



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 Ninth Meeting of the
Coordination Committee

Mazara del Vallo–Capo Granitola, Italy, 16-18 May 2011

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 or Italian Regione Siciliana 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). The Italian Regione Siciliana funded a project aimed at strengthening MedSudMed’s effectiveness on issues related to demersal resources, namely crustaceans for 18 months, starting from May 2011.

MedSudMed promotes scientific cooperation between research institutions of the four participating countries (Italy, Libya, 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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Preparation of this document

This document is the final version of the report of the Ninth 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), Mazara del Vallo–Capo Granitola, Italy, 16-18 May 2011.

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The Chief of Units of the General Directorate of Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies, Mr Plinio Conte, and the Director of IAMC-CNR Capo Granitola, Mr Salvo Mazzola and the responsible for IAMC-CNR Capo Granitola, Mr Mario Sprovieri, who provided kind hospitality and assistance in the organization of the meeting, are gratefully acknowledged.

MedSudMed

Report of the Ninth Meeting of the Coordination Committee, Mazara del Vallo–Capo Granitola, Italy, 16-18 May 2011.

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ABSTRACT

The Ninth Meeting of the MedSudMed Coordination Committee was attended by representatives of the Donor (Italy and Italian Regione Siciliana), delegations from the countries participating in the Project (Italy, Malta and Tunisia), representatives of the FAO GFCM Secretariat, the FAO-Fisheries and Aquaculture Resources Use and Conservation Division (FAO FIR), 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 Ninth meeting of the MedSudMed Coordination Committee
Mazara del Vallo–Capo Granitola (Italy), 16-18 May 2011**

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

1. The 9th meeting of the MedSudMed Coordination Committee was held in Capo Granitola, Campobello di Mazara, Italy 16-18 May 2011, hosted by the Istituto per l'Ambiente Marino Costiero – Consiglio Nazionale per le Ricerche (IAMC-CNR).
2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Donors (Italy and Regione Siciliana), representatives from three of the countries participating in the Project (Italy, Malta and Tunisia), representative of FAO-Fisheries and Aquaculture Resources Use and Conservation Division (FAO FIR), representatives of other FAO Regional Projects (namely AdriaMed, CopeMed II and EastMed), a representative of the FAO General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean and Black Sea (FAO GFCM) Secretariat as well as the staff of the FAO MedSudMed Project.
3. The scientist responsible for IAMC-CNR Capo Granitola, Mr Mario Sprovieri welcomed the participants on behalf of the Director of the IAMC-CNR. He expressed his wishes for a pleasant stay in the Region as well as fruitful scientific discussions.
4. On behalf of the Government of Italy, Mr Plinio Conte, the Chief of Units of the General Directorate of Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies, welcomed all the Committee Meeting participants and expressed his honour at having the Committee members gathered in Capo Granitola in occasion of this Meeting. He recalled the relevance that Italy has given to scientific cooperation on fisheries in the Mediterranean and in particular in the Project area. He then expressed his hope that collaboration with the Marine Biology Research Centre in Tajura (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) be resumed in the near future.
5. Mr Fabio Fiorentino, National Focal Point for Italy was elected as Chair for this session of the MedSudMed Coordination Committee. He welcomed the participants wishing the meeting every success and also that the results of this meeting would entail the continuation of coordination and collaboration on all issues related to fisheries.

6. The Representative of Regione Siciliana, Mr Salvatore Manzella, welcomed the participants and thanked each member country for the cooperation and the achievements in the context of MedSudMed. He stressed the importance of this meeting and of the MedSudMed Project for the Regione Siciliana as a concrete example of regional cooperation.
7. The FAO MedSudMed Project Coordinator, Mr Enrico Arneri, took the floor and thanked the CNR-IAMC of Capo Granitola for hosting the meeting and for the excellent organization and assistance provided. He thanked and welcomed all the Delegations, mentioning that the Coordination Committee was planned in March 2011 but it was postponed due to the recent situation in the Northern Africa countries and he stressed his wish to continue working with all the participating institutions. He then thanked the Regione Siciliana for the additional contribution provided since April 2011 to the MedSudMed Project on specific activities focused on crustaceans, as well as the Government of Italy for its continuing contributions.
8. The representative of FAO GFCM, Ms Pilar Hernandez, thanked the IAMC-CNR for hosting the meeting and wished to remark on how the FAO Regional Project activities (i.e. AdriaMed, ArtFiMed, CopeMed II, MedSudMed, EastMed, MedFisis) supported the growing role of the FAO GFCM in the Mediterranean Sea.
9. The FAO Fishery Industry Officer, Mr Petri Suuronen, took the floor to greet the Delegations of the participating countries, as well as those of the Donors, the FAO GFCM and of the other FAO Mediterranean Regional Projects and to thank the IAMC-CNR for hosting the meeting.
10. The Project Coordinator of CopeMed II and ArtFiMed, Mr Juan Antonio Camiñas while thanking the host Institute, mentioned that the presence of representatives from all the other FAO Mediterranean Projects reflected the importance attached to cooperation, coordination and synergy among the Projects for the benefit of the participating countries. He particularly recalled the close cooperation and synergies between CopeMed II and MedSudMed. In addition, by acknowledging the support provided by the Regione Siciliana to MedSudMed, he stressed the importance that additional support by

Mediterranean administrations would have to further fuel cooperation on fisheries sciences in the Mediterranean Sea.

11. The Delegates of Malta (Ms Andreina Fenech Farrugia) and Tunisia (Mr Rhida M'Rabet) thanked the host Institute for the hospitality and for the organization of this important meeting. The Project staff was thanked as well for the work carried out over these years to provide the necessary assistance to the MedSudMed participating countries to strengthen scientific cooperation in the region.

Adoption of the Agenda (Agenda Item n. 2)

12. The Agenda was presented to the Coordination Committee. The Chair invited the participants to offer any comments. The Agenda was adopted with no changes.

Report on the Project's Progress (Agenda Item n.3)

13. The Project Fishery 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 from June 2010 to May 2011 were presented. The activities described correspond to the work programme and recommendations of the 8th Meeting of the MedSudMed Coordination Committee.
14. Regarding demersal resources, the Meeting was informed that progress has been made in the harmonisation of sampling procedures and data processing in the Project area; a meeting was held involving the experts from the Italian and Tunisian research Institutes to discuss the technical aspects of an intercalibration exercise to be carried out between sampling protocols currently used in the Project area for bottom trawl surveys. A draft proposal was prepared for the execution of intercalibration at sea between the Tunisian vessel "R/V Hannibal" and the "M/P Santanna". Furthermore a Sub-regional Working Group on Shared Demersal Fisheries Resources was organised, establishing a group of researchers to make progress on the issue of knowledge and joint assessment of shared

demersal stocks. The species to be investigated and possibly jointly assessed in the Project framework were identified.

15. A specific Working Group was held on the stock assessment of *Parapenaeus longirostris* in the Project area and the joint stock assessment exercise was finalised and the results presented to the SAC meeting. Further work was carried out on the issue of closed seasons for fisheries and preliminary discussion was held taking advantage of the Sub-regional Working Group on Shared Demersal Fisheries Resources held in Mazara del Vallo. Progress was also made in the identification of shared stocks of *O. vulgaris* by finalising the report on *Octopus* fishery in Tunisia and by collecting samples from all the Project areas and investigating the best option for the genetic analysis of the samples.
16. Regarding small pelagic fisheries resources, efforts were made by the Project to continue building up expertise on these resources and to harmonise methodologies for data collection at sea, as well as in monitoring areas not regularly covered by national surveys targeting small pelagic fishery resources. A joint ichthyoplankton survey was carried out in Libyan waters on board the R/V Urania (15-27 July 2010) and a joint acoustic survey at sea was executed on board the R/V Maria Grazia (6 August - 2 September 2010) in the western part of Libyan waters. A bilateral meeting between Libyan and Italian scientists was then held to agree on a tentative calendar to process data and samples collected during the surveys at sea. At present the data processing is temporarily suspended.
17. The Meeting was also reminded that during the intersessional period, the Project created further opportunities for training, mainly upon request of the participating institutes. In particular on-the-job training was carried out during the ichthyoplankton and acoustic surveys at sea. The Project also supported the participation of experts in the AdriaMed Training course on Virtual Population Analysis for stock assessment. Moreover, to maintain a high level of regional cooperation, the Project assisted experts from the MedSudMed area in attending relevant FAO GFCM meetings held in the intersessional period.
18. The Committee members received the information on the work done by the Project positively, recognising adherence to the expected outputs of the previous Coordination Committee meeting. They further expressed their general satisfaction with the activities

carried out and commented that in the future the strictly scientific achievements (e.g. the publication of results on peer reviewed journals) should also be reported to the Committee and announced via the web-site.

19. The FAO GFCM representative emphasised the high quality of the work done and the positive scientific impact, especially concerning results supporting the FAO GFCM activities as carried out by the Project. She also congratulated the Project on the joint stock assessment on *Parapenaeus longirostris* and reiterated the importance of strengthening further the countries' participation and support to the FAO GFCM activities through the Project.
20. The Tunisian Delegate expressed appreciation of the work done by the Project and the scientific results achieved. He briefly recalled some of the key issues on which, among others, MedSudMed has played a crucial and innovative role, such as the effective scientific cooperation network established and the pragmatic approach to the issue of shared stocks. Emphasis was given to the harmonization of research methods and approaches in the MedSudMed area, with a view to using the best scientific tools. Together this resulted in valuable and constructive support to the progress of the Scientific Advisory Committee of the FAO GFCM (SAC). He therefore expressed the hope and the necessity that the Project enters into a new operative phase where due consideration will be given to critical issues such as those related to fisheries management.
21. He noted that Mediterranean fisheries research and management, as well as the FAO GFCM itself, should greatly benefit from the network of FAO Mediterranean Projects. He called the attention of the participants to the need to reach a common position for the management of fisheries exploiting shared stocks, such as for example *Parapenaeus longirostris* in the Straits of Sicily.
22. The discussion that followed recalled that during the last session of the FAO GFCM it was decided that proposals for FAO GFCM recommendations could be presented by members at least 15 days before the session. It was mentioned that this could create an opportunity for countries sharing stocks or areas to present proposals covering the management of fisheries exploiting their shared resources to the FAO GFCM, the only

forum that has the authority to actually turn them into regional regulations. To achieve this, the Tunisian Delegate suggested that the countries should use the MedSudMed Project, in a cooperation with CopeMed II and the other FAO Regional Projects, as a platform for discussing and agreeing on common management proposals regarding fisheries exploiting the stocks they share, to be submitted to the FAO GFCM.

23. The Delegate from Tunisia proposed that in order to improve the management system the countries sharing stocks should have the opportunity to meet together, to discuss and prepare management recommendations before the FAO GFCM annual meeting. The discussion of these consultative meetings will be based on the conclusion and recommendation of SAC and will facilitate agreement among countries on common positions and related management measures to be presented to the annual meeting of the FAO GFCM. These consultative meetings may reinforce the capacity of the member countries to actively propose management options thus reinforcing the FAO GFCM itself. The organization of such consultative meetings could be a joint activity of FAO MedSudMed and CopeMed II, involving other countries and projects when necessary.

FAO GFCM work plan for the next intersession period (Agenda Item n. 4)

24. The GFCM representative presented the draft work plan of GFCM-SAC envisaged for 2011/2012. The Committee members noticed that the large list of proposed meetings and the calendar which has not been set up might prevent the countries from ensuring timely contributions to the SAC activities.
25. The Committee commented that most of the activities of the Project are in support of the SAC work plan, e.g. standardization activities, intercalibration, stock assessment, fisheries resources monitoring. In addition MedSudMed, like all the FAO Regional Projects in the Mediterranean Sea, plays an important role in supporting the participation of experts in the FAO GFCM related events.
26. The issue of the visibility of the Regional Projects' support during the FAO GFCM events was discussed at length following the recent discussion had during the SAC (February 2011) and FAO GFCM session meeting (May 2011). The Committee

underlined the importance for the Projects to have more visibility both in terms of more time for the presentation of the activities during the FAO GFCM sessions (and its subsidiaries bodies SAC and CAQ) and in terms of acknowledgment of the role played in the organization/support, when it occurs, of each single event of FAO GFCM (and its subsidiary bodies). The Committee recognized the appreciation of the FAO GFCM of the Projects work done in support of its activities. A proposal to add a specific paragraph on the support provided by the FAO Regional Projects in the national report that member states should submit to the FAO GFCM was then made. In addition it was proposed to request that a specific mention be made of the FAO Regional Projects in the report of the FAO GFCM meetings when they contributed to the organization or participation of experts. The Committee agreed that the proposals be forwarded to the attention of the FAO GFCM Secretariat.

Development of the Project's Programme for the next period (Agenda Item n. 5)

27. The document CC/9/03 "Project Future Implementation" was introduced by the MedSudMed Project Coordinator, Mr Enrico Arneri. The Committee was reminded that the end of MedSudMed Project was scheduled for June 2011 and thanks to additional funds provided by the Donors the activities have been extended to June 2012. In particular, an *ad hoc* contribution was granted by Regione Siciliana (Italy) for specific activities on crustaceans and related fisheries. Accordingly, some of the activities that will be carried out in the forthcoming period will be partially supported thanks to these specific funds.
28. The Committee was informed that an Internal Evaluation of the project will be performed by FAO probably in late 2011 or at the beginning of 2012.
29. The work plan for the next intersessional period will follow the established Project areas of intervention: demersal and small pelagic fisheries resources; training and national capacity development; communications, in particular the web site; regional cooperation.
30. In relation to the component on demersal resources, the Project foresees the organisation of a specific Working Group meeting to identify common or joint research priorities and

activities; to review of current knowledge on fisheries and the marine environment in the Project area and to discuss the results / evaluate of the state of selected fisheries resources.

31. The Project will continue to support ongoing research and will initiate activities on *Merluccius merluccius* and *Palinurus elephas*. Moreover, an intercalibration exercise at sea between the R/V “Hannibal” (Tunisia) and the R/V “Santanna” (Italy) on the main target species *Parapenaeus longirostris* and *Merluccius merluccius* will be carried out according to the details agreed by national experts. Work will also continue on the matter of closed seasons for fishery. On the basis of a specific request and additional funding, established cooperative activities on crustacean stocks in the south-central Mediterranean will be carried out.
32. The Committee was informed that regarding small pelagic resources, the relative Working Group will meet 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 species in the participating countries and, whenever possible, discuss and carry out evaluations of the state of the fisheries resources. Furthermore, the Project will organise a specific workshop on *Coryphaena hippurus* and related fisheries. Cooperative processing of acoustic and ichthyoplankton data will continue and the Project will also explore the possibility to support an exploratory mid-water trawl survey in the central part of the Project area, using a large horizontal and vertical opening net.
33. Training exercises will be transversal to the abovementioned scientific activities, and where possible further *ad hoc* training will be organised. Regional cooperation on all issues will also continue as established in the Project mandate.
34. The Committee expressed appreciation for the work plan presented by the Project. The importance of addressing specific aspects was stressed and discussed.
35. The Committee expressed the wish that the collaboration with the Marine Biology Research Centre in Tajura (Libyan Arab Jamahiria) be resumed in the near future.

36. The delegate of Tunisia underlined the important role that the MedSudMed Project could play in supporting the discussion on fisheries and fisheries management in the south-central Mediterranean. He also reiterated that future activities should take initiative from the results achieved so far and different objectives should be identified when different fisheries or target species are concerned.
37. In this perspective, the Committee agreed that a working group should be organised with the specific aim of pooling together all the information available on the *Parapenaeus longirostris* fisheries (including e.g. updated stock assessment, performance of fishing gears, spatial distribution of effort, environmental parameters socio-economic related aspects) and progress toward the definition of specific management plan for this fishery. The meeting should take place in the first half of September 2011 (tentatively from 12 to 16 September 2011). The Project, in cooperation with Mr Othman Jarboui will prepare and circulate the Terms of References to initiate the discussion. During this week, one day could be devoted to the sub-regional Working Group on Demersal Shared Stocks.
38. Regarding the work on *Merluccius merluccius*, the Committee agreed that the same approach adopted for *Parapenaeus longirostris* should be followed. The first step forward should be the execution of a joint stock assessment to be presented during the relevant SAC meeting (Working Group on demersals). Accordingly, the Project will explore the possibility to carry out such an exercise in the following period.
39. The participants also agreed that a specific *ad hoc* meeting on Spiny lobster (*Palinurus elephas*) should be organised. This meeting should be finalised to gather all the available information on biology, abundance, distribution and fisheries of this species to explore the available options for the assessment of its stock and tentatively initiate a joint assessment exercise.
40. With reference to the intercalibration exercise foreseen for July 2011, discussion was held on some organizational arrangements. The representative of Tunisia, while underlining the importance of having fishing technologists on board during the survey, recalled that in order to ensure the timely arrangements all the documentation should be received by the Tunisian administration by the end of the month. The Project confirmed that all the

documentation will be sent to the Tunisia authorities in due time to ensure the timely starting of the work at sea.

41. Regarding the activities related on *Octopus vulgaris*, the Committee recalled the importance of the work carried out so far and pointed out the importance of finalizing the genetic studies to define the stock units in the Project area.
42. On this issue, the meeting recalled that although the genetic analysis can provide evidence of the existence of a single population, different pattern of exploitation can occur depending on the specific geographical region considered, thus accounting for the existence of different stocks. The importance of progressing in the definition of aspects like stock-recruitment relationship, and spatial and/or environmental aspects in the stock assessment of *Octopus vulgaris* rather than using classical methods was stressed.
43. The delegate of Tunisia stressed the importance of further continuing the research activities on this species and the need to have some training activities on ageing. He also mentioned that ancillary information on sediments, macro-benthonic flora and fauna associated to this species are available in Tunisia. The participants commented on the importance for the future of enlarging the scope of the study on Octopus thus providing a complete picture of the associated benthic species, this information is also available at the Italian and Maltese research Institutes.
44. After the discussion the participants agreed that, once the genetic study is completed and the stock boundaries defined, further steps toward the identification of critical areas such as nurseries and spawning grounds and on the possible options for the stock assessment of this species shall be planned.
45. With regards to the Review on Crustaceans, the representative of Regione Siciliana acknowledged the importance to carry out a specific review on crustaceans as these species are high interest for its administration. In this context the participants were informed that a project on spiny lobster called LanCollect is active involving institutions from Italy, Spain and France to build a regional knowledge-base in the Western Mediterranean. Some preliminary meetings have already been carried out and a preliminary list collecting all the information available in the Mediterranean sea on this

species has been prepared and could be made available for the MedSudMed review. The Committee was also informed that scientific information are available at IEO in Palma de Majorca which organized a meeting on spiny lobsters whose results could be used for the fulfilment of this task

46. The Committee acknowledged the possibility to take advantage of previous or on-going activities carried out on crustaceans and agreed that the Review will focus, as first step on: *Nephrops norvegicus*, *Aristeomorpha foliacea*, *Aristaeus antennatus*, *Palinurus elephas*, *Penaeus kerathurus* and *Metapenaeus monoceros*.
47. The Tunisian representative stressed the importance of proceeding with the discussion started last year during the MedSudMed Working Group of Demersal Fisheries Resources 2010) on closed seasons for fishery. He recalled the importance of addressing this issue for his country especially in the Gulf of Gabes where stakeholders are requesting an harmonization of the closed seasons for fisheries in the Straits of Sicily.
48. The participants concurred on the need to discuss the issue further and agreed to convene an *ad hoc* meeting aiming at revising the information available in each Project country, to define the objectives of specific activities to carry out in order to draft some preliminary management options for the area.
49. The representative of Regione Siciliana reiterated the importance of this issue for his administration. He mentioned the effort of Regione Siciliana towards the harmonization of management measures in Sicily at local level for the implementation of local management plans (for artisanal and industrial fisheries) in order to minimize the conflicts among the multiple users of the fishing resources often raised by the adoption of restrictive rules on fisheries (which may have a significant impact on the local fisheries management and policies, e.g. the adoption of mesh size regulations). He further reiterated the importance of joint and concerted actions for the achievement of good management results and therefore of the organisation of a specific meeting to represent the appropriate forum in which to address these issues.
50. The Committee acknowledged that this activity will be challenging for both the participating countries and the Project itself. The participants then agreed to convey an *ad*

hoc meeting on closed seasons for fisheries aimed at assessing the “state of the art” of closed seasons for fisheries in the Project area, at identifying the area on which focus possible joint harmonized intervention. The meeting is expected to take place at the beginning of 2012.

51. General consensus was expressed by the participants on the organization of the *ad hoc* working group on *Coryphaena hippurus*. The meeting will aim to define the status of national activities carried out and/or currently implemented on this species and to tentatively initiate a joint stock assessment exercise. To facilitate the discussion, MedSudMed, in cooperation with Ms Pilar Hernandez and Mr Camiñas, will provide the participants with a document summarizing all the activities carried out on *Coryphaena hippurus* in the framework of CopeMed. The meeting will be held in Palermo on the second week of July 2011.
52. Discussion on the need to address also the small pelagic fisheries issues like e.g. intercalibration of acoustic surveys and data processing, genetic comparison of anchovies, was stressed. The Committee then agreed to explore the possibility of holding this working group back to back with the meeting of *Coryphaena hippurus*.
53. The participants agreed with the training activities proposed in the work-plan. They were also informed that a joint training course on stock assessment would be organized in cooperation with the other Mediterranean Regional Projects due to the common request received by all the Projects on this topic. Furthermore, cooperation will be sought with the Mediterranean Regional Projects on topics of common interest. The Committee acknowledged the initiatives and recalled that the training activities should remain one of the relevant components of the Project. The representative of Malta stressed the importance for her country to have a training course specifically on stock assessment and confirmed the willingness to host it in Malta.
54. After wide discussion and comment on the content of Document CC/09/03, the Committee agreed on the programme of activities proposed and suggestions made by the participants for the coming period; some specific elements were pointed out with reference to some of the activities and related outputs. The activities will be implemented according to the budget availability. Furthermore the Committee made the following

additional specific suggestions for the next intersessional period of Project implementation:

- Support the implementation of an intercalibration exercise at sea between the R/V Hannibal (Tunisia) and M/P Santanna (Italy);
- Organisation or support for training activities on assessment and ageing methods for demersal and small pelagic resources;
- Organize an *ad hoc* Working group on demersal fisheries resources and particularly on *Parapenaeus longirostris*, devoting one session to the *Merluccius merluccius*;
- Organize an *ad hoc* meeting on *Palinurus elephas* to gather the information available for stock assessment;
- Organize an *ad hoc* meeting on closed season for fisheries in the Project area;
- Organize a meeting on fisheries and appraisal of *Coryphaena hippurus* and investigate the possibility to have a back to back meeting of the Working Group on Small Pelagic fisheries resources;
- Support the collection and reviewing the information available in the Project area on *Nephrops norvegicus*, *Aristeomorpha foliacea*, *Aristaeus antennatus*, *Palinurus elephas*, *Penaeus keraturus* and *Metapenaeus monoceros*;
- Support to the FAO GFCM its Scientific Advisory Committee and all Sub-Committees should be further given also in terms of scientific contributions.

Other matters (Agenda item n. 6)

55. The Committee wishes to thank the IAMC-CNR for hosting and contributing to the organization of the meeting. The Italian Government and the Regione Siciliana are also thanked by the Committee for the specific support provided.

Date and venue of the next Coordination Committee meeting (Agenda item n. 7)

56. Further to the kind invitation of the Tunisian representative, the next meeting of the MedSudMed Coordination Committee will be held in Tunisia tentatively in March 2012. This proposal was welcomed by the Meeting participants.

57. This report was adopted on 18th May 2011.

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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

The main activities and the Project's outputs will be presented and reviewed. Information will be given on the cooperative research work, the training sessions, and the relationship and cooperation of the Project at Mediterranean level.

4. FAO GFCM work plan for the next intersession period

The scientific and technical activities foreseen in the FAO GFCM work plan for 2011-2012 will be presented.

5. Project future implementation

The work plan of the Project 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 follow-up of Working Groups and to the harmonisation of sampling procedures and data processing. The international cooperation, the relationship with other projects, the relationship with the Donors, 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.

6. Other matters

7. Date and venue of the next Coordination Committee meeting

List of Documents

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| FAO-MedSudMed: CC/9/01 | Provisional annotated agenda |
| FAO-MedSudMed: CC/9/02 | Report on Project's Progress (<i>May 2010 – April 2011</i>) |
| FAO-MedSudMed: CC/9/03 | Development of the Project's Programme |
| FAO-MedSudMed: CC/9/Info 01 | Provisional list of participants |
| FAO-MedSudMed: CC/9/Info 02 | Report of the Eighth Meeting of the Coordination Committee. <i>MedSudMed Technical Documents N.25</i> |
| FAO-MedSudMed: CC/9/Info 03 | Report of the meeting "Progress toward the intercalibration of bottom trawl surveys in the MedSudMed project area (south-central mediterranean)" Palermo 13 – 14 July 2010 |
| FAO-MedSudMed: CC/9/Info 04 | Report of the MedSudMed and CopeMed II Working Group on <i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i> in the Projects' area (Mazara del Vallo, Italy, 13-15 September 2010). |
| FAO-MedSudMed: CC/9/Info 05 | Assessment of deep water pink shrimp, <i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i> , in the in the south-central Mediterranean Sea |
| FAO-MedSudMed: CC/9/Info 06 | Report of the Sub regional Working Group on Demersal Shared Stocks in the MedSudMed and CopeMed II area (Mazara del Vallo, Italy, September 2010) |
| FAO-MedSudMed: CC/9/Info 07 | Rapport du Projet de Recherche sur l'exploitation du poulpe commun <i>Octopus vulgaris</i> dans la région Sud Tunisienne et la région de Lampedusa Italienne (Méditerranée centrale) - DRAFT |
| FAO-MedSudMed: CC/9/Info 08 | Report of the MedSudMed 2010 Ichthyoplankton and Oceanographic Survey in the Libyan continental shelf 15 – 27 July 2010 |
| FAO-MedSudMed: CC9/Info 09 | Report of the MedSudMed 2010 acoustic survey in the Libyan west continental shelf 08 – 31 august 2010 |
| FAO-MedSudMed: CC/9/Info 10 | Major activities of the FAO Regional Projects. Documents presented at the FAO GFCM-SAC 13th session (Marseille, France, 07-11 February 2011) |
| FAO-MedSudMed: CC/9/Info 11 | List of documents |

Report on Project's Progress (June 2010 – May 2011)

Introduction

This paper provides an overview of the main activities carried out by the Project MedSudMed between June 2010 and April 2011, 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 8th Meeting of the MedSudMed Coordination Committee (Tajoura, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, 18-19 May 2010) were implemented (CC/9/info 02).

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 2010, 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

During the intersessional period, the work carried out within this Project component focused on planning field work, promoting discussion on emerging issues and priorities on fisheries between national experts, joint data analysis, finalisation of technical reports and technical documents.

As a result of the great collaborative effort of the institutes participating in MedSudMed, progress has been made in the harmonisation of sampling procedures and data processing in the Project area in the last years. During the intersessional period, the Project organised a meeting (Italy, July 2010) involving the experts of the Italian and Tunisian research Institutes (IAMC-CNR of Mazara del Vallo and INSTM of Sfax) to discuss the technical aspects of an intercalibration exercise to be carried out between sampling protocols currently used in the Project area for bottom trawl surveys. The main issues of the exercise including the sampling scheme to be adopted, the sampling area and the period of the year for its execution were preliminary agreed. A draft proposal for the execution of the intercalibration at sea between the Tunisian vessel "R/V Hannibal" and the "M/P SantAnna", which carried

out experimental surveys in Italy (south-Sicily) and Malta in the last years, was prepared (CC/9/info 03).

MedSudMed organised a Working Group for the stock assessment of *Parapenaeus longirostris* in the projects area. The activity was performed, in cooperation with the FAO Regional Project CopeMed II. The Working Group was held on 13-15 September 2010 in Mazara del Vallo, Italy, kindly hosted by the Istituto per l'Ambiente Marino Costiero – Consiglio Nazionale per le Ricerche (IAMC-CNR) of Mazara del Vallo. The Working Group was attended by 11 researchers from the south-central and western Mediterranean research institutes involved in MedSudMed and CopeMed II. The Working Group finalised the joint stock assessment exercise on *P. longirostris* in GSAs 12-13-14-15-16 initiated in 2009 (Malta, October 2009, see CC/8/info 04). National data from Tunisia (GSAs 12-13-14), Malta (GSA 15) and Italy (GSA 16) on *P. longirostris* were pooled together and jointly analysed at sub-regional level by experts of participating countries. During the meeting, as preliminary exercise the data from Algeria (GSA 4) were also analysed using the same approach applied for the other GSAs. The results of the joint stock assessment of *P. longirostris* for the entire area (GSAs 12-16), including the management advice proposed, were presented at the SAC SCSA Working Group of Demersal Species of the FAO GFCM (Turkey, October 2010). Full details can be found in the relative Meeting Memorandum and stock assessment forms (CC/9/info 04 and CC/9/info 05).

In addition, in the framework of the activities related to the Demersal Fisheries Resources the Project organised a Sub-regional Working Group on Shared Demersal Fisheries Resources. The meeting was organised in cooperation with CopeMed II (16-17 September 2010, Mazara del Vallo, Italy). The main objective of the meeting was to discuss issues related to demersal fisheries shared resources in the Projects' area. Particular importance was given in establishing a group of researchers to progress in the knowledge and joint assessment of shared demersal stocks. The species to be investigated and tentatively jointly assessed in the Projects' framework were identified by sub-region: Alboran Sea and surrounding areas (GSAs 01-06), Gulf of Lion (GSAs 07), Straits of Sicily (GSAs 12-16 and GSA 21). A work plan, including specific activities to be carried out and the species to focus on in the short and medium term was agreed on (CC/9/info 06).

An *ad hoc* meeting on the fishing closed seasons currently occurring at national level in the south-central and western Mediterranean was organized for the management of shared stocks. The meeting was organized back-to-back of the Sub-regional Working Group on Shared Demersal Fisheries Resources to be held in Mazara del Vallo (16-17 September 2011). The objective of the meeting was to initiate the process toward the harmonization of fishing closed seasons in the south-central Mediterranean for the sustainable exploitation of shared fisheries resources. During the meeting national experts described the fisheries regulation in their country, including the existing fisheries restrictions measures such as closed seasons and marine protected areas. Common issues, convergences and differences between countries regarding current fishing closed seasons were highlighted. The Working Group envisaged the organisation of a wider workshop involving also fisheries administrators to further progress on the harmonisation of fishing closed seasons (CC/9/info 06).

MedSudMed continued to back the work on *Octopus vulgaris* and related fisheries in the south-central Mediterranean. During the intersessional period the work initiated in Tunisia on the fisheries of *O. vulgaris* (including preliminary analysis of abundance and of the socio-economic related aspects) was completed (CC/9/Info 07). Progresses were also achieved in the identification of shared stocks of this species in the Project area. The sampling phase for a genetic comparison of *O. vulgaris* from different zones of the project area (*i.e.* GSAs 12-16 and 21) has been completed according to the protocol agreed on during the 8th MedSudMed Coordination Committee (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, May 2010, CC/8/info 06). All samples have been sent to the INSTM of La Goulette, Tunisia, for the first part of the genetic analysis.

In the view of enhancing the scientific networking and promoting the harmonising of protocols for experimental surveys at sea, MedSudMed organised an *ad hoc* meeting in Palermo between the Libyan and Italian National Focal Points involving also experts from the IAMC-CNR (Italy, 03 February 2011). During the meeting discussion was held on protocol currently adopted in the GSA 16 for the experimental bottom trawl surveys, *i.e.* the MEDITS (international bottom trawl survey in the Mediterranean) Protocol. The basic needs and requirements related to the application of the MEDITS sampling scheme were discussed and the initial steps for the sampling stations allocations and mapping were initiated.

A presentation was given at the ICES Workshop on Sexual Maturity Staging of Elasmobranchs (WKMSSEL, Malta, October 2010) to illustrate specific results obtained by the Project on Chondrichthyes, namely on age determination and on the identification of sexual maturity.

1.2. MedSudMed Component on Small Pelagic fish

As for the previous years and following the requests formulated during the 8th MedSudMed Coordination Committee (May 2010), efforts were made by the Project in pursuing building up expertise on small pelagic fisheries resources and harmonising methodologies for data collection at sea, as well as in monitoring areas not regularly covered by national surveys targeting on small pelagic fishery resources. In particular, MedSudMed encouraged and supported the organisation of cooperative surveys at sea with mixed teams on board the research vessels during which, in addition to collecting data, on-the-job training was provided:

Joint oceanographic and ichthyoplankton survey at sea. The Istituto per l'Ambiente Marino Costiero – Consiglio Nazionale per le Ricerche (IAMC-CNR) of Capo Granitola, Italy, and the Marine Biology Research Centre (MBRC) of Tajoura, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, under the auspices of MedSudMed, carried out a joint ichthyoplankton survey at sea on board of the R/V Urania (15-27 July 2010) in Libyan waters. During the survey samples were collected to describe the oceanographic characteristics of the area and the composition and spatial distribution of the ichthyoplankton, hence improving knowledge on transport patterns of eggs and larvae of commercial fish species in the Project area (CC/9/info 08).

Joint acoustic survey at sea. MedSudMed encouraged and supported the execution of a joint acoustic survey at sea on board of the R/V Urania (06 August - 02 September 2010) in the western part of the Libyan waters in cooperation with the Istituto per l'Ambiente Marino

Costiero – Consiglio Nazionale per le Ricerche (IAMC-CNR, Italy) and the Marine Biology Research Centre (MBRC) of Tajoura, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. The processing of the data collected are foreseen to produce an estimate of the biomass of small pelagic fish in the area investigated (CC/9/info 09).

An *ad hoc* meeting was organised between the Libyan National Focal Point and the experts of the IAMC-CNR of Capo Granitola in Palermo (Italy, 04 February 2011) to agree on a tentative calendar for the processing of data and samples collected during the surveys at sea. The data processing was organised in three phases to be completed at the IAMC-CNR of Capo Granitola (Italy) and at the MBRC of Tajoura (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya).

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 they involved scientists belonging to the network that was created and consolidated by the Project. Moreover, some of the training courses allowed for joint sampling at sea and aimed not only at enhancing capacity development, but also at producing scientific information directly related to the Project activities.

On-the-job training was carried out during the ichthyoplankton and acoustic surveys at sea for scientists from the MBRC. Scientists were trained on: measurement of physical-chemical parameters of the water column with a multiparametric probe; collection of current profiles with ADCP (Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler); zooplankton sampling with Bongo net; collection of sediments samples with a box corer; water sampling with Niskin bottles; collection of acoustic data related to small pelagic fish using a split beam transducer at 38, 120 and 200 kHz; biological sampling of small pelagic fish using a pelagic trawl and processing of samples for the collection of biological information of small pelagic fish.

Following the requests formulated during informal meetings held through the year on the need for a training on stock assessment, the Project supported to the participation of 3 experts from the Project area to the AdriaMed Training course on Virtual Population Analysis for stock assessment (Rome, November 2010).

3. Regional cooperation

The reinforcement of regional cooperation was encouraged by the Project through participation of regional experts in several workshops, trainings, meetings, seminars and conferences 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. Several informal meetings with national experts and focal points were also held through the year to preliminary discuss on technical issues and planning possible activities.

In order to strengthen international and regional cooperation, 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 11th AdriaMed Coordination Committee meeting (Montenegro, 2010). Moreover the Project participated at the AdriaMed Working Group on Small Pelagic Fisheries Resources, Split (Croatia, October 2010) and at the 12th AdriaMed Coordination Committee meeting (Ljubjana, Slovenia, 01-02 February 2011).

A strong cooperation was also established with the FAO Project CopeMed II and ArtFiMed, to optimise the use of human and financial resources. In this framework, the Working Group on *Parapenaeus longirostris* and the Sub-regional working Group on Shared Demersal Stocks in the Projects’ area were co-organized by the two Projects.

In addition, several meetings of coordination were also held with the other regional projects AdriaMed, ArtFiMed, CopeMed II and EastMed throughout the year (the last one being on 10 February 2011) to consolidate and envisage common activities. In this respect the Project also participated to the fourth Coordination Committee meeting of CopeMed II (April 2011) and to the second Coordination Committee of EastMed (Antalya, Turkey, 05-06 April 2011), where additional synergies were identified.

A common exposition during the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) session (FAO HQ, Rome, Italy, 31 January -4 February 2011) was organized for all the FAO Mediterranean Regional Projects displaying informative material and posters of the Projects activities.

Cooperation with “MedSea Large Marine Ecosystem (MedSea-LME)” Project funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF)” on topics that may be of common interest, was also sought. In particular, the Project participated in the workshop “Implementing the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries - Framework and Practical Guidance” organised in the framework of the MedSea-LME Project (Rome, December, 2010), where representatives from Tunisia were involved.

Cooperation was further sustained with the FAO GFCM Secretariat and the FAO GFCM Subsidiary bodies. MedSudMed continued to support the activities of the FAO GFCM by providing scientific contributions for discussion and by participating and funding the participation of experts in the FAO GFCM meetings held in the intersessional period (CC/9/info 10). Due to the overlap in geographical areas covered by MedSudMed and CopeMed II, the two Projects agreed to coordinate the support to the participation of national scientists in the following meetings organised by the FAO GFCM:

- FAO GFCM – SAC Transversal Expert Meeting on the status of Elasmobranchs in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (Salammbô, Tunisia, 20-22 September 2010);
- FAO GFCM - SAC - Transversal Workshop on Fishing Capacity (Rome, Italy 27–28 Sep 2010);
- Workshop on data collection methods applied to all segments of the Fleet and their coherence with the requirements of the FAO GFCM Task 1 (Rome, Italy 29 Sep – 1 Oct 2010);

- FAO GFCM - SAC - SCSA Working Group on Demersal Species (Istanbul, Turkey 18 - 23 October 2010);
- FAO GFCM - SAC - Sub-Committees meetings - (Malta 29 November-, 2 December 2010);
- FAO GFCM - SAC - Coordination Meeting of the Sub-Committees (CMSC) - 10th Session (Malta, 3 December 2010);
- FAO GFCM – 13th session Scientific Advisory Committee (Marseille, France 31 January – 4 February 2011);
- FAO GFCM 35th session (Rome, Italy, 09-14 May 2011)

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.

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. An effort was made, in cooperation with AdriaMed, EastMed and CopeMed II (including ArtFiMed), to harmonise the information provided in the Projects web sites. In particular, the Country Fishery Information sheet containing the basic information on geography, fisheries and aquaculture for each country were updated and standardized with the CFI provided by the other Mediterranean Regional Projects. A special section on the information related to the participating countries (based on the identification of Operational Units) that is reported in the FAO GFCM Statistical Bulletin was created. In addition, a common repository of all the documents produced by the Mediterranean Regional Project is planned. Over the last year, an average of 1000 pages was visited each month and around 150 documents are downloaded from the site each month.

4.2. Technical Documents

Three technical documents related to meetings and specific research activities promoted by the Project were finalised and published on the web site. 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 most recent Project publications are also disseminated through the Project's mailing list. The following technical documents were finalised during the intersession period:

- Drago, A., Sorgente, R., Olita, A. 2010. Sea temperature, salinity and total velocity climatological fields for the south-central Mediterranean Sea. GCP/RER/010/ITA/MSM-TD-14. *MedSudMed Technical Documents*, No. 14: 35pp.
- MedSudMed. 2010. Report of the workshop on octopus stocks and related fisheries in the MedSudMed Project area. GCP/RER/010/ITA/MSM-TD-23. *MedSudMed Technical Documents*, No. 23: 50 pp.
- MedSudMed. 2010. Report of the Eight Meeting of the MedSudMed 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: 29pp.

Development of the Project's Programme

Introduction

The aim of this document is to provide the Coordination Committee (CC) members with elements for discussion on the MedSudMed Project Work Programme for the coming year.

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). Following a technical review conducted in 2009, 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 2012. Additional funds were also provided to MedSudMed in 2011 by the Regione Siciliana to carry out specific actions on crustaceans. Accordingly, activities regarding crustaceans that will be co-funded by this specific initiative are included in this document marked with an asterisk.

Moreover, according to the ruling procedures of FAO, due to the total budget and the life span of the project, MedSudMed should be subject to an internal evaluation (as also foreseen in the Project Document). The FAO evaluation objectives are to analyse the effectiveness and efficiency of the FAO executed projects, including the role of partners and beneficiaries, to provide an assessment of the implementation status, and to provide recommendations to improve the implementation process towards sustainable effects and impact on beneficiaries. The findings, lessons learned and recommendations of the evaluations are officially provided to the concerned authorities of the recipient countries and of the funding institutions, for better formulation and implementation of future projects. Therefore in 2011 action will be taken to organize a mid-term evaluation of the project starting from the preparation of draft Terms of Reference (TOR) that will define the scope, including evaluation issues and questions, and the modalities for conducting the evaluation.

The activities proposed in this document take into account the objectives and results achieved so far and the recommendations received during the 8th Coordination Committee meeting (May 2010, Tajoura, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya). The indications collected from the countries during informal meetings held with the National Focal Points throughout the intersession period are considered, as well as the scientific cooperation established within the framework of the FAO General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (FAO GFCM).

The final work plan will take into due account the recommendations of the 9th 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;
- 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 outcomes of the first meeting of the Sub-regional Working Group on Shared Demersal Stocks organised in cooperation with CopeMed II in 2010 and in consultation with the participating institutes, the Project foresees the organisation of a MedSudMed Working Group on demersal fisheries resources. The objectives of the meeting will be: i) the identification and plan of common or joint research priorities and activities; ii) the review of current knowledge on fisheries and the marine environment in the Project area; and iii) discuss the results and/or carry out the evaluation of the state of selected fisheries resources. 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, the Project will continue to support the work on *Parapenaeus longirostris* and the initiation of a joint assessment of *Merluccius merluccius*. Likewise, an ad hoc activity on Spiny lobster (*Palinurus elephas*) is foreseen to explore the possibility of a joint stock assessment of this species in the Project area.

- Inter-calibration exercise*

Considerable effort was made by MedSudMed and the research institutes to progress toward the standardisation of sampling designs and protocols used in the different survey programmes and data handling in the Project area. In this context, MedSudMed will support the intercalibration exercise at sea between the R/V “Hannibal” (Tunisia) and the R/V “SantAnna” (Italy) according to the details agreed by national experts. The activity is tentatively planned in July 2011. To this extent, the main target species (*Parapenaeus longirostris* and *Merluccius merluccius*), the sampling scheme and period (July 2011), the possible sampling area (GSA 13) and the number of hauls to be performed were already identified and agreed on by national experts (CC/9/Info 03).

- 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 promoted the collection of samples of this species for a genetic study in the south-central Mediterranean. During the next period, the Project will support the genetic analysis and comparison of the collected samples. On this regard, the work will be carried out as far as possible taking advantage of the experience and capability developed in the participating countries.

- 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 structure and contents of 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 template. In particular, information on crustaceans contained therein will be extracted from the TD 15, updated and integrated with new relevant data (e.g. including stock assessment information, maps of nurseries). Information of other species like *Palinurus elephas* will be also included in the document.

- Workshop on fishing closure (e.g. fishing closed seasons, fishery restricted areas)

Following the outcomes of the discussion held on fishing closed seasons (Italy, 17 September 2010 - CC/9/Info 06) and the emerging need of harmonising the management strategies in the Project area, MedSudMed foresees the organisation of a meeting on the use of fishery restriction measures as management tools in the south-central Mediterranean. The workshop will be opened to national experts from the participating countries, as well as to representatives of national fishery administrations according to the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF). The workshop will address the main issues regarding fishing closure (over time and space) and will aim to progress in the harmonisation of such valuable management tool in the south-central Mediterranean.

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 fisheries resources. As follow up and according to the consultation with the participating institutes during the year, the Project will organise a Working Group on small pelagic fisheries resources. 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 and the standardisation of data sampling and processing. In particular, the possibility to support a genetic study for the stock identification of small pelagic species relevant for fisheries will be brought to the attention of the Working Group for discussion and planning. The organisation and technical aspects concerning an intercalibration at sea of methods for investigating the biomass and spatial distribution of small pelagic will also be discussed, as well as their applicability to all GSAs in the Project area. 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.

- Workshop on *Coryphaena hippurus*

According to the recommendation of the 8th MedSudMed Coordination Committee and of the requests formulated during the informal meeting held with national experts during the year, the Project will organise a specific workshop on *Coryphaena hippurus* and related fisheries. Being *C. hippurus* a high migratory species which is fished throughout the Mediterranean basin and taking advantage of the network of FAO Projects operating in the area, the meeting will be opened to experts from all the Mediterranean countries. Based on the outcomes of the workshop, the possibility of a joint exercise for the stock assessment of *C. hippurus* will be explored. The meeting was originally scheduled for January 2011, it will be carried out during the forthcoming period.

- Cooperative processing of acoustic and ichthyoplankton data

The Project, in cooperation with the participating institutes, will continue supporting the joint processing of samples and data collected during the MedSudMed Surveys at sea in Libyan waters (summer 2010). The calendar of the activity will be set according to the availability of the participating institutes in order to optimise resources, maximise the effectiveness of the analyses and minimise the time lag between the surveys and the analysis.

Following the specific request formulated during the year, MedSudMed, in cooperation with the participating institutes, will explore the possibility to support an exploratory mid-water trawl survey in the central part of the Project area using a large overture (horizontal and vertical net). On this regard, the experience accrued by the INSTM in using such net will be taken into due consideration.

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 specific activities. The Project will also 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 (e.g. intercalibration exercise) and data processing;
- The organisation of a basic training course on fish stock assessment and population dynamics;
- Specific activities on fish ageing 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.

Training activities, in general, will be coordinated among the FAO Regional Projects, in order to avoid duplication or overlapping of activities.

d) Web site and information system*

The Project portal (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.

e) Regional cooperation

Strengthening the cooperation with FAO Regional Projects

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 also be sought, taking into consideration the discussion held during the internal coordination meeting of the FAO Mediterranean Regional Projects (Rome, FAO-HQ January 2011). Several coordination meeting of the Mediterranean Regional Projects have already been planned in 2011 in order to consolidate and coordinate common activities. Areas of cooperation have been indicated for surveys at sea and socio-economic aspects of fisheries.

Moreover, the Project will participate in the Coordination Committees of the other regional Projects through 2011 where additional synergies will be identified.

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) through the preparation of scientific contributions for 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.

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. Synergies with other initiatives acting in the Project area and regarding fishery subjects will be also sought, thus avoiding duplication of efforts and optimising the use of financial resources.

In particular, synergies are sought 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.