



ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING OF THE FISHERY RESOURCES  
AND THE ECOSYSTEMS IN THE STRAITS OF SICILY

*MiPAAF*

MEDSUDMED  
GCP/RER/010/ITA

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Report of the Eighth Meeting of the  
Coordination Committee

Tajoura, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, 18-19 May 2010

The conclusions and recommendations given in this and in other documents in the *Assessment and Monitoring of the Fishery Resources and Ecosystems in the Straits of Sicily* Project 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 MiPAAF concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or concerning the determination of its frontiers or boundaries.

## Preface

The Regional Project “Assessment and Monitoring of the Fishery Resources and the Ecosystems in the Straits of Sicily” (MedSudMed) is executed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and funded by the Italian Ministry of Agriculture Food and Forestry Policies (MiPAAF).

MedSudMed promotes scientific cooperation between research institutions of the four participating countries (Italy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malta and Tunisia), for the continuous and dynamic assessment and monitoring of the state of the fisheries resources and the ecosystems in this area of the Mediterranean.

Research and training are supported to increase and use knowledge on fisheries ecology and ecosystems, and to create a regional network of expertise. Particular attention is given to the technical coordination of the research between the countries, which should contribute to the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries. Consideration is also given to the development of an appropriate tool for the management and processing of data related to fisheries and their ecosystems.

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GCP/RER/010/ITA Publications

MedSudMed Project publications are issued as series of Technical Documents (GCP/RER/010/ITA/MSM-TD-00) related to meetings, missions and research organized by or conducted within the framework of the Project.

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For bibliographic purposes this document  
should be cited as follows:

MedSudMed. 2010. Report of the Eighth Meeting of the Coordination Committee. FAO-MiPAAF Assessment and Monitoring of the Fisheries Resources and Ecosystems in the Straits of Sicily. GCP/RER/010/ITA/MSM-TD-25. *MedSudMed Technical Documents*, No 25: 27pp.

## Preparation of this document

This document is the final version of the report of the Seventh Meeting of the Coordination Committee, organized by the FAO-MedSudMed Project (Assessment and Monitoring of the Fisheries Resources and the Ecosystems in the Straits of Sicily), Tajoura, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, 18–19 May 2010.

## Acknowledgements

The Chairman of the General Authority of Marine Wealth, Mr Hussein A. Zaroug, and the Director of the Marine biology Research Centre of Tajoura Mr Nouredine Essarbout, who provided kind hospitality and assistance in the organization of the meeting, are gratefully acknowledged.

MedSudMed

Report of the Eighth Meeting of the Coordination Committee, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Tajoura, 18-19 May 2010.

*MedSudMed Technical Documents*. No.25. GCP/RER/ITA/MSM-TD- 25, Rome, 2010: 27pp.

### **ABSTRACT**

The Eighth Meeting of the MedSudMed Coordination Committee was attended by representatives of the Donor (Italy), delegations from the countries participating in the Project (Italy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malta and Tunisia), representatives of the FAO GFCM Secretariat, the FAO Technical Backstopping Officer for regional Mediterranean Projects, the FAO Fisheries Resources Officer, from the FAO AdriaMed Project as well as the Project Coordinator of CopeMed II and EastMed Projects. A brief remind was made on the Project objectives and activities and a presentation of the activities implemented for the MedSudMed components during the inter-session period was made. The proposed work plan for the next period was discussed and approved. It focuses on the same priorities of standardizing approaches, increasing scientific knowledge on fishery resources and ecosystems, strengthening national expertise and regional cooperation. A positive appraisal of the MedSudMed Project for supporting all the participating countries in the assessment and monitoring of the fisheries resources and for the good job carried out since the beginning was given. The belief that continuing the Project can only bring success and be beneficial for each of the participating countries was affirmed.

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**Report of the Eighth meeting of the MedSudMed Coordination Committee  
Tajoura (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), 18-19 may 2010**

**Opening of the meeting and election of the Chairperson (Agenda Item n.1)**

1. The eighth Coordination Committee Meeting of the FAO Regional Project MedSudMed “Assessment and Monitoring of the Fishery Resources and Ecosystems in the Straits of Sicily” was held on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> May 2010 in Tajoura (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) kindly hosted by the Marine Biology Research Centre of Tajoura.
2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Donor, representatives from the countries participating in the Project (Italy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malta and Tunisia), staff of FAO-Fisheries and Aquaculture Resources Use and Conservation Division (FAO FIRF), representatives of other FAO Regional Projects (namely AdriaMed, CopeMed II and EastMed), the Executive Secretary a.i. of the FAO General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (FAO GFCM) as well as the staff of the FAO MedSudMed Project (Annex A).
3. The Secretary of the General Authority of Marine Wealth, Mr H. A. Zaroug, welcomed all the Committee Meeting participants on behalf of the Government of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and expressed his honour at having the Committee members gathered in Tajoura for the Meeting. He recalled that this was the second meeting of the MedSudMed Coordination Committee hosted in Libya, and the eighth overall. For many years cooperation has been pursued and strengthened with discussions and achievements; numerous papers have been produced, joint expeditions and joint research activities have been carried out, the results of which have to be commended and recognized.
4. Moreover he underlined that some issues still have to be completed. In particular he called the attention of the meeting to the theme of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), suggesting that the work on this theme could be developed further. He also acknowledged the good number of publications produced by the Project and circulated at the meeting; the Committee was also reminded that some of the results of Project research activities are taking a long time to be published.
5. Finally he thanked the Project Donor, the Project staff and all the people who have contributed to the accomplishment of MedSudMed activities over the years. He expressed the hope that the constructive atmosphere maintained throughout the Project’s life would help in obtaining further good results in the years to come.
6. The Director of the Marine Biology Research Centre (MBRC), Mr Nureddine Essarbout, welcomed the Committee members gathered in Libya in occasion of the eighth MedSudMed Coordination Committee meeting. He stated that such relevant initiatives as MedSudMed should be further reinforced, as they constitute common tools to deal with common resources.

7. The Project Coordinator, Mr Enrico Arneri, took the floor and welcomed the national representatives. The MBRC was thanked for hosting the meeting, being the second official FAO MedSudMed Coordination committee meeting held in the country following the 3rd Coordination Committee meeting in Tajoura in 2005. The Project Coordinator mentioned that the activities of the previous year, to be summarized during the meeting, have been formulated according to the orientation of the Project Coordination Committee. An open discussion on the activities to be carried out during the coming year is essential to further improve the technical assistance to the countries, and strengthen the scientific cooperation among the countries and the collaboration with the FAO GFCM.
8. The Director of the Marine Biology Research Centre, Mr Nurreddin Essarbout, was elected as Chairperson and declared the meeting open.

### **Adoption of the Agenda (Agenda Item N. 2)**

9. The Agenda (Annex B) was presented to the Coordination Committee. The Chairman requested any comments or alterations considered necessary. Following the request of the Acting Executive Secretary of the FAO General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (FAO GFCM), Mr Abdellah Srouf, it was agreed to include an agenda item dedicated to the FAO GFCM work programme. The Agenda was thus adopted.
10. A set of documents prepared by the Project staff was previously distributed to the participants of the meeting.

### **Report on the Project's Progress (Agenda Item N. 3)**

11. The Project Fisheries Monitoring Expert, Mr Luca Ceriola, introduced this point of the agenda and the document "Report on the Project's progress", in which the main activities carried out by MedSudMed between March 2009 and April 2010 are presented. The activities described correspond to the work programme and recommendations of the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MedSudMed Coordination Committee held in Sliema, Malta, in February 2009.
12. The first semester of 2009 was dedicated in part to the Internal FAO Technical Review of the Project that resulted from the request by the Italian Donor to evaluate Project activities and to recommend any complementary measures for an extension period. Part of the Project's efforts was also devoted to the drafting of a concept note for a new Project proposal for a third phase of MedSudMed which is to be presented to the Italian Donor, by taking into consideration the comments and suggestions collected during the technical review mission and the new challenges for fisheries management in the Project area and in the Mediterranean (CC/08/05).
13. The main activities reported included, among others, the joint MedSudMed and CopeMed II Working Group on *Parapenaeus longirostris* and related fisheries, the



identification of nurseries and spawning areas for fisheries target species and, the standardisation of trawl surveys procedures held in Malta.

14. The Project also supported the joint processing and elaboration of the data collected during the MedSudMed cooperative ichthyoplankton and acoustic surveys carried in Libyan waters in summer 2008 and the joint analysis of acoustic and oceanographic data, including ichthyoplankton samples.
15. The meeting was further informed on the efforts dedicated to the organisation of *ad hoc* and on-the-job trainings activities requested by the participating institutes, as well as the technical support that continues to be provided to the other FAO Regional Projects as requested, and the support given to the FAO GFCM and its subsidiary bodies.
16. The Committee members expressed their appreciation for the amount of work done by the Project and emphasized that it represents effective implementation of the programme of work approved by the last Coordination Committee meeting.
17. The Committee's attention was drawn to document CC/08/04, the Summary of the Internal FAO Technical Review of the MedSudMed Project. Mr Pedro de Barros, FAO Fishery Resources Officer and Lead Technical Officer for the FAO FIRF Mediterranean Projects, presented the summary of the Project review carried out during 2009.
18. The presentation covered the following points: i) Background and execution of the review; ii) Review of Project Objectives and main Activities carried out; iii) Main remaining gaps regarding the activities and Objectives; iv) Main constraints and problems encountered; v) Relevance of the present phase of the Project for development objectives; vi) Sustainability of the results achieved after termination of the Project; vii) Recommendations on themes to focus on for a potential next phase of the Project.
19. Overall, the review concluded that on top of an impressive list of activities carried out, the main achievements of the Project were linked to the regional cooperation and communicative environment created. Furthermore the review highlighted the remarkable increase in human and institutional capacity of the national fisheries institutions participating in the Project as well as the agreement established on standardisation of methods for research and data analysis.
20. The main gaps identified related to: i) Standardization and harmonization of the scientific surveys at sea not completed, due mostly to incomplete coverage of the area by the surveys; ii) Studies on the influence of regional differences in the effect of fishing effort on fish stock structure; iii) Spatial characterisation of the fishing effort in the region; iv) Extension to other regions of the work done in GSA 15 on integration of environmental and fisheries data; v) Insufficient data and information on interaction between protected pelagic species and fisheries; vi) Connection between MPA and fisheries management and spatial pattern of nursery areas. The need to address EAF principles in a more systematic way was also pointed out.

21. The coordination shortage experienced by the Project in the last years, the insufficient number of staff of the national fisheries institutions to cover all main areas of work, or to ensure resilience of the institutions to possible staff loss, and a frequent focus on the needs of individual countries rather than on regional interests were indicated as the main constraints and problems faced by the Project in its current phase. The Project was considered to be very relevant to the development priorities and needs of the region, because it contributed directly and significantly to creating a scientific framework for the sustainability of the fisheries sector of the participating countries, given the large importance of shared stocks in the area. Furthermore, the results achieved were evaluated as equally supported by the participating institutions, however these results were considered nevertheless to be insufficient to ensure full sustainability, especially due to the low number of staff trained.
22. The review recommended the prolongation of the Project through a new phase with a minimum duration of 4-5 years, that should contribute to reinforcing the sustainability of the results already achieved, but also to strengthening the work on the areas identified as lacking and explicitly address the development of national capacity for providing scientific advice to manage fisheries according to the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF).
23. Finally the review suggested and listed four main areas that should be addressed by this new phase. These included i) Reinforce and support the existing networking process and cooperative frameworks established by the Project; ii) Continue supporting national capacity for fisheries-related research activities, with a special focus on multidisciplinary research in support of fisheries management compatible with EAF; iii) Reinforce activities on training and human capacity development of staff and fisheries institutions; iv) Support a fuller implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) and the EAF.
24. General consensus with the report's findings was expressed by the Committee. The delegates took the opportunity to renew the maximum appreciation of the MedSudMed Project in all areas of activity being implemented, sharing the positive appraisal expressed by the consultant as well as his recommendation to further extend the Project activities. The Committee also expressed the willingness to see the suggestions and the priorities that were identified in the technical review in the new Project proposal, so that the remaining gaps will be minimized in the new phase.
25. The Committee acknowledged with satisfaction the appraisal produced by the Technical review and the overall progress achieved concerning scientific cooperation by the Project.
26. The Committee expressed its trust in having the Project activities extended in the future in order to continue supporting the scientific development of the participating institutions in support of sustainable fisheries management in the sub-region.
27. The Representative of Italy, Mr Plinio Conte, acknowledged the results of the Technical Review and expressed his country's agreement with the recommendation to continue the

work of the Project. He also informed the Committee that Italy had just approved to extend its support to the Project activities with additional funds for the next 12 months, and was in the process of studying the possible inclusion of support for the Project in the plans for the next three-year period 2011-2013.

28. The Tunisian representative, Mr Ridha M'Rabet, briefly recalled the catalytic crucial role played by MedSudMed for the establishment of more independent cooperative frameworks in the Project area. He brought two examples of bilateral agreements that the INSTM has signed with the Libyan and Italian scientific counterparts independently of the Project but which were possible only due to the linkages created by MedSudMed. All this resulted in the valuable and constructive support to the progress of scientific cooperation in the Project area. For the next phase he expressed the hope and the necessity that due consideration will be given to critical issues such as those related to the involvement of other stakeholders and fisheries administration in the Project activities
29. The Project Coordinator of CopeMed II, Mr Juan Antonio Camiñas, drew similarities between the two Projects and underlined the coordination among MedSudMed and CopeMed II activities, commenting that, as for CopeMed II, the future evolution of MedSudMed should continue to reinforce the countries' capacity. He agreed with the Tunisian representative that it is important to include the promotion of the participation of stakeholders in the fisheries management process, with the inclusion of the fisheries administrations. General consensus on the needs mentioned was expressed by all the delegates. The meeting was then reminded that the development of the fisheries administrations and promotion of stakeholder participation in the fisheries management process is one of the main objectives of CopeMed II and the two Projects will cooperate to maximize the synergies between them in order to avoid any duplication of work.
30. Some discussion on the main gaps of the Project identified by the review followed. It was recalled that while some of the themes can be tackled by the Project in the short-term (e.g. the extension of work on integration of environmental and fisheries data to other regions) others (e.g. the study of the impact of the establishment of marine protected areas on fisheries activities) are issues being discussed worldwide at this moment. The need to include the Project activities in a wider context such as the Ecosystem Approach for Fisheries management was further stressed.

#### **Project Future Implementation (Agenda Item N. 4)**

31. The document "Project Future Implementation" was introduced by the MedSudMed Project Coordinator with a reminder that the second phase of the Project is due to end in June 2010, but that an extension up to the end of June 2011 has been granted. It was also reiterated that FAO is preparing the formulation of a third phase of the Project, following the information by the Italian Donor of its willingness to continue supporting the Project activities. The meeting's attention was drawn to the concept notes on the new Project proposal. It was also reiterated that the work plan is directly linked to the budget availability of the Project.

32. The presentation focused on priority issues and activities identified taking into account the objectives and the results achieved so far, the results of the Project review, as well as suggestions arising from a series of informal meetings held with the Project participants during the last six months.
33. The actions planned to be taken by the Project on each of the existing components were presented. The Project foresees the establishment of thematic working groups on demersal and small pelagic fisheries resources. The Working Groups will be organized to discuss the progress made on research and stock monitoring activities in the Project area; to identify possible synergies with the ongoing monitoring activities; and to discuss the request from the GFCM-SAC to provide sub-regional stock assessment on priority species. In this framework synergy will be sought with CopeMed II in order to avoid duplication of activities and to optimise the resources available. In this respect, the Project will continue to support, in cooperation with CopeMed II, the analysis of available data on *P. longirostris* to progress in the formal evaluation of the state of its stock in the Project area.
- The Project will continue to support harmonisation of sampling procedures by promoting the discussion and providing technical support to the intercalibration of survey methodologies.
  - Furthermore the Project will provide support to the identification of shared stocks for *Octopus vulgaris* by promoting the genetic comparison of samples collected in different parts of the Projects area.
  - Available information on demersal crustaceans relevant for the fisheries in the Project area will be reviewed and summarised in a specific document. The MedSudMed Technical Document N. 15 “Review of information on some demersal target species in the MedSudMed area (central Mediterranean)” published in 2008 will be used as a template. Information on crustaceans contained therein will be extracted, updated with the data from other related activities (e.g. stock assessment, mapping of nurseries) and included in a separate document.
34. The Project, in cooperation with the participating institutes, will continue supporting the organisation and conduction of standardised acoustic and ichthyoplankton surveys, with particular attention to areas that are not regularly monitored, upon request of the participating institutes. Wherever possible, calendars of acoustic and ichthyoplankton surveys at sea carried out by the different participating institutes will be coordinated in order to maximise the coverage and minimise the time lag between surveys conducted by the different vessels. The CopeMed II Shared Stocks Working Group proposed the organization of two Shared Stocks Sub Regional Working Groups, one on Demersal and another on Pelagic Fisheries Resources. The first meetings of these SRWG will be jointly organized in Mazara del Vallo (Italy) and in Malaga (Spain) respectively.
35. The Maltese representative, Ms Roberta Mifsud, and the Tunisian representative underlined the importance of continuing the study on *Coryphaena hippurus* initiated in the

framework of CopeMed. For this purpose an *ad hoc* meeting could be organised back-to-back with the SRWG on pelagics in Malaga.

36. The Tunisian representative suggested that the Project could address the issue of assessing some fisheries management measures like the closed seasons in the Project area. He therefore proposed the organization of an *ad hoc* meeting on the harmonization of closed seasons applied for the management of shared stocks. The committee agreed on taking advantage of the Working Group on Shared Demersal Stocks to be held in Mazara del Vallo, adding an additional day for this issue. Mr Othman Jarboui volunteered to support the Project in the organization of such an event by coordinating the collation of the existing information.
37. The meeting agreed to discuss the organization of an intercalibration exercise between the different research vessels carrying out trawl surveys in the Project area during the MedSudMed Working Group on demersal fisheries resources. This WG will be organized in a working session dedicated to the stock assessment of *Parapenaeus longirostris* and a full day dedicated to the discussion of common research issues like the intercalibration organization or the fish ageing.
38. General consensus was expressed by the participants on the interest to have some pilot actions focused to test the applicability of the participatory approach in the Project area. Following the discussion, a proposal to develop a pilot study to involve the small-scale fisheries communities in fisheries management was presented by the Tunisian delegates. The lesson learnt from the Project ArtFiMed which focuses on artisanal fisheries in Morocco and Tunisia will be used to set up common pilot studies, jointly organized by CopeMed II and MedSudMed Projects, with the direct involvement of fishing communities. The Committee was then informed on the initiative in Morocco where, taking advantage of the cooperative framework established by the ArtFiMed Project, the Mediterranean LME Project will promote the involvement of local fishermen in the management of a specific MPA.
39. Mr Salem Zgozi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), expressed appreciation for the work carried out by the Project with particular specification on activities which involved the MBRC. He presented an overview of the activities carried out in the framework of MedSudMed involving the MBRC of Tajoura. The paramount importance of efforts made by the Project in supporting surveys at sea (i.e. ichthyoplankton, acoustic and oceanographic surveys) was pointed out during the presentation. Furthermore, the training activities and their effectiveness in promoting national capacity development, as well as the logistic support provided were mentioned. In addition some of the activities still suspended (e.g. on selachians or on *Posidonia* meadows), as well as proposal for future activities were also presented.
40. The representative from Malta mentioned they would particularly need training on data analysis tools (e.g. on “R”) and techniques including GIS.

## **Proposal for a new Project phase (Agenda Item No. 5)**

41. The FAO representative presented the concept note developed by FAO for the possible next phase of the Project, emphasizing that this was a document to raise discussion and opinions, and not a final proposal. He presented the lessons learned about the management of the project, and the linkages with AdriaMed, with explicit reference to the conditions that suggest that merging the two Projects for management and administrative purposes might lead to a more efficient use of the available human and financial resources;
42. The FAO representative drew the attention of the participants to the need for international cooperation on fisheries research and management in the Adriatic and south-central Mediterranean. Both basins are characterized by mostly transboundary marine resources, heavily dependent on oceanographic variations, and very dynamic fleets operating in national and international waters.
43. He briefly reviewed the main achievements of the two Projects, enhancing the “regional attitude” created in both areas and the positive environment for regional cooperation and communication, together with the improvement of national capacity that resulted in both areas, and that culminated recently with the preparation in each Project area of joint stock assessments that were presented at the GFCM level.
44. He concluded his presentation with a summary of the proposed areas of work of the new joint Project, grouped under six major outputs: i) Enhanced institutional capacity for identification of management strategies, as a basis for the implementation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF); ii) Improved capacity for fisheries monitoring, research and assessment and production of management advice according to the EAF; iii) Socio-economic issues of sustainable fishery management; iv) Improved understanding of the interactions between capture fisheries and aquaculture; v) Project organization and Information exchange and dissemination of scientific outputs; vi) Regional cooperation reinforced. The proposed organisation of the Project under the new format concluded the presentation, being suggested that a single Coordination Committee, with two independent sections would be created, and that most of the activities should be organized by area (AdriaMed and MedSudMed), with separate Working Groups.
45. After discussion, the Committee agreed on the following general guidance for the third phase of the Project:
  - the regional networking and cooperation framework already attained by the participating institutions should continue to be supported by the Project, as one of the main tools for fisheries scientific cooperation;
  - The fusion of the administrative and management parts of the Project should not lead to changes in the legal agreements with the countries;
  - The scientific and technical activities of MedSudMed and AdriaMed Projects should not be merged, each keeping its own identity, except for common activities like training courses;
  - The budget allocated to the two Projects should not be affected by the merging.

46. The Italian delegate informed the meeting that for MiPAAF the merging of the administrative and management structures of the two Projects was considered as an advantage, since it should lead to a simplification of the procedures.
47. The Committee agreed that FAO should officially inform the Government of the participating countries on the procedures to be taken.
48. Finally, the participants unanimously expressed the wish that the third phase should start immediately after the end of the second phase without any time gaps.
49. After wide discussion and comment on the content of the document on the Project's future activities the Committee agreed on the programme of activities proposed for the coming period. Among the others, the Committee stressed the importance of the following activities upon budget availability:
- Organise Working Groups on demersal and pelagic fisheries resources;
  - Continue the analysis of data on *Parapenaeus longirostris* in the Project area;
  - Progress in the definition of a work plan for the proposed intercalibration exercise;
  - Support the implementation of acoustic and ichthyoplankton surveys in the Project area;
  - Promote on-the-job training exercises and capacity building on sampling procedures at sea;
  - Organize an *ad hoc* meeting on the harmonization of closed seasons for fisheries management in the Project area;
  - Organize an *ad hoc* meeting on *C. hippurus* jointly with CopeMed II.

#### **FAO GFCM SAC Workplan (Agenda Item 6)**

50. The Acting Executive Secretary of the GFCM, Mr. Abdellah Srour, informed the meeting of the GFCM SAC workplan for 2010-2011. He thanked the Project for the support provided to the activities of GFCM in the past, and stated he was sure the FAO Mediterranean Regional Projects would continue supporting the development of the GFCM.

#### **Other matters (Agenda item N. 5)**

51. The Meeting participants wished to thank the former Project Coordinator, Mr Fabio Massa, and Fisheries Monitoring Expert, Ms Tarub Bahri, for the considerable and commendable work carried out while working for MedSudMed.
52. Representatives and Meeting participants expressed their thanks to the Marine Biology Research Centre of Tajoura for the hospitality provided.
53. Further to the kind invitation of the Italian representative, the next meeting of the MedSudMed Coordination Committee will be held in Italy. The date and venue will be

proposed in due time by the Project. This proposal was welcomed by the Meeting participants.

54. This report was adopted on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2010.



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### **Annotated Agenda**

#### **1. Opening of the meeting and election of the Chairperson**

#### **2. Adoption of the Agenda**

#### **3. Report on the Project's progress**

*An overview of the main Project activities performed and the outputs achieved during the intersession period will be given to the Committee. Information on the cooperative research work, the training sessions, and the relationship and cooperation of the Project at Mediterranean level will be presented. In addition the outcomes of the FAO Internal Technical Review of the Project's activities, performed in 2009, will be presented.*

#### **4. Project future implementation**

*The work plan of the Project, regarding the ongoing and scheduled activities for the next period, will be outlined and discussed. Topics to be dealt with are those pertaining to the ongoing research, the training activities and the joint activities directed toward the national capacity building. Particular attention will be given to the possibility of establishing MedSudMed Working Groups and to the harmonisation of sampling procedures and data processing. The international cooperation, the relationship with other Mediterranean projects, the relationship with the Donor, and other topics brought forth by the Committee will be discussed. The Committee will be asked to provide the Project with an appraisal and orientation of the programme presented and/or any other contribution.*

#### **5. Proposal for a new Project phase**

*The outcomes of the FAO Internal Technical Review performed in 2009 will be presented. These outcomes have been used to formulate a draft proposal of a new phase of the Project. The concept notes of the new Project proposal will be introduced. The new framework, the foreseen main outcomes and activities will be illustrated. The Committee will be asked to provide the Project with an appraisal and orientation on the new phase of the Project.*

#### **6. FAO GFCM-SAC Work plan for 2010**

#### **7. Other matters**

## List of Documents

<b>FAO-MedSudMed: CC8/01</b>	Provisional annotated agenda
<b>FAO-MedSudMed: CC8/02</b>	Report on Project's Progress ( <i>March 2009 – April 2010</i> )
<b>FAO-MedSudMed: CC8/03</b>	Development of the Project's Programme
<b>FAO-MedSudMed: CC8/04</b>	MedSudMed Project – Internal FAO Technical Review
<b>FAO-MedSudMed: CC8/05</b>	Project Concept Note – Proposal for the new Project's phase
<b>FAO-MedSudMed: CC8/Info01</b>	Provisional list of participants
<b>FAO-MedSudMed: CC8/Info02</b>	Report of the Seventh Meeting of the Coordination Committee. <i>MedSudMed Technical Documents N.24</i>
<b>FAO-MedSudMed: CC8/Info03</b>	MedSudMed Working Groups on the definition of priority topics related to demersal and small pelagic fisheries resources of the south-central Mediterranean – Terms of References
<b>FAO-MedSudMed: CC8/Info04</b>	Report of the MedSudMed and CopeMed II Working Group on “ <i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i> and related fisheries in the Projects' area” (Marsaxlokk, Malta, October 2009).
<b>FAO-MedSudMed: CC8/Info05</b>	Advances in defining nurseries and spawning grounds of selected fisheries target species: <i>Octopus vulgaris</i> and <i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i>
<b>FAO-MedSudMed: CC8/Info06</b>	Proposal for population genetic comparison of <i>Octopus vulgaris</i> stocks in the MedSudMed area
<b>FAO-MedSudMed: CC8/Info07</b>	Report of the MedSudMed Training course on fish age determination through otoliths reading
<b>FAO-MedSudMed: CC8/Info08</b>	MedSudMed on-the-job training on sampling procedures using the MEDITS protocol. GSA 15 – Malta Islands 29 June – 01 July 2009
<b>FAO-MedSudMed: CC8/Info09</b>	Major activities of the FAO Regional Projects. Documents presented at the FAO GFCM 33rd Session (Tunis, Tunisia, 23-27 March 2009), at the FAO GFCM-SAC 12th session (Budva, Montenegro, 25-29 January 2010), and at the FAO GFCM 34 <sup>th</sup> session (Athens, Greece, 12-17 April 2010)
<b>FAO-MedSudMed: CC8/Info10</b>	FAO Mediterranean Projects products. 1999 - February 2009
<b>FAO-MedSudMed: CC8/Info11</b>	List of the MedSudMed and AdriaMed Technical Documents printed in the period 2009-2010
<b>FAO-MedSudMed: CC8/Info12</b>	List of Documents

## **Report on Project's Progress (March 2009 – April 2010)**

### **Introduction**

This paper provides an overview of the main activities carried out by the MedSudMed Project between March 2009 and April 2010, including meetings, training and research activities as well as the cooperation established with the FAO General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (FAO GFCM), its Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and Sub-Committees and other relevant institutions. The work programme and recommendations of the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the AdriaMed Coordination Committee (Sliema, Malta, 18-19 February 2009) were implemented (CC/8/info 02).

In addition to the work programme detailed below, a considerable part of the first semester of 2009 was devoted to the organization of the Internal FAO Project Technical Review. Following the communication by the Italian Donor, the Ministry of Agriculture Food and Forestry Policies (MiPAAF), concerning its readiness to support a third phase of the AdriaMed Project, the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Management Division (FIMF) was requested by the MiPAAF to carry out a technical review of the Project. The aim of such technical review was to evaluate the activities carried out by the Project and to recommend any complementary measures for the proposed extended period.

Between April and July 2009 the Project staff in cooperation with the FAO Fisheries Resource Officer, and the consultant appointed by FAO to carry out the technical review met and had discussion with the staff of the national research institutions participating in the Project as follows:

- Italy (27 April 2009): Istituto Ambiente Marino Costiero – Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, IAMC–CNR of Mazara del Vallo;
- Tunisia (28-29 April 2009): Institut des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer, INSTM;
- Malta (11-12 May 2009): Malta Centre for Fisheries Sciences, MCFS;
- Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (28–29 July 2009): Marine Biology Research Centre (MBRC) of Tajoura.

Each beneficiary institution was interviewed and provided a comprehensive overview of the achievements and constraints of the Project activities in the respective country from their perspective. Thematic areas and activities were identified for inclusion in a Project Document for future implementation during a possible future phase of the Project. A summary of the outcome of the internal technical review is given in the relative document (CC/8/04).

In this context, FAO is formulating a third phase of the Project following the informal indications provided by the Italian Donor concerning its willingness to continue supporting Project activities, and by taking into consideration the comments and suggestions collected during the technical review mission and the new challenges for fisheries management in the Mediterranean (CC/11/05).

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 Project activities and the results achieved within the following components:

1. Cooperative research programmes and working groups;
2. National capacity building;
3. Regional cooperation;
4. Project communication.

## **1. Cooperative research programmes and Working Groups**

In 2009, the Project implemented a series of activities dealing with field work and data processing methodology. During the inter-session period, on the basis of standardised protocols previously agreed, field work and on-the-job trainings were implemented for each component of the Project.

### **1.1. MedSudMed Component on Demersal Resources**

As a result of the great collaborative effort of the institutes participating in MedSudMed, standardisation of methodologies used for trawl survey data processing was improved in the last years. During the intersessional period, the work carried out within this Project component focused on field work on board of fishing vessels, data analysis, finalisation of technical reports on the results obtained and publication of synthesis regarding species of interest in the Project area.

A three-day joint training exercise on sampling procedures using the MEDITS (International Bottom Trawl Survey in the Mediterranean) Protocol was held in Malta from the 29<sup>th</sup> June 2009 to the 01<sup>st</sup> July 2009. The activity has been organised in cooperation with the Malta Centre for Fisheries Sciences (MCFS) and was carried out during the Maltese national MEDITS survey in waters. Researchers from all the Institutions participating to MedSudMed have been involved in this activity (CC/8/info 08).

MedSudMed, in cooperation with the FAO Regional Project CopeMed II organised a Working Group on “*Parapenaeus longirostris* and related fisheries in the Projects’ area”. The Working Group was held on 05-07 October 2009 in Marsaxlokk, Malta, kindly hosted by the Malta Ministry Rural Resources and Agriculture (MRRA) at the MCFS. The main objective of the meeting was to initiate a joint preliminary exercise on the assessment of *P. longirostris* in the south-central Mediterranean at GSA or at sub-regional level using different approaches and types of data. Another objective of the meeting was to acquire information on the existing available knowledge at national level on *P. longirostris* in terms of fisheries, distribution and biological characteristics. The Working Group was also aimed at allowing national experts to familiarise with some of the software packages that are currently used to analyse fishery dependent and fishery independent data for stock assessment purposes. During the Working Group, the first joint assessment exercise on *P. longirostris* was carried out and the preliminary results were presented to the FAO GFCM SAC Sub Committee on Stock Assessment meeting (November-December 2009, Malaga, Spain) (CC/8/info 04).

In order to progress in the identification of *Octopus vulgaris* stock units in the Project's area a proposal on the comparison of genetic structure of samples collected in different zones of the south-central Mediterranean was drafted. The minimum requirements in terms of sampling (e.g. number of samples, sampling areas) and expertise available in the Project's participating countries, as well as the available options for sequencing samples after the DNA were defined and summed up (CC/8/info 06).

Progresses were made in the identification of nurseries and spawning areas for fisheries demersal resources; in particular sensitive areas for *Octopus vulgaris* and *Parapenaeus longirostris* were preliminary identified in a specific sector of the Project's area (CC/8/info 05).

A presentation was given at the Cephalopods International Advisory Council (CIAC) '09 Symposium (Spain, September 2009) to illustrate specific results obtained by the Project on cephalopods namely on the distribution of nurseries and spawning grounds of *Octopus vulgaris*, as well as on the potential effects of sea water temperature on the recruitment of this species in the south-central Mediterranean.

## **1.2. MedSudMed Component on Small Pelagic fish**

Efforts were made by the Project in harmonising methodologies and jointly analysing data coming from surveys at sea targeted on small pelagics. In the reporting period, MedSudMed supported the joint processing and elaboration of the data collected during the MedSudMed cooperative ichthyoplankton and acoustic surveys carried in Libyan waters in summer 2008 (R/V "Urania", July 2008 and R/V "Dallaporta" August-September 2008 respectively).

*Joint analysis of acoustic and oceanographic data and ichthyoplankton.* Mixed international teams of experts from the Istituto Ambiente Marino Costiero of Mazara del Vallo (IAMC-CNR, Italy), the Marine Biology Research Centre (MBRC, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) and the Russian Federal Research Institute of Fisheries and Oceanography (VNIRO, Russia) participated to the data analyses which were carried out according to the following timetable:

- The ichthyoplankton samples processing was held in two sessions (i.e. April and May 2009) at the IAMC-CNR of Mazara del Vallo (Italy). A description of the oceanographic characteristics of the area covered by the survey and the composition and spatial distribution of the ichthyoplankton was produced, hence complementing information on transport patterns of eggs and larvae of commercial fish species in the Project area. The results of this activity supplement previous work carried out in 1981 and 2007 at MBRC on diatoms, silicoflagellates and dinoflagellates.
- An ad hoc meeting to preliminary discuss the results obtained from the sample processing and data elaboration was held at the IAMC-CNR of Mazara del Vallo (Italy, May 2009). The meeting served also to plan the work to be carried out for the publication of these results as MedSudMed Technical Documents.
- The processing and elaboration of the acoustic data was held in December 2009 at the MBRC (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya). The exercise produced estimates of the biomass of some small pelagic fishes in the area covered by the survey.

### **1.3. Fishery and Ecosystem Information System (FEIS)**

The final version of the FEIS was presented to the participating institutes during the 7<sup>th</sup> MedSudMed Coordination Committee meeting (Malta, 2009). As follow up, according to the suggestion formulated by the FAO GFCM SAC Sub-Committee on Statistics and Information (SCSI) (Kavala, Greece, 16-21 September 2007) and to the work plan adopted by the 7<sup>th</sup> Coordination Committee, the handing-over of the whole FEIS package to the FAO GFCM has been done.

## **2. National Capacity building and training**

During the intersessional period, considerable effort was dedicated to the organisation of training courses, mainly upon request of the participating institutes. The courses were an occasion to strengthen scientific collaboration and to exchange the competences between institutes, as most of them involved scientists belonging to the network that was created and consolidated by the Project. Moreover, some of the training courses allowed for joint processing of data collected at sea and aimed not only at enhancing capacity development, but also at producing scientific information directly related to the Project activities. The following courses were organized during the last inter-committee period:

- Two *ad hoc* training activities on the growth of white shrimp (*Metapenaeus monoceros*) and on age determination of fish through otolith reading were organized and carried out respectively at the IAMC–CNR of Mazara del Vallo (Italy, August 2009), in collaboration with the INSTM of Sfax (Tunisia); and at the Marine Biology Research Centre of Tajoura (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, November 2009) in collaboration with the IAMC–CNR of Mazara del Vallo (CC/8/info 07).
- An on-the-job training exercise was carried out during the MEDITS survey in Malta (Malta, July 2009). Scientists from all the research Institutes participating to the Project were on board (CC/8/info 08).
- On-the-job trainings were carried out during the ichthyoplankton and acoustic data processing and elaboration at the IAMC–CNR Mazara del Vallo (Italy, April and May 2009) and at the MBRC of Tajoura (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, December 2009). Scientists were trained on: zooplankton and pelagic larvae sorting, identification and counting; sediments classification and quantitative data elaboration; acoustic data elaboration for the estimation of the total biomass of pelagic fish.

## **3. Regional cooperation**

The reinforcement of regional cooperation was encouraged by the Project through participation of regional experts in several workshops, trainings and meetings organised in the Mediterranean area. Relations were constantly maintained with the researchers and the Institutes of the Project area for the discussion of the Project's activities, planning and organization of the working groups, and comments on the publications produced.



The Project interacted closely with the FAO Regional Project AdriaMed “Scientific Cooperation to Support Responsible Fisheries in the Adriatic Sea”, with support provided on administrative matters and some technical issues. The Project also participated in the AdriaMed Working Group on Demersal Fisheries Resources, (Croatia, June 2008) and in the 11<sup>th</sup> AdriaMed Coordination Committee meeting (Montenegro, 2010).

A strong cooperation was also established with the FAO Project CopeMed II in order to optimise the use of human and financial resources. In this framework, the working group on *Parapenaeus longirostris* and related fisheries was co-organized by the two Projects. In addition, MedSudMed participated in the second Coordination Committee meeting of CopeMed II (June 2009) where additional synergies were identified.

In addition, the Project participated in the EastMed Inception meeting, (Athens, Greece, 19-20 April 2010) presenting an outline of the MedSudMed activities.

Several informal meetings of coordination were also held with the other Regional Projects AdriaMed, CopeMed II, ArtFiMed and EastMed and official meeting was also held in order to consolidate and coordinate common activities (Rome, FAO-HQ 13-15 January 2010).

In addition, in cooperation with the other Regional Projects, MedSudMed contributed to the preparation of a publication listing all the documents produced by the Mediterranean projects since 1999 (FAO Mediterranean Projects Products: 1999 - February 2009) (CC/8/info 10). A poster describing the regional projects aims and a leaflet on the activities of the MedSudMed Project were prepared and distributed during the COFI and the 33<sup>rd</sup> FAO GFCM session.

Cooperation was further sustained with the FAO GFCM Secretariat and the FAO GFCM Subsidiary bodies. MedSudMed continued to support the activities of the GFCM by participating and funding the participation of experts in the FAO GFCM meetings held in the intersessional period (CC/8/info 09). Due to the overlap in geographical areas covered by MedSudMed and CopeMed II, the two Projects agreed to coordinate the participation of national scientists in meetings organised by the FAO GFCM:

- 33<sup>rd</sup> session (Tunis, Tunisia 23 - 27 March 2009);
- SAC - SCSA - Workshop on a GFCM Regional Logbook for the Mediterranean, Rome, Italy 29 June 2009 - 1 July 2009;
- SAC - SCSA Working Group on Demersal Species, Ancona, Italy, 19-23 October 2009);
- SAC - SCSA - Working Group on Small Pelagic Species, Ancona, Italy 26 - 30 October 2009;
- SAC - Sub-Committees Meetings - 10th Session, Malaga, Spain 30 November 2009 - 3 December 2009;
- SAC - Coordination Meeting of the Sub-Committees (CMSC) Malaga, Spain 4 December 2009;
- Scientific Advisory Committee - 12th Session Montenegro 25 - 29 January 2010;
- SAC - SCESS/SCSA/SCSI Transversal Workshop on Fishing Capacity Rome, Italy 17 - 19 February 2010;
- 34<sup>th</sup> session, Athens, Greece 14 - 17 April 2010).

## **4. Project Communication**

### **4.1. Web site (<http://www.faomedsudmed.org>)**

Since its publication, the Project's website has been further updated. A general description of the MedSudMed Project is available, as well as information on the recent or forthcoming events organized by the Project, links to the Research Institutes participating in the Project, the Mediterranean Regional Projects or to sites regarding GIS, databanks and Research Bodies.

Besides this, a new section describing information on the fisheries for the countries participating in the MedSudMed Project was created and national Country Fishery Information sheets (CFI) are now available on the website. The CFI sheets have been prepared according to a standardised format developed by the FAO Project AdriaMed and adopted by all the other FAO sub-regional Projects in the Mediterranean. The list of Technical Documents available on the Project's web site has been updated and more than 15 MedSudMed Technical Documents are now available as pdf file.

Over the last year, an average of 1000 pages was visited each month and around 290 documents are downloaded from the site each month.

### **4.2. Technical Documents**

Several technical documents related to meetings and trainings organised by the Project were finalised and printed (CC/8/info 11). The MedSudMed Publications are issued as series of Technical Documents (GCP/RER/010/ITA/MSM-TD-00) related to meetings and research organised or conducted within the framework of the Project. The MedSudMed Technical Documents are included in the ASFA database.

The following technical documents were finalised and printed or made available in the final version on the web site during the intersession period:

1. Ungaro N. 2008. Field manual on macroscopic identification of maturity stages for the Mediterranean fishery resources. GCP/RER/ITA/MSM-TD-21. *MedSudMed Technical Documents*, 21: 42 pp.
2. Fiorentino, F., Ben Meriem, S., Bahri, T., Camilleri, M., Dimech, M., Ezzeddine – Naja, S., Massa, F., Jarboui, O., Zgozi, S. 2008. Synthesis of information on some demersal target species in the MedSudMed area (central Mediterranean). GCP/RER/010/ITA/MSM-TD-15. *MedSudMed Technical Documents*, 15: 69pp.
3. Garofalo, G., Bel Hassen, M., Jarboui, O., Zgozi, S., Gristina, M., Fiorentino, F., Ragonese, S., Camilleri, M. 2008. Spatial distribution of biomass indices, nursery and spawning areas of *Merluccius merluccius* and *Mullus barbatus* in the MedSudMed Project area. GCP/RER/010/ITA/MSM-TD-19. *MedSudMed Technical Documents*, 19: 24pp.
4. MedSudMed. 2005. Report of the Workshop on Standardisation of fish age determination based on otolith samples in the MedSudMed area. GCP/RER/010/ITA/MSM-TD-09. *MedSudMed Technical Documents*, 9: 52pp.

5. Camilleri M., Dimech M., Drago A., Fiorentino F., Fortibuoni T., Garofalo G., Gristina M., Schembri P.J., Massa F., Coppola S., Bahri T., Giacalone V. 2008. Spatial distribution of fisheries demersal resources, environmental factors and fishing activities in GSA 15. GCP/RER/010/ITA/MSM-TD-13. *MedSudMed Technical Documents*, 13: 97pp.

## Development of the Project's Programme

### Introduction

The aim of this document is to provide the Coordination Committee (CC) members with information for the discussion of the MedSudMed Project work programme for the coming period.

The MedSudMed Project has been operative since April 2001 with an initial mandate of 5 years (MedSudMed I phase). During the 5th MedSudMed Coordination Committee meeting (2006), the Committee reviewed the conclusions and recommendations made by the Project Mid-term Review and recommended a four-year extension period from 2006 to 2010 (MedSudMed II phase). In June 2008, the Italian Donor, the Ministry of Agriculture Food and Forestry Policies (MiPAAF), confirmed the extension of its financial support to the Project activities until June 2010 and communicated, at the same time, its readiness to support a third phase of the MedSudMed Project. In view of that, the MiPAAF requested the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Management Division (FIMF) to perform a technical review of the Project to evaluate the Project's activities and to recommend any complementary measures for a proposed extended period. The Technical Review was carried out through meetings with representatives of the participating countries organised between April and July 2009. The review describes the results achieved by the Project, also including the comments and requirements received by the beneficiary participating institutions for future development. The end date for the Project has been fixed for 30 June 2010 according to the last extension of the Project activities.

This document includes activities that will cover the next 12 months despite the second phase of the Project being due to end in June 2010. FAO is preparing the formulation of a third phase of the Project based on the informal indications provided by the Donor about its willingness to continue supporting the Project activities, the experience accrued in the execution of the first two phases of the Project, the consultations with the participant institutions carried out during the Technical Review and the indications given in the Technical Review.

The new, third phase of MedSudMed, is foreseen to start in July 2010 thus assuring continuity between the second and the new phase of Project activities.

The concepts notes on which the new project proposal is being prepared have been drafted and were circulated among the participating countries in the month of April, in order to facilitate the discussion during the Coordination Committee meeting (CC/08/05).

In this context, the activities proposed in this document take into account the objectives and results achieved so far and the recommendations received during the 7<sup>th</sup> Coordination Committee meeting (February 2009, Sliema, Malta). The indications collected from the countries during the missions for the technical review of the Project and during informal

meetings held with the National Focal Points throughout the intersession period are also considered. The scientific cooperation established within the framework of the FAO General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (FAO GFCM) is also taken into proper consideration.

Finally, the work plan will take into due account the recommendations of the 8<sup>th</sup> Coordination Committee meeting, in accordance with the priorities expressed by the countries on each activity and directly linked to the budget availability of the Project.

## WORK PLAN

For the coming period the Project, in collaboration with the participating institutions, will focus its attention on research activities, the filling of scientific gaps on fisheries, fisheries resources and the ecosystem, the finalisation of pending publications and the training component.

In order to facilitate the presentation of the work plan for the next 12 months, all the activities were organized into five main themes:

- a. Demersal fisheries resources;
- b. Small pelagic fisheries resources;
- c. Training and national capacity development;
- d. Web site and information system;
- e. Regional cooperation.

Some of the activities included in this work plan overlap with those of the previous programme of work, as they were initiated during the intersessional period and are currently in progress.

### **a) Demersal fisheries resources**

- MedSudMed Working Group on Demersal Fisheries Resources

According to the consultation with the participating institutes the Project foresees the establishment of thematic working groups. Advantage will be taken from the experience accrued in the framework of the FAO AdriaMed Project and the Terms of Reference of the first AdriaMed Working Group were circulated among the participating institutes in February 2010. In this framework, the Project will organize a first MedSudMed Working Group (WG) on Demersal Fisheries Resources that aims to: i) identify common or joint research priorities and activities; ii) review current knowledge on fisheries and the marine environment in the Project area; iii) plan research activities; and iv) discuss and carry out evaluations of the state of the fisheries resources. The common, joint analysis of data is foreseen to take place thus creating an additional opportunity for cooperative analysis and joint assessment of the common and shared stocks in the Project area. In particular, on the basis of the preliminary study on *Parapenaeus longirostris* carried out jointly by the experts participating in the MedSudMed Project, the finalisation of the assessment for this species and the preparation of

a contribution paper describing the results will be promoted by the Project. The Terms of Reference of the “MedSudMed Working Group on demersal fisheries resources” have been drafted (CC/8/Info03).

- Inter-calibration exercise

Considerable effort was made by MedSudMed and the research institutes to achieve standardisation of sampling designs and protocols used in the different survey programmes and data handling in the Project area. As a result, common protocols started to be used for field work and, whenever possible, for the data processing methods. In the near future, work should continue towards the standardisation of sampling, laboratory work and processing of samples collected at sea. The Project will support the definition of the sampling scheme for the execution of an intercalibration exercise between some of the sampling protocols currently in use in the Project area. In addition, depending on budget availability, the Project will explore possibility to support the intercalibration exercise between the R/V “Hannibal” (currently used during the Tunisian national surveys) and the R/V “Sant’Anna” (which has performed the Medits surveys in the GSAs 15 and 16 in the last years).

- Progress on the identification of shared stocks

Following the work carried out so far by the Project on the occurrence of shared stocks in the MedSudMed area for relevant fisheries target species and in particular on *Octopus vulgaris*, the Project will investigate the possibility to back further studies on this species. In particular, the genetic comparison between samples collected in three different zones of the Project area will be supported. On this regard, a proposal has been drafted (CC/8/Info06).

- Cooperative activities on crustacean stocks in the south-central Mediterranean

Available information on demersal crustaceans relevant for the fisheries in the Project area will be reviewed and summarised in a specific document. The MedSudMed Technical Document N. 15 “Review of information on some demersal target species in the MedSudMed area (central Mediterranean)” published in 2008 will be used as a template. In addition, information on crustaceans contained therein will be extracted, updated with the data from other related activities (e.g. stock assessment, mapping of nurseries) and included in a separate document.

- Mapping of nurseries and spawning grounds

In the past years progress has been made by the Project in the identification of sensitive areas (i.e. nurseries and spawning grounds) for commercially important fisheries resources in the south-central Mediterranean. Taking advantage from the work carried out so far, the Project will explore the possibility to use national data to continue the mapping of nurseries and spawning grounds of relevant fisheries target species in the south-central Mediterranean with a focus on crustaceans.

- Document on Octopus stock and related fisheries

A document including and summarising the outcome of the MedSudMed Workshop on “Octopus stocks and related fisheries in the Project area” (Salammbô, 18-20 November 2008) and the information presented during the meeting will be finalised and published in the MedSudMed Technical Documents series.

## **b) Small pelagic fisheries resources**

- Working Group on small pelagic fisheries resources

Great attention has been given by MedSudMed to specific actions on small pelagic fish. Exploratory activities on this group of species have been implemented by the Project and the knowledge of small pelagic fish distribution and abundance in the area has consequently been enhanced. As follow up and according to the consultation with the participating institutes, the Project foresees the establishment of a specific Working Group on small pelagic fish. The Working Group will aim to discuss and plan common or joint research activities from the scientific and technical point of view, review current knowledge on fisheries targeting small pelagic fish in the participating countries and, whenever possible, discuss and carry out evaluations of the state of the fisheries resources.

The Working Group will put particular emphasis on the identification of the priority issues regarding the south-central Mediterranean fisheries resources, the standardisation of data processing and elaboration. In particular the methods for estimation of biomass spatial distribution will be further discussed and their suitability to all GSAs will be evaluated. In this context the progress of the MEDIAS initiative will be taken into consideration and synergies with the other FAO Mediterranean Regional projects will be sought. The Terms of Reference of the “MedSudMed Working Group on small pelagic fisheries resources” have been drafted (CC/8/Info/03).

- Cooperative acoustic and ichthyoplankton surveys

The Project, in cooperation with the participating institutes, will continue supporting the organisation and conduction of standardised acoustic and ichthyoplankton surveys, with particular attention to areas that are not regularly monitored, upon request of the participating institutes. Wherever possible, calendars of acoustic and ichthyoplankton surveys at sea carried out by the different participating institutes will be coordinated in order to maximise the coverage and minimise the time lag between surveys conducted by the different vessels.

- MedSudMed Technical Documents on small pelagics

The Technical Documents on small pelagic fish i.e. the ichthyoplankton catalogue “Identification sheets of early life stages of bony fish (Western Libya, summer 2006)” and the review document “Bibliographic synthesis on small pelagic fishery resources species in the MedSudMed Project area (central Mediterranean)” will be finalised and published by the Project.

## **c) Training activities and national capacity development**

In the coming period, the Project will continue to support the strengthening of national expertise through the implementation of an *ad hoc* programme. The Project will continue to consider the full involvement of all the research institutes and scientists from the participating countries to the activities organised as a priority. The strengthening of the national capacity in terms of expertise will therefore be promoted through the support of specific research programmes that are coherent with the activities of the Project. Seminars and training activities will also be considered both for the implementation of research activities and in the effort to standardise scientific methodology.

In particular, activities foreseen for the coming period include:

- The continuation of on-the-job training during the surveys at sea (acoustic, ichthyoplankton and trawl surveys) and data processing;
- Specific activities on otolith reading could be jointly organised with the other FAO Mediterranean Projects.

The organisation of *ad hoc* training programmes upon request of the participating institutes can be foreseen upon budget availability.

In addition, to support national capacity development, the Project will support the preparation of a synopsis summarising the fisheries legislative framework currently active in the Participating countries.

#### **d) Web site and information system**

The Project portal ([www.faomedsudmed.org](http://www.faomedsudmed.org)) will be consolidated and the online information further updated. One specific section will be created devoted to the dissemination of knowledge on fisheries resources with particular focus on demersal crustaceans. In addition, a common repository of all the documents produced by the Mediterranean Regional Project is planned.

#### **e) Regional cooperation**

The existing cooperation with other FAO Regional Projects such as the AdriaMed Project will continue and will be further strengthened. Close collaboration with CopeMed II, ArtFiMed, EastMed and MedFisis will be sought, also taking into consideration the indications received during a coordination meeting among the FAO Mediterranean Regional Projects (Rome, FAO-HQ 13-15 January 2010). A second coordination meeting of the Mediterranean Regional Projects has already been planned for July 2010 in order to consolidate and coordinate common activities.

Training activities will be coordinated and harmonized among the Projects, in order to avoid duplication or overlapping. The participation of the MedSudMed experts in training courses organised by the other FAO Regional Projects in the Mediterranean, and vice versa, will be foreseen.

The preparation of informative material (e.g. leaflets, CD-rom) that can improve the visibility of the results obtained by the FAO Regional Projects in the Mediterranean area and in international contexts is also planned.

#### **Strengthening the cooperation with other initiatives in the region**

Cooperation with international institutions or projects on topics that may be of common interest will be sought, as well as synergies with other initiatives acting in the Project area and regarding fishery subjects; this will avoid duplication of efforts and optimize the use of financial resources. In particular, the Project will seek to collaborate with the GEF Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystem - MedSea LME Project, Sub-Component 3.2: Promote the Sustainable Use of Fisheries Resources in the Mediterranean through the application of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries -- Activity 3.2.1: Application of the Ecosystem Approach to



Fisheries, for the identification of training needs and priorities for mainstreaming the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries into fisheries research and management.

### **Strengthening the cooperation with the FAO GFCM**

The Project will continue to strengthen international and regional cooperation at Mediterranean level with the FAO GFCM and its related bodies, according to budget availability, (SAC, SubCommittees, Working Groups, CAQ) through the preparation of scientific contributions to FAO GFCM events, the participation of experts from the Project participating institutes in FAO GFCM events and through support to the countries to be compliant with the FAO GFCM requests.