's technical officer, Mr. Mark Dimech made a presentation of the major activities carried out by the EastMed project from April 2013 to April 2014, based on the document *EastMed CC5_02* (Annex III). The participants appreciated the amount of work done by the project and emphasized that it represents the follow up of the plan approved during the 4th Coordination Committee meeting (Rome, 6-7 April 2013).
7. The participants thanked the project for the activities which were carried out in the intersessional period, and highlighted the importance of all the achievements of the project, especially the work being conducted on fisheries data collection.
8. The Egyptian delegation highlighted the important work which has been done on data collection and that it is extremely important that this work is continued, especially since it is essential in order to monitor the fisheries resources. However the Egyptian delegation also mentioned that such a data collection system should be designed in a way that it is sustainable in the future and that every country should be able to continue data collection activities with minimal support.
9. Several delegations agreed with such comment, and the Lebanese delegation reiterated that this was particularly important for the country. Since resources are limited, any data collection activity would have to take into account such limitations. They also expressed the concern that the system put in place with the current pilot activity for data collection on catch and effort was not sustainable in the future due to the high demands on human resources, which Lebanon could not afford.
10. The GFCM representatives highlighted that the data collection in the countries should be in line with the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) which was adopted by the 16th Session of the GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and submitted to the GFCM 37th Session for its consideration, and fully agreed that any activities planned on data collection should be sustainable in the long term. The GFCM representatives highlighted that for GFCM it is important that any data submitted to the GFCM is considered as official data by the corresponding governments.
11. The Turkish delegation expressed gratitude to the project for the support provided to the pilot study on data collection in Antalya bay. These pilot activities served to catalyse data collection all over Turkey, in that for example the methodology used was adopted along all the Turkish coast. This had started with vessels 12 m and over in 2012 and then extended for the > 10 m vessels in 2013, including an increase in the sample size. Furthermore collaboration was increased with the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat).

12. Some delegations mentioned that the main problem they are still facing is the collection of catch and effort data, and further support was requested in this respect. It was pointed out that the next step would be to optimise the current data collection activities, make them more cost-effective, and determine ways on how to make them more sustainable in the long term.
13. A point was raised that the data collection activities should serve to satisfy the needs of the country in relation to fisheries management. The GFCM representative clarified that data collected through the GFCM Task 1 and the new GFCM DCRF also share the objective to serve the management of fisheries in its area of competence. The data collection activities in the countries should therefore be in line with the task I and the DCRF, which are also designed taking into account Countries' priorities and requirements.
14. The Egyptian delegation also highlighted the importance of the clam fisheries resources survey in which a new fishery could be developed and new production could be added to the market, and increase the food available for the country.

GFCM activities for the next intersessional period

15. The representative of the GFCM secretariat presented the activities in the provisional 2014-2015 programme of work of the GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee and the new GFCM Framework program (SAC, Annex IV). He highlighted the main activities that would be conducted within the regular GFCM program and the framework program, as well as some activities proposed at the 16th session of the SAC.
16. A question was raised on the need to collect more information on the small scale fisheries, while focus should also be given on the large scale fleet which are the main group responsible for illegal activities. It was clarified that information on the large scale fleet is more available than the small scale and this is the reason why a need has been identified to collect more information on the small scale fisheries. But this did not mean that collection of data on industrial fisheries would be dropped or reduced.
17. The representative of the GFCM secretariat thanked all the FAO sub-regional projects for their support to SAC. He also informed the participants that the schedule of the GFCM activities will be finalised at the plenary session.

Development of the project`s programme for the next period

18. The draft proposal for the EastMed 2014 work plan was presented, which was based on the previous years` work plans. It was underlined that the proposed work plan for the future period aims to consolidate the achievements of the past years and provide technical assistance at national and sub-regional level during the coming year. The work plan proposal is based on the scientific cooperation established within the framework of the project and FAO - GFCM. In principle, the majority of the activities proposed were considered of high relevance.
19. A question was raised on the possibility to use readymade software for the processing of socio-economic data. It was clarified that although there are software packages for specific socio-economic analysis, at this stage there is no software which is capable of processing socio-economic data and produce basic parameters and indicators. The aim of the software was to try to simplify the processes in a simple macro excel format. The participants agreed that although this software would be very useful, at this stage, this can be considered as a low priority since there are other issues which are currently more important.
20. It was mentioned that the same standard methodology to collect socio-economic data is also being used in other areas in the Mediterranean. Such a software would also be useful for other areas in the Mediterranean. At present guidelines on the collection of socio-economic data are also being drafted in order to assist in the data collection process.
21. With respect to the training course on stock assessment, a proposal was made also to include possible fisheries assessment methods which rely on extremely data poor situations, which are more qualitative in nature.
22. The representative from AdriaMed and MedsudMed informed the meeting that a joint training course in the “R” system would be conducted in order to improve the capacity in the region for data analysis, and that experts from the EastMed region would also be invited.
23. The GFCM representative pointed out that a strategy to improve the amount of stocks for which an assessment is carried out should be designed, and informed that a specific workshop to provide assessment on the status of stocks with limited data in the Mediterranean and Black Sea is scheduled in the 2014-2015 GFCM workplan. He also pointed out that on their opinion countries should capitalise on the efforts of the regional projects to produce more stock assessments. It was clarified that capacity building to undertake such assessments is important, however countries should also bring data if available so that it can be analysed together with other experts, in the working groups, and especially so for shared stocks.

24. With respect to the data collection the Egyptian delegation expressed the need to change some of the species so that stock assessments could be conducted for more species. The delegation also requested to extend the socio-economic survey to the non-motorized small scale vessels and support in the presentation of the results of the socio-economic survey to the stakeholders in Egypt. They also requested support on the catch and effort Samac system since they are facing some problems with the system.
25. The Egyptian delegation also showed interest to continue training on fisheries inspection and control. The GFCM highlighted that at the moment there are discussion with the European Fisheries Control Agency in order to support training activities on this aspect. In this respect further collaboration will be sought with the GFCM in order to satisfy the request made by the delegation.
26. A request was made to make courses on the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries available, including case studies where the EAF approach is implemented. The GFCM pointed out that a specific activity on the implementation of the GFCM guidelines for management plans in specific case studies, including deep water shrimps in eastern Mediterranean is being carried out through the GFCM Framework Programme, with the collaboration of the GFCM Members and the Regional Projects. It was mentioned that at this stage of the project, training courses on EAF can be conducted in collaboration with the MedLME project, however in order to undertake case studies, more time would be required and it would be more appropriate to work on such case studies within the new FAO Mediterranean program.
27. The GFCM representative also asked the participants from the countries of the EastMed project on their interest to undertake further actions in support of the continuation of work for the case study on a management plan of the deep water shrimps in the Eastern Mediterranean. The participants did not express any objection to this, however it was pointed out that at this stage there are other priorities.
28. The Lebanese delegation requested support to hold a validation workshop for the roadmap on the concerted action in Lebanon, in coordination with the GFCM. This was a high priority activity for the country and hence the co-ordination committee agreed to support such a workshop.
29. The Lebanese delegation had also requested an update on the fishing vessel design project since this work was conducted a long time ago and no report has been received so far.
30. A request was made by the Greek delegation on a follow up of the work on *Lagocephalus sceleratus* (silver-cheeked toadfish), which an alien species for the Mediterranean originating from the Indian Ocean. This species no inhabits the coastal zone of the SE Mediterranean, creating problems for the coastal fishermen of the area. *L. sceleratus* feeds on species of the coastal zone such as cephalopods, (ie. Octopus) and

fish ie. (mullet) reducing their quantities available for fishing and often destroying fishing gears such as nets. The species is caught in large quantities in areas such as the Dodecanese in Hellas, on the south coast of Turkey and in SE Cyprus. Because of the toxicity of the species, human consumption is banned/forbidden by the authorities. However, the species is still caught in several areas and therefore all existing solutions should be detected in order to exploit its stock in different ways, giving in this way an outlet to the fishermen.

31. The Coordination Committee was then briefed on the proposal of a single Mediterranean regional fisheries Programme developed by FAO and presented by the representative of FAO FIRF. The new Programme should be seen as the natural continuation of the existing four projects which are due to an end in December 2014. The overall objective of the Programme aimed at strengthening regional and country-specific capacity for sustainable fisheries through the application of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries. He provided an overview of the financial and budgetary situation of the current FAO Regional Fisheries Projects in the Mediterranean. The representative stressed that the new programme would build on the experience, lessons learned and result achieved and will improve the current mechanism for activities implementation by increasing more activities related to the EAF component, reducing the administrative layer and seeking the possibility to amplify the funding sources to potential Donors across the region.
32. He drew the attention of the participants on the structure of the new Mediterranean programme: the action will confirm the current existing sub-regionalization by keeping the sub regional specificities. In this view, four steering committees (one per sub-region) are foreseen to be established back to back with a regional steering committee. He concluded the presentation by illustrating the roadmap identified for the formulation of the new programme.

Work plan for the 5th year of the project

Institutional Strengthening

The Project will continue to support the needs in the Fisheries Departments, in particular:

33. **Web-based licensing system in Lebanon**

The Project will keep a follow up the functionality of the installed web based software and provide technical assistance if required.

34. **Develop a software application for the processing of socio-economic data**

The development of the software on socio economic will be processed in phases. During the first phase, a database application for the data entry of socio economic sample survey will be developed. During the second phase entry filters for data quality checks will be developed as well as tools for final estimations and export of indicators.

35. **Feasibility study for new fishing vessel designs and/or new vessel building materials in Lebanon**

As a follow up of the feasibility study for new fishing vessel designs and/or new vessel building materials, a report is expected to be produced which will include the status of the fishing vessels, the legal framework of the country related to the safety requirements of sea vessels, as well as a preliminary proposal for a new small scale fishing vessel design and material based on the feasibility study.

36. **Provide IT Support if and as necessary**

The Project will provide IT support when and if required by the participating countries.

Staff Training and Development

The project will continue to support on-the-job training, national and sub-regional workshops and opportunities for experts to participate in regional management meetings, in particular:

37. Support training course on the methodology for the calculation and processing of the socio-economic variables

In several countries of the Eastern Mediterranean datasets have been collected on the socio-economic aspects of fisheries. However there is a lack of expertise in analysing socio-economic data. To overcome this deficiency a training course on the methodology for the calculation and processing of socio-economic variables, including those required by GFCM Task 1, is proposed. The course will focus also on the definition of the variables, and will provide an insight in the methodology for the analysis and the use of the data and the relevant indicators.

38. Support training in stock assessment methods

A general need for training on stock assessment has been indicated in several cases by the countries participating in the project. The project will support training sessions organised by other FAO Mediterranean regional projects or other entities relevant to the Mediterranean. A course on the analysis of catch and effort data together with the application of surplus production models, general linear models, and time series analysis will be conducted for the project's area. Furthermore the possibility to run training courses uses fisheries assessment based on very data limited situations will be sought.

39. Training course on EAF

According to the recommendations and outputs of the workshop on management (Athens, 15-17 March 2011) as well as recommendations from the 3rd Coordination committee meeting (Bari, Italy, Apr 2012), it has been agreed that the project will support the organization of a training course on Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) in synergies with other FAO Mediterranean Regional Projects including FAO-FIRF. Such a course is planned to be carried out by FAO. The project will contribute to the organization of the course. The course would train managers and scientists on EAF principles in the management process.

40. Support training on Fisheries Inspection and Control

The administration has the role of safeguarding the sustainability of the fisheries resources and secures the safety of fisheries products. The enforcement of fisheries regulation relies on the authorised fish inspectors and therefore the need for further training has been identified. The project will continue to support the organization of similar seminars upon request of the countries.

After the successful implementation of the seminar on inspection and control in Lebanon and Egypt, the support of the project was requested to make a step forward by training

the inspectors on the field and particularly on board of the petrol vessel which will be soon available. Upon request of Egypt, the project will also support inspectors to be trained on board as well as to follow the whole inspection procedure in a developed country.

Data Collection and Analyses

41. Support pilot activities on the collection of catch, effort, socio-economic and biological data in Egypt, Gaza Strip and Lebanon

The project will continue to support ongoing data collection activities on catch, effort, biological and socio economic variables.

42. Follow up the development of the clam fishery in Egypt

After the successful clam fisheries resources survey conducted in Egypt targeting the clam *Chamelea gallina* (Venus clam or "Vongola" in Italian), the main constraint in developing this fishery seems be the market since at present most of the species encountered in the survey are not present on the Egyptian market. In this respect a market analysis should be performed in order to understand the best way on how to introduce the products on the local and international market. The follow up may include to devise a strategy to introduce the product on the local and international market.

43. Support the organization of sub regional WGs on stock assessment

The 3rd meeting of the PWGSA will be conducted in order to produce assessments by using data that are collected through the data collection programmes carried out in the region, including those supported by the project. During the meeting an effort will be made to conduct assessments on shared stocks.

44. Support the organization of a workshop on the potential use of the puffer fish *Lagocephalus sceleratus*

A workshop is being planned by the authority of the region of Dodecanes on the potential use of natural toxin of puffer *Lagocephalus sceleratus*, for medical purposes or other uses that will arise during the. The Greek representative proposed that this workshop would be conducted under the auspice of EastMed and the participation of experts from the EastMed countries would be supported by the FAO EastMed project.

Increased Participation and Cooperation

45. Strengthening the cooperation with the other FAO Regional Projects

The existing cooperation with the other FAO sub-regional projects AdriaMed, MedSudMed, CopeMed II and Med LME will be further strengthened. In this context, synergies are foreseen with the projects. Training activities will be coordinated among all the projects, in order to avoid duplication or overlapping of activities. The participation of other experts from the projects in training courses organized by EastMed and vice versa will be foreseen. The preparation of common informative material that can improve the visibility of the projects in the Mediterranean area is foreseen.

46. Support Government staff to attend and fully participating in GFCM meetings

The Project will continue to strengthen the international and regional cooperation at Mediterranean level with the GFCM and its related bodies (SAC, Sub-Committees, Working Groups), according to budget availability, through the support to the preparation of scientific contributions for GFCM events, the participation of experts from the EastMed countries in GFCM events and through support to the countries to be compliant with the GFCM requirements.

47. Support the organization of a final stock-taking Coordination Committee meetings to draw lessons learned, and formulate recommendations regarding requirements and priorities for fisheries management and research

The project may organize a final stock-taking meeting of the Coordination Committee, where lessons learned and possible recommendations regarding requirements and priorities will be discussed, also in the light of a possible follow-up project supporting the development of national and regional capacity for fisheries management in the Mediterranean

48. Support the organization of a validation workshop for the road map on the concerted action in Lebanon.

The project will co-organize together with the GFCM a validation workshop on the road map which was developed for Lebanon which was based on the concerted action for the country.

49. Disseminate Project's results and develop fishery information systems through the use/development of databases, web pages and technical papers

The contents, and consequently the EastMed portal (www.faoeastmed.org), will continue to be updated and further developed in order to make it always easily accessible in areas of interest to website users. The Project will continue to disseminate the project's results through the preparation of technical documents, meeting reports and posters.

Appendix I Priority list of activities to be held in the next intercessional period

Activity	Priority
Institutional strengthening	
Web-based licensing system in Lebanon	High
Develop a software application for the processing of socio-economic data	Low
Provide IT Support if and as necessary	Medium
Training	
Support training on the processing of socio-economic data	High
Support training in stock assessment methods	Medium
Support training on EAF - support through Med LME project	Medium
Support training on fisheries inspection and control	Medium
Data collection and Analysis	
Support pilot activities on data collection	High
Follow up the development of the clam fishery in Egypt	Medium
Support the organization of sub regional WGs on stock assessment - depending on the high participation from developing countries	High
Support workshop on the potential use of puffer fish <i>L. sceleratus</i>	Low
Increased Participation and Cooperation	
Support Government staff to attend and fully participating in GFCM meetings	High
Validation workshop for the road map on the concerted action Lebanon	High

ANNEXES

Annex I - List of Participants

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Annex II - Agenda

Annotated Draft Agenda

Day 1 :Tuesday 6th May, 9:00-18:00

1. Opening of the meeting and election of the Chairperson

- Welcome
- Introduction of the participating countries international organisations and other participants.
- Designation of the chairperson

2. Adoption of the agenda

3. Report on the Project's progress

- Presentation of the EastMed Project 4th year activities
Information will be given on the progress and achievements of the project since the last Coordination Committee Meeting. The project's initiatives to seek additional strategic alliances with other projects and GFCM will also be mentioned.

4. GFCM activities for the next intersessional period

- Presentation of the GFCM planned scientific and technical activities of relevance to the project.

5. Project's Programme for the next period

- Presentation of the work plan for the next period
Following the current activities of the project, the work plan for the next intersessional period will be discussed and finalised. The Committee will be asked to provide feedback on the work plan presented.

7. Any other matters

Presentation on the Future Mediterranean program

Day 2: Wednesday 7th May, 9:00-11:00

9. Adoption of the report

Coffee breaks: 11:00 - 11:30 and 16:00 - 16:30
Lunch breaks: 13:00 - 14:30

Annex III - Report on the Intersessional Activities of the Project

(April 2013 – April 2014)

FAO EastMed Working Document

Introduction

This document summarizes the main activities carried out by the Project EastMed from April 2013 – April 2014, including workshops, training, research activities and the technical assistance provided to the countries; as well as the cooperation established with the GFCM, the SAC and Sub-Committees and other relevant institutions. The work programme and recommendations of the 4th coordination committee meeting of the EastMed Coordination Committee (Rome, 4-5th April 2013) were mostly implemented.

The activities carried out during the inter-committee period comply with the methodological framework of the project and its mandate for this phase. This report details the main outputs of the activities of the project and the results achieved with direct reference to the following project components:

- 1) Institutional strengthening.
- 2) Staff training and development.
- 3) Data collection and analysis.
- 4) Increased participation and Cooperation.

Component 1 - Institutional Strengthening

To undertake institutional analysis and needs assessments of Fisheries Departments and provide recommendations for change and support

This component will ensure that the Fisheries Departments of the Eastern Mediterranean countries have the institutional structure, financial capacity and technical competences necessary to undertake the fundamental elements of fisheries management, and can collect fishery statistics, perform fisheries assessments and characterize marine ecosystems.

In Egypt a web-supported computer system was set up in February 2012 and continued to be developed in 2013 with an internet Samac-Web for the storage and analysis of catch/effort data collected in outposts.

After the appraisal of the current fisheries licensing system in Lebanon which is handled manually and the proposal to develop a web based system, a prototype system for the analysis of fleet data was demonstrated to the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA). The software was delivered to the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) in December 2012 and was tested for bugs. The development of the software was finished in 2013 after a testing period by the Lebanese Fisheries department. The system is now operational, however there were some logistical problems in the provision of internet access in the outposts of the Ministry of Agriculture, and this has hampered the full use of the system.

Project Component 2 - Staff Training and Development

National and sub-regional workshops and on-the-job training will be organized.

Under this component it is expected that the capabilities of the staff of the national administrations are further developed, covering various components of regionally consistent multi-disciplinary fisheries appraisal (including stock assessment) and management. The project will offer on-the-job training, national and sub-regional workshops and opportunities for experts to participate in regional management meetings. This will be undertaken on a case by case basis on issues identified by the project or requested by the fisheries departments.

Training courses and technical support on socio-economic data collection were provided to the countries. The support included lectures and practical work experience in the field with interviews with fishers. The aims of the training courses were to introduce the general scheme and the goals of the data collection survey, to provide the definition of the variables, to introduce the methodologies to validate the questionnaire and train the data collectors on the approach that should be followed to interview the fishers.

A training workshop on EAF was organised from the 9th to the 14th of June 2013 under a cooperation with the FAO component of the project "Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystem", and the other FAO-led projects CopeMed II, AdriaMed, MedSudMed, EastMed and EAF-Nansen. The aim of the five-day workshop was to improve the understanding of EAF and EAA (Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture) and of the processes involved in the preparation and implementation of fisheries and aquaculture management plans by experts from the fisheries management and research. The training workshop was quite interesting and useful to the participants since it enhanced the understanding of and familiarity with the EAF/EAA process resulting in an increase in the capacity of their home institutions to carry out the development and implementation of fisheries and aquaculture management plans compatible with EAF/EAA. Four participants from the EastMed region attended the course.

The project also participated in a training course for trainers on EAF. The training course was organised within the framework of the EAF Nansen project. This ten-day course aimed at improving the understanding of EAF with specific emphasis on the processes involved in the preparation and implementation of fisheries management plans. The EAF Toolbox aided in looking for practical solutions that can be applied given the stakeholders' circumstances and resources, and guided the participants in going through all the components of the EAF, including the ecological, socio-economic, governance and external factors. The knowledge gained will increase the capacity of FAO to carry out training courses on EAF in the Mediterranean, especially in the Eastern part.

The project supported the participation of 3 experts from countries of the project's area at the GFCM Workshop on fisheries data collection in the Mediterranean Sea (Rome, Italy, March 2013).

The project supported the participation one expert at the training course using FLR for quantitative fisheries advice at the EC joint research centre (Ispra, Italy, March 2013).

The project supported the participation of one expert at the GFCM training session on improving the analysis of Fisheries data: An introduction to R and the Fisheries Library based on R; FLR (Rome, Italy, November 2013).

Project Component 3 - Data Collection and Analyses

The project will assist countries to improve/develop fishing vessel surveys, national catch, effort and socio-economic surveys, and ecosystem characterisation.

This component introduces the fundamentals of fisheries management in terms of building capacity of fisheries departments and other relevant institutions to collect and analyze data and information. The project will assist the countries in designing, improving and implementing national data collection programmes, and will monitor these activities. Additionally, the project will carry out experimental fisheries resources surveys, in order to support and develop the capacity of participating countries to undertake more coordinated and cooperative fisheries research activities in support of fisheries management in the Eastern Mediterranean sub-region in partnership with the GFCM.

Within the fisheries-dependent data collection survey in Egypt, the project supported the collection of biological data for the second year (January 2013 to December 2013). Catch and effort data have been collected since 2011. During the second year a follow up of the progress in collecting the biological data together with the processing of the data was conducted. Prior to the implementation of the second year of biological data collection, the staff of the project supported the Egyptian scientists in the examination of the data, identification of gaps and the recommendation of improvements to the biological sampling which were then implemented in the second year of data collection.

After the training course conducted by the staff of the project in Antalya Bay, Turkey on catch, effort, biological and socio-economic data collection, a pilot survey on data collection was started in September 2012 and continued through 2013. After 4 months of data collection, a mission was organised in 2013 to review the progress of the data collection, answer to any problems the data collectors might have and to conduct some data analysis for checking the quality of the data.

After the training courses on fisheries data collection in Gaza Strip a workplan on a pilot study on data collection was discussed with the colleagues in Gaza. The pilot study included the refinement of the catch and effort system, the collection of biological parameters for four species (which include three small pelagic species namely *Sardinella aurita*, *Scomber japonicus* and *Alepes djedaba*, and one demersal species, *Upeneus mollucensis*) and the collection of socio-economic parameters. The data collection was started in April 2013. The catch, effort and socio-economic data has been collected, entered in the computer systems and partially analyzed, with the support of the project's staff

A pilot survey on the collection of catch and effort data was started in 2013, in Lebanon in collaboration with the University of Balamand. The aim was to provide support to the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture for the implementation of the national pilot survey on fisheries dependent data collection in Lebanon, including training of the related personnel. It included several activities where the related personnel were trained on the data collection system, including the filling of the catch/effort forms for data collectors, followed by pilot testing of the catch/effort monitoring program.

A fisheries independent survey was conducted in Egypt in April - May 2013 in order to explore the possibility of exploiting the venus clam *Chamelea gallina*. The study was implemented after the 3rd EastMed Coordination Committee (19-20 April, 2012, Bari, Italy), where the participants agreed to conduct the first clam fisheries resources survey in Egypt. Apart from this in the 4th EastMed Coordination Committee (4-5 April, 2013, Rome, Italy), a request was made to determine the environmental impacts of the hydraulic dredge on the bottom.

Following this request an extensive literature review was made on the subject. In total 126 hauls were conducted covering a coastline of about 60 km from 3 - 10 m in depth. All the species sampled were counted and weighed and *Chamelea gallina* samples were also kept for further processing in the laboratory, where the collection of stock parameters, microbiological and heavy metal analysis were conducted. Overall the results show that the commercial clam *Chamelea gallina* has a potential for exploitation together with other potentially commercial species such as the changeable nassa *Nassarius mutabilis* and the bivalve *Anadara polii*. Most of the biomass is located on the Western side of the area investigated and close to the fishing port of Rasheed, making the area more easily reachable. The results obtained from the bacterial and heavy metal analysis show that the clams are in general within safe limits especially in the western and middle parts of the investigated area and when compared to other commercially exploited bivalve species in Egypt such as Grooved carpet shell *Tapes decussatus*. Most of the potential production would probably be for local consumption in Egypt, since export is rather difficult due to the special regulations for the import of bivalve species. The main constraint for the commercialization of the products will be the market, since these species are at present not commercialized in Egypt, so a market chain analysis should be conducted and a market strategy should be devised in order to successfully introduce the product in the local markets.

The second meeting of the EASTMED Permanent Working Group on Stock Assessment was held in Kavala (Greece) from 9 to 14 of September 2013. It was attended by experts from Egypt, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, and Turkey as well as FAO staff. The meeting had six main general objectives i) to identify surveys and fishery-dependent data collection programs carried out in the last 10 years in each country of the EastMed area; ii) to provide advice on how to increase the standardization between surveys carried out in the EastMed area; iii) to process with raw data that has been collected through the pilot activities supported by the project and/or supported by the countries within the framework of the European DCF, in order to produce stock assessments, iv) to make an effort to identify at least some shared stocks, v) to discuss the possibility of establishing two WGs on stock assessment, one for demersals and one for small pelagics, vi) to define gaps existed in the sampling protocol which is used during the implementation of the pilot activities on data collection and decide on amendments. Furthermore five stock assessments were completed and other preliminary analyses were carried out. The five stocks assessed, represented also by two Lessepsian species, showed a state of overfishing with the exception of *Spicara smaris* in GSA 25.

The project supported technically and financially an assessment of the socio-economic situation of the Egyptian fisheries sector. In order to undertake such an assessment several information was gathered, from literature, from several fishers and other stakeholders, and a sampling survey in order to investigate the main socio-economic characteristics of the motorized fishing vessels by type of fishery. The study produced very important information and recommendations for the management of Egyptian fisheries under the framework of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF)..

Project Component 4 - Increased Participation and Cooperation

The Project will promote sub-regional cooperation and collaboration for fishery research, monitoring and management and will support Government staff to attend and fully participating in GFCM (and other) regional meetings

In order to strengthen international and regional cooperation the project interacts closely with the other FAO sub-regional projects, AdriaMed, MedsudMed, CopeMed II, ArtFiMed and MedLME throughout the year with several co-ordination meetings. These meetings were held in order to consolidate and envisage common activities. In this respect the project also participated to in the meetings of the Coordination Committees of AdriaMed, MedsudMed, CopeMed II, where synergies were identified. Training activities were coordinated among all the Projects, in order to avoid duplication or overlapping of activities. The participation of experts from the other projects in training courses organized by EastMed and vice versa was organised. Common informative material were prepared that can improve the visibility of the Regional Projects in the Mediterranean.

Cooperation was further sustained with the GFCM Secretariat and the GFCM subsidiary bodies. EastMed continued to support the activities of the GFCM by providing scientific contributions for discussion and by supporting the participation of several experts from the Eastern Mediterranean countries to GFCM and other international activities.

The project participated at the round table on innovation and best practices in the fishery production chain in the Near East: the Lebanese case in Genoa Italy from the 9th to the 11th of May. The project has been invited to participate in this round table which was organised as one of the activities of the annual Slow Fish conference, which is dedicated to the world of fish and marine ecosystems and it brings together several fishers, producers, and consumers and experts in order to share and display fisheries products and have short Workshops on several aspects on sustainable fisheries. The round table was fruitful since the project was informed in detail on the activities which are being held in Lebanon. There were many constructive discussions and the link between the FAO EastMed project and the other entities conducting activities in Lebanon was strengthened.

The FAO Mediterranean projects AdriaMed, CopeMed, EastMed and MedSudMed participated at the GFCM Task Force on the modernization of GFCM, specifically to the issues related with the activities of the projects. The second meeting on the validation of the outcomes of the Task Force was held in Split attended by 48 participants, including representatives of the GFCM members, the FAO, non-governmental organizations and both the GFCM Bureau and the Secretariat.

The project together with the other FAO Regional Mediterranean Projects participated in a meeting at DG Mare in Brussels. The meeting was an opportunity to analyze the main results and achievements of the four FAO projects, summarizing the main activities promoted, supported or carried out by the FAO projects in collaboration with the fisheries research Institutes, national fisheries administrations, the GFCM and the donors. The participants discussed priorities for the next year 2014 and a concept note for a new joint Mediterranean-wide programme. The main objective of the new proposal is *to strengthen regional and country specific efforts to create conditions to develop sustainable fisheries management regimes specifically through the application of the EAF*. The two parties agreed in a roadmap for discussions of the concept note and the derived programme with the projects' members, the current donors (EU, Spain, Italy, Greece and Regione Siciliana) and potential new donors.

On the occasion of the 10th International Conference on Artificial Reefs and Related Aquatic Habitats (CARAH) which took place from 23-27 September 2013 in Izmir (Turkey), GFCM in collaboration with the EastMed project organized a workshop devoted to the Mediterranean and Black Sea. In particular the Workshop aimed at discussing the draft guidelines for artificial reefs applications in the context of an integrated maritime approach.

The project participated at the sub-regional Technical Workshop on Fisheries Multiannual Management Plans for the Western, Central and Eastern Mediterranean which was part of an action within the GFCM Framework Programme addressing the following fisheries: i) small pelagics fisheries in the Alborán Sea; ii) rose shrimp and associated species in the Strait of Sicily; iii) deep water red shrimps in central-eastern Mediterranean areas and iv) the fisheries for eels in the Mediterranean. For these case studies, the objectives of the workshop were: i) to assess the technical feasibility of the GFCM guidelines for the development of multiannual management plans, ii) to identify issues and needs for the management of each case study and iii) to progress towards the preparation of documents and strategies supporting management plans. The minimum structure and common criteria upon which multiannual fisheries management plans have to be built for the case studies, were agreed upon.

The project participated in a meeting with donors and presented a joint Mediterranean-wide concept note concerning the future of FAO fisheries projects in the Mediterranean to the permanent Representatives to FAO of the Mediterranean countries. The concept note described the Mediterranean-wide programme that should be the follow-up of the four current FAO sub-regional projects AdriaMed, CopeMed, EastMed and MedSudMed. A presentation was given of the main achievements, shortcomings, lessons learned and challenges for driving sustainable fisheries in the Mediterranean as outcomes of the existing regional projects, which was followed by presenting the concept note. The participants commented on financial issues as well as the necessity to keep the sub-regionality, however they agreed to proceed with the joint Mediterranean programme.

Under the coordination of the GFCM and the support of the Maltese fisheries administration, co-sponsored by the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, the FAO sub-regional projects AdriaMed, CopeMed II, MedSudMed and EastMed, CIHEAM, WWF and MedPAN, over 170 participants from all fisheries actors of the Mediterranean and Black Sea met in Malta to share experiences and make steps towards a sustainable future for small-scale fisheries in the region. Discussions have laid the groundwork for a regional project fostering knowledge of all the components linked to small-scale fisheries and involving all interested stakeholders and have led to a collaboration agreement signed between fishers from the Northern and Southern Mediterranean coasts. It is the first time ever that such a platform was created to enable cooperation between fishers from both sides of the Mediterranean. The staff of EastMed, other FAO staff from the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, the FAO sub-regional office in Tunis and the FAO office in Ankara and staff of the other FAO Mediterranean projects participated in this symposium. EastMed staff gave two presentations during session I and two in session IV. Copies of documents and posters on artisanal fisheries produced by EastMed were displayed and distributed to the participants.

The project participated at the second symposium on Fishery-Dependent Information in Rome, Italy 3-6 March, 2014, was an international conference for resource managers, scientists and the fishing sector on the collection and interpretation of information in the context of the ecosystem approach. With the support of the project, three scientific posters from the EastMed region were presented at the conference by their authors (one from Egypt, Lebanon and Turkey). Besides, a short oral presentation was made on the comparative analysis of fisheries socio-economic data collection in the Mediterranean, in a cooperation among the staff of the different FAO Mediterranean projects lessons learned and future prospects.

Technical documents have been prepared and the ones published are available online through the website. Hard copies have also been distributed to participating countries. Posters were prepared, and presentations were given to several meetings, in which the publications were distributed.

The project web site (www.faoeastmed.org) has been improved and active links have been created with the websites of the other sub-regional projects and GFCM. It is continuously updated with new information, and on the home page a new section on upcoming events was developed.

Beneficiary countries

Countries with waters included in the GFCM
Geographical Sub-Areas (GSAs) 19-20 and 22-28

Donors

Greece

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Rural Development and Food

Italy

- Ministry of Agriculture Food and Forestry Policies

European Community

- Directorate General of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG-MARE)



Hellenic Ministry of
Foreign Affairs

Hellenic Ministry of Rural
Development and Food



ITALIAN MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD
AND FORESTRY POLICIES



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