



MedSudMed

Report of the Tenth Meeting of the Coordination Committee

Djerba, Tunisia, 13-14 March 2012

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.

FAO-MedSudMed Project HQ
FAO FIRF
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Roma
Italy

Tel: +39 06 570 56092/54492
Fax: +39 06 570 55188
e-mail: medsudmed@fao.org
URL: <http://www.faomedsudmed.org>

GCP/RER/010/ITA Publications

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

Comments on this document would be welcomed and should be sent to the Project headquarters:

MedSudMed Project
FAO FIRF, Room C351/352
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Roma
Italy
medsudmed@fao.org

For bibliographic purposes this document
should be cited as follows:

MedSudMed. 2012. Report of the Tenth 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-29. *MedSudMed Technical Documents*, No 29: 35 pp.

Preparation of this document

This document is the final version of the report of the Tenth 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), Djerba, Tunisia, 13-14 March 2012.

Acknowledgements

The Tunisian Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture, the General Director of the Institut National des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer (INSTM), Mr Ridha M'Rabet, and Mr Othman Jarboui, Tunisian Focal Point for MedSudMed, who provided kind hospitality and assistance in the organization of the meeting, are gratefully acknowledged.

MedSudMed

Report of the Tenth Meeting of the Coordination Committee, Djerba, Tunisia, 13-14 March 2012.

MedSudMed Technical Documents. No.29. GCP/RER/010/ITA/MSM-TD-29, Rome, 2012: 35 pp.

ABSTRACT

The Tenth Meeting of the MedSudMed Coordination Committee was attended by representatives from the countries participating in the Project (Italy, Libya, Malta and Tunisia), representatives of the Italian Donor (Ministry for Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies, MiPAAF), of the FAO GFCM Secretariat, of the FAO MedSudMed Project as well as of AdriaMed, 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. Mention was given that, according to the FAO rules, MedSudMed is subject of an FAO independent evaluation and all countries will be called to provide their contribution to the evaluation process. 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 by all the members of the Coordination Committee. The belief that continuing the Project can only bring success and be beneficial for each of the participating countries was affirmed.

Table of Contents

Preface	i
Preparation of this document	iii
Acknowledgement.....	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Report of the meeting	1
Annex A: List of Participants.....	18
Annex B: Agenda	20
Annex C: List of documents	21
Annex D: Report on Project's Progress.....	23
Annex E: Development of the Project's Programme	30

**Report of the 10th Meeting of the MedSudMed Coordination Committee
Djerba, Tunisia, 13-14 March 2012**

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

1. The Tenth meeting of the Coordination Committee Meeting of the FAO Regional Project MedSudMed “Assessment and Monitoring of the Fishery Resources and the Ecosystems in the Strait of Sicily” was held in Djerba, Tunisia, 13-14 March 2012, hosted by the Institut National des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer (INSTM).
2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Donor, the Italian Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies (MiPAAF), representatives from the countries participating in the Project (Italy, Libya, Malta and Tunisia), representatives of other FAO Regional Projects (namely AdriaMed, CopeMed II and EastMed), a representative of the FAO General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (FAO GFCM) Secretariat, as well as the staff of the FAO MedSudMed Project. The meeting was also attended by the three members of the independent Evaluation Team.
3. Mr Rhida M’Rabet, Director of the host Institute, the Institut National des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer (INSTM) welcomed the participants and expressed his honour at having the Committee members gathered in Djerba on the occasion of this meeting. He pointed out many of the aspects in which cooperation has been established with the Project. He stressed the importance of the Gulf of Gabès for fisheries in Tunisia and in the sub-region, mentioning the problems that still need to be addressed and the role that the INSTM plays in concentrating its efforts in the area.
4. The FAO MedSudMed Project Coordinator, Mr Enrico Arneri, took the floor and greeted the Delegations. The INSTM was also thanked for hosting the Coordination Committee for the third time and for the excellent organization and assistance provided. He underlined the importance of having the countries supporting the Project in this moment when the bases for the future years are being laid. He recalled the significance that the Gulf of Gabès in particular has for the Project and the need to continue strengthening the scientific cooperation in the sub-region; he also underlined the

particular necessity to reinforce support for the development of the capacity of the Libyan Marine Biology Research Centre. He informed the Meeting that a set of documents and their digital version on a USB pen drive, prepared by the Project staff had been distributed to the participants.

5. Mr Rhida M'Rabet was proposed and elected as Chair for this session of the MedSudMed Coordination Committee.
6. On behalf of the Government of Italy and in particular of Mr Mario Catania, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies, Mr Luca Bedin from the Fisheries Directorate thanked the INSTM for the kind hospitality and the Project for the work carried out so far. He also wished to welcome the representatives from Libya in particular, expressing his satisfaction in seeing them participating actively in the activities of the Project once again. He underlined that the participation of Libya is essential for the Project and for the cooperation in the area.
7. The Representatives echoed the appreciation expressed by the Representative of Italy in thanking the INSTM for the hospitality and MedSudMed Project for its work.
8. The representative of Libya, Mr Nureddin M. Esarbot, Director of the Marine Biology Research Centre of Tajoura (MBRC) and Chairperson of the National Authority for Marine Wealth of Libya, thanked the INSTM for the hospitality and greeted the Meeting representatives. He thanked the Italian Donor for the continuing financial support given to the MedSudMed Project since its initiation. He expressed his appreciation for the warm welcome received. He recalled that although the participation of Libya in the Project activities had been slowed down due to the circumstances that affected his country, the Institute is willing to start the cooperation in the area again. He assured the active involvement of the MBRC in the framework of the Project and he mentioned that the Institute wishes to follow up and finalize the activities left in 2010 and start the activities planned for 2012 with new emphasis. He wished the meeting every success and also hoped that the results of this meeting would entail the continuation of coordination and collaboration on all issues related to fisheries as well as the continuation of the MedSudMed Project activities.

Adoption of the Agenda (Agenda Item n. 2)

9. 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)

10. The Project Fishery Monitoring Expert, Mr Luca Ceriola, introduced this agenda item and the document "Report on Project progress", in which the main activities carried out by MedSudMed from June 2011 to February 2012 are described. The activities carried out correspond to the work programme and recommendations of the 9th Meeting of the MedSudMed Coordination Committee.
11. It was remarked how often the Project together with the national experts has developed its work in full coherence with the priorities set by the FAO GFCM to progress towards the formulation of sound scientific advice for the needs of fisheries management.
12. Where demersal resources are concerned, the Meeting was informed that, during the intersessional period, the Project organised an inter-calibration exercise at sea between the Tunisian vessel "R/V Hannibal" and the Italian vessel "M/P Santanna". The exercise was carried out from 08-19 July 2011 in GSA 13. Forty sampling stations were performed in parallel by the two vessels and data on catch and on performance of the fishing gears were gathered. Samples of target species (*Parapenaeus longirostris* and *Merluccius merluccius*) were also collected and a follow up meeting was held in January 2012. The initial results of the inter-calibration were presented during the meeting of the Sub-committee on Stock Assessment of the FAO GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee.
13. In cooperation with the CopeMed II Project, MedSudMed organised a Working Group for the assessment of *Parapenaeus longirostris* stocks in the south-central

Mediterranean in September 2011. The Working Group on *P. longirostris* continued the work initiated in 2009 and widened the biologic approach by including economic parameters in the analysis. Moreover a Working Group on *Merluccius merluccius* and related fisheries was also organised in cooperation with the CopeMed II Project in September 2011. The results of both joint Working Groups, including the management advice proposed, were presented at the FAO GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee - Working Group of Demersal Species in October 2011. In the context of the above, the Project also organised the second meeting of the Sub-regional Working Group on Shared Demersal Fisheries Resources together with the CopeMed II Project. The aim of this sub-regional Working Group was to strengthen the scientific cooperation and to preliminarily identify possible joint activities.

14. MedSudMed continued to support the identification of shared stocks of *Octopus vulgaris* in the south central-Mediterranean. Collaboration with the University of Oviedo is being established for the genetic analysis of the samples collected in the Project area in order to detect the existence of possible subpopulations in the area.
15. An *ad hoc* meeting on closed seasons for fisheries currently occurring at national level in the south-central Mediterranean was organized to discuss the case study of the Gulf of Gabès with a view to the future harmonization of these regulations in the MedSudMed Project area and at regional level. A road map for future activities to achieve this harmonisation was the successful output of the meeting.
16. Concerning the small pelagic species, in the intersessional period, particular importance was given to enlarging and consolidating the group of researchers involved in studies on this group of species; efforts were made in pursuing the improvement of expertise on small pelagic fishery resources and harmonising methodologies for data collection at sea. The first Working Group on Small Pelagic meeting (Capo Granitola, Italy, January 2012) was also organized. During the meeting discussion was held on possible priority activities such as the standardisation of sampling and data processing procedures and the identification of population units for small pelagic in the Project area.

17. In cooperation with CopeMed II, the Project organized a Workshop on “Fisheries and appraisal of *Coryphaena hippurus* in the south-central and western Mediterranean Sea” in July 2011. The foundation was laid to begin the common analysis of the available data on *C. hippurus* stock and fisheries.
18. Where training is concerned, in December 2011 the Project, with the support of all the FAO led Mediterranean Projects, organised a training course on the basic concepts and models used for stock assessment which was attended by 28 young scientists from all over the Mediterranean area. Furthermore, on-the-job training was carried out during the inter-calibration at sea on all the relevant procedures: setting of the technical equipment for measuring the gear characteristics during fishing operations (e.g. vertical and horizontal opening, distance from the bottom); setting of fishing gears and collection and storing of data on gears.
19. The reinforcement of regional cooperation was encouraged by the Project through participation of regional experts in relevant meetings at Mediterranean level including all GFCM SAC events. The Coordination Committee was also informed on the updating of the Project web pages and Technical Documents.
20. The Committee members appreciated the amount of work done by the Project and emphasized that it represents the follow up to the expected outputs of the previous Coordination Committee meeting, although the intersessional period was only 8 months. The participants wished to clearly point out that the future continuation of the MedSudMed experience is an essential condition to support sustainable development of the fisheries sector of the whole Project area.
21. Mr Fabio Massa, on behalf of the FAO GFCM Secretariat, thanked the INSTM for the kind hospitality. He also thanked the Project staff for the organization of this meeting and the amount of the work carried out in the inter-sessional period. He further emphasized the importance of MedSudMed for the GFCM and its Scientific Advisory Committee in terms of effective support provided by the Project to the FAO GFCM SAC work. He wished to underline how such contributions were provided through concrete input as, for instance, the joint stock assessments in GSAs 12-16 presented at the FAO GFCM Sub Committee meeting and the integration of basic economic data in

the joint assessment of *Parapenaeus longirostris*. Mention was also made of the importance of the inter-calibration exercise at sea. Finally he underlined the relevance of the publication of technical documents and the dissemination of the project results.

22. The Representative of Tunisia, Mr Othman Jarboui, expressed full satisfaction for the work carried out by the Project and commented on the findings that have enriched the knowledge on the demersal and small pelagic fisheries resources in the Project area and have strengthened the scientific cooperation established, which now represents important scientific assets. He pointed out some disequilibrium between the time/resources allocated to each Project component, underlining that the same level of attention paid to the demersal fisheries resources should be allocated to the small pelagic resources.
23. Following the discussion the participants agreed to try, in the future, to consolidate the activities related to the marine protected areas component.
24. The participants were then reminded that each year the Coordination Committee establishes an annual work plan for the Project according to the indications provided by the participating members. In particular for the small pelagic resources component the Committee was reminded that in 2011, due to the political situation in the Project area, many activities were delayed or postponed thus forcing the Project to slow down implementation, *inter alia*, of the small pelagic resources component. Mention was then made of the activities carried out in the past years on these components and the activities planned for 2012 which will be proposed.
25. The representative of Tunisia, Mr Rhida M'Rabet, acknowledged the work carried out by the Project and underlined that this represents the evolution of the Project activities. It was highlighted that the Project has achieved many significant results, starting in 2000 with national capacity development activities, then strengthening the process of standardization of the methodologies and in just a few years it has succeeded through the cooperative framework established to carry out the first joint stock assessment in the area. In the context of this process he wished that, as next step, the Project could widen its mandate and play the important role of facilitating the identification of common proposals for management to be brought to the attention of the FAO GFCM,

with the final aim of protecting the marine resources. The example of the outcome of the *ad hoc* meeting on closed seasons for fisheries in the Project area, held in Tunisia (February 2012), was brought to the attention of the participants.

26. In these kinds of activities the meeting also identified the possibility to take advantage of cooperation with the other FAO led Mediterranean Projects. The participants agreed that when synergies between the Regional Projects are sought, from the planning stage these should include common objectives aimed at facilitating the formulation of joint proposal for fisheries management at regional level.
27. At the same time positive appraisal was made of the preliminary results produced by the inter-calibration exercise and mention was made of the further continuation of this activity.

Project Evaluation

28. The Coordination Committee's attention was drawn to document CC/11/04, the Terms of Reference of the Final Projects Evaluation of the FAO implemented Projects in the Adriatic and Straits of Sicily (AdriaMed and MedSudMed): GCP/RER/010/ITA; GCP/RER/021/EC and GDCP/INT/010/ITA. Mr Arneri reminded the participants that FAO Evaluation policy establishes that all projects with a budget above USD 4 million should be evaluated at least once in their lifetime. An Independent Evaluation Team was established and it is composed of Mr Henri Farrugio (Team Leader), Mr Argirys Kallianotis and Mr Franco Franchini. The Evaluation Team will attend the Coordination Committees meetings of the two Projects to meet and interview the participants in the Projects, the representative of the donors and of the countries.
29. The MedSudMed Project Coordinator presented the objectives of the final evaluation to the participants. These are to provide accountability to the participating Member Countries, donors including the Italian MiPAAF, the European Commission and the Regione Siciliana, and FAO on the extent of the Projects' results, including outputs, outcomes and impacts – actual and potential – to date. The Evaluation team will also

draw lessons and formulate recommendations for the potential future role and strategies of the Projects, aiming to enable all key stakeholders to take decisions regarding the utilization of Project results as well as on the design and implementation of similar projects in the future. Relevance of and perspectives for the Projects' continuation will also be assessed. He also recalled that other internal reviews requested by the Donor were undertaken in 2003 (AdriaMed mid-term-review), 2006 (MedSudMed mid-term-review) and 2009 (AdriaMed/MedSudMed review of technical aspects).

30. The representatives took the opportunity to renew the maximum appreciation of the MedSudMed Project in all areas of activity being implemented. The representative of Tunisia underlined once more the need to strengthen and optimise cooperation between FAO Projects in the Mediterranean with other projects regarding both the scientific/technical aspects and the capacity development programmes, and to optimise the human and financial resources. In addition he pointed out the relevance of the current phase of the Project. After 10 years of cooperative research activities and of developing trust and cooperation, discussion on supporting fisheries management was just initiated in the framework of MedSudMed, as well as important progress made by CopeMed II and ArtFiMed in supporting studies on socio-economic aspects of fisheries.

31. The Committee agreed that the importance of the Project in this key moment and of its continuation on a multi-year basis, to consolidate and further strengthen the results achieved so far, should be highlighted to the FAO Independent Evaluation team.

FAO GFCM work plan for the next intersessional period (agenda item 5)

32. The FAO GFCM secretariat representative briefly introduced the draft work plan of GFCM-SAC envisaged for 2012/2013 as proposed by the SAC. He also described the proposal of the First GFCM Framework Programme (2013-2018) in support of the Task Force for the promotion of Sustainable Development and Cooperation in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea with its seven work programmes corresponding to thematic areas (Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries [EAF], Improving data collection

and reporting capacity, Aquaculture, capture fisheries and Integrated Coastal Zone Management [ICZM], Marine Protected Areas [MPAs] and artificial reefs, Enhancing artisanal fisheries) or to geographical areas (Strengthening capture fisheries and aquaculture management in the Black Sea area, and Supporting capture fisheries and aquaculture in the Southern Mediterranean Sea). The proposal will be submitted to the next session of the FAO GFCM (May 2012).

33. The Committee acknowledged the importance of the new GFCM framework and envisaged that it could foster cooperation and interaction between the FAO GFCM and the FAO led Mediterranean Projects.

Development of the Project's Programme for the next period (Agenda Item 6)

34. The MedSudMed Project Coordinator, introduced the document "Project Future Implementation". The work plan for the next intersessional period will respect the Project areas of intervention: demersal and small pelagic fisheries resources; training and national capacity development; communications (web site and technical documents); regional cooperation. He informed the participants that, thanks to additional funds secured by the Italian Donor MiPAAF and to the funds from Italian Regione Siciliana, the activities of the Project have been extended to December 2012.

35. In relation to the component on demersal resources, the Project foresees the organisation of a MedSudMed Working Group meeting on demersal fisheries resources. In particular, the Project will continue to support the work on *Parapenaeus longirostris* and on *Merluccius merluccius*. Likewise, an *ad hoc* activity on Spiny lobster (*Palinurus elephas*) is foreseen to explore the possibility of a common study on this species in the Project area.

36. Following the significant efforts made by the Project to move towards the standardisation of sampling designs and protocols used in the different survey programmes, as well as to uniform data handling procedures in the Project area, it is

planned that the scientists involved will work on the processing of the data collected during the exercise at sea to obtain inter-calibration factors and a standardized spatial distribution of the species sampled. The inter-calibration factor will be applied to obtain distribution maps in the south-central Mediterranean using the existing time series of survey data in Tunisia, Malta and Italy. The organisation of one workshop/meeting to elaborate and discuss the results obtained from the analysis of the data gathered during the exercise at sea will be planned.

37. The Project will continue to support the work carried out on the occurrence of shared stocks in the MedSudMed area for relevant fisheries target species and in particular on *Octopus vulgaris*; the Project will finalise the genetic comparison of Octopus samples collected in the south-central Mediterranean. The possibility to proceed with a preliminary analysis of Octopus population dynamic will be explored.
38. Available information on demersal crustaceans relevant for the fisheries in the Project area will be reviewed and summarised in a specific document, the existing information will be updated and integrated with relevant new data. This activity was already in last year's Work Plan but it was postponed due to time and human resource constraints.
39. In the coming period MedSudMed will provide technical assistance in the preparation of a document containing proposals for the harmonisation of closed seasons for trawl fisheries operating in the Gulf of Gabès in line with an ecosystem approach to fisheries, as a move towards the harmonisation of management strategies in the Project area. Once the document is ready and has been transmitted to the relevant fisheries administrations, the scheduling of a specific meeting to plan the follow up at SAC and FAO GFCM level could be envisaged.
40. Where small pelagic resources are concerned, the Project will continue to cooperate with the participating institutes in supporting the joint processing of samples and data collected during the MedSudMed cooperative surveys at sea held in 2008 and 2010. The results of the work will be integrated into the survey report detailing the processing of acoustic and ichthyoplankton data in the area.

41. A second MedSudMed Working Group on Small Pelagic Fisheries Resources will be organised to review the activities carried out to date and to discuss and plan common or joint research to be developed. Furthermore, the Project will support the organisation of and inter-calibration exercise at sea for acoustic survey between the Tunisian “R/V Hannibal” and the Italian “R/V Dallaporta” with particular reference to the main target species *Engraulis encrasicolus*. MedSudMed also plans to coordinate the definition of a work plan for the sampling and processing of samples of Sardine from the countries participating in the Project, following the discussion held during the Working Group on small pelagic species in January 2012. It is necessary to define the occurrence of possible stock sub units through studies on fish morphometry, genetics, otolith microchemistry and amino acid content.
42. The implementation of training activities to be coordinated and harmonized among the Projects will be transversal to the activities mentioned.
43. The website is now available in three languages, English, Italian and Arabic. It will be continuously updated and the Project will continue to strengthen ties with the other FAO Regional Projects, with FAO GFCM and with other regional initiatives.
44. The Committee congratulated the Project for the work plan proposed, it follows the indications provided during the year by the participating institutes. The amount of activities proposed was noted. The participants acknowledged the importance of the current phase of the Project, advantage should be taken to jointly identify common actions to be performed in order to better manage fisheries. In this perspective the Project should continue to address its efforts on the fisheries and fisheries resources defined and agreed in the previous years and try to include additional species in the near future so as to have a more complete view of the fisheries resources exploited in the area.
45. The Representative of the IAMC-CNR, Mr Angelo Bonanno, agreed on the proposed work plan. He underlined the need to finalize the processing of survey data collected in 2010 in Libya, and proposed that specific studies on ichthyoplankton should be considered in the MedSudMed work plan. In particular he stressed that surveys are

carried out annually on small pelagic eggs and larvae in Italy, Malta and Tunisia and some surveys have also been carried out in Libya, thus covering the entire Project area. Accordingly, he proposed that the Project could support the joint analysis of ichthyoplankton available data with the aim of mapping nurseries and spawning grounds for small pelagic fish. The Committee agreed that the proposal of such a study should be presented and discussed during the MedSudMed Working Group on small pelagic fisheries resources.

46. With regard to the inter-calibration exercise for bottom trawling the participants concurred on the need to organize a specific meeting to finalize the analysis of the data gathered in 2011 and deal with the aspects of data comparison. The preliminary results indicate differences in terms of length structure of the catch, fishing gears and operational measurements. The Committee agreed on the proposal to initiate the preparation of a document summarizing the information covering the entire Project area, by starting with hake. Moreover it was concurred that this kind of exercise should not be restricted to the institutes participating in the Project and should be open to the scientists of all the Mediterranean countries in the future.
47. Regarding the inter-calibration of acoustic surveys and the interpretation of acoustic data for small pelagics, the Tunisian representatives informed the meeting that in June-July 2012 the Tunisian R/V Hannibal will probably be involved in acoustic surveys with the Italian R/V Dallaporta. He also mentioned that to broaden the scope of the exercise, the participation of experts from other countries (i.e. Libya and Malta) could be envisaged on board.
48. Where closed season for fisheries in the Gulf of Gabès is concerned, the Committee agreed on the proposed framework of activities on the area and underlined the fact that this procedure could be followed in the future for other fishery management issues. The representative of Libya stressed the importance of the work initiated within the Project on the closed seasons for fisheries and wished that in the near future Libya could join this kind of activity and cooperate to promote a common proposal to manage the resources jointly.

49. The representatives of Libya, Mr Nureddin Esarbot and Mr Salem Zgozi, expressed their appreciation for the list of activities planned that cover several aspects. They wished to actively contribute to the Project activities by recalling the importance of the support received by MedSudMed in the past years. From 2006 to 2010 several unique achievements were reached in Libya, whether through the joint organization of surveys or workshops or training or common activities. These led to major improvements in the institute and in the strengthening of cooperation. Unfortunately the breakdown of more than one year stopped this process.

50. The representatives underlined the present need for Libya to continue in taking advantage of the Project support as well as of the cooperative framework established. In this view the MBRC expressed willingness to participate in the activities planned for 2012 although some specific intervention to tackle issues at national level would be necessary. To do that the MBRC has defined some priority issues to be addressed to the attention of the Coordination Committee meeting. The first priority for the Marine Biology Research Center is to resume the work initiated in 2010 during the joint acoustic and ichthyoplankton surveys and follow up with the data analysis. Moreover the MBRC is going to organize an experimental bottom trawl survey covering all the coastal areas of Libya. For this activity the support of the Project is envisaged in terms of technical assistance.

51. The meeting was reminded of the support on national capacity development provided by the Project to the MBRC that laid the basis for future cooperation. In this view further assistance was deemed necessary by MedSudMed on the following scientific thematic areas, both in terms of technical assistance and training:

- Stock assessment
- Acoustic survey methodology
- Fish age reading
- Identification of maturity stages
- Sampling processing, identification of zooplankton and phytoplankton
- Identification and analysis of crustaceans species

- Identification of ichthyoplankton
- Acoustic survey
- Bottom trawl survey
- Finalization of surveys reports (starting from 2006 survey)

52. The Committee agreed that although they have primary importance in the region, not all the mentioned thematic areas could be effectively tackled by the Project in the short term. Some specific actions will be taken already this year to provide the technical assistance required by Libya according to the priorities indicated by the country.

53. Mr Bernardon of the FAO Project CopeMed II underlined the importance of the cooperative framework established among FAO Projects and in particular between MedSudMed and CopeMed II/ArtFiMed. He also mentioned the willingness of CopeMed II to continue in this cooperation and to contribute to the organization of joint events as done in the previous years. Accordingly, some activities discussed during these days and approved by the meeting will be included in the work plan of CopeMed II to be considered and defined during the forthcoming CopeMed II Coordination Committee (Spain, May 2012).

54. The representative of Tunisia underlined that since the Project is dealing with scientific research activities that do not have explicit time limits, the work programme of the Project should reflect this aspect. The planning of Project activities should therefore not be limited to the annual work plan but should also envisage some long-term schedule to orientate and better manage the annual activities. This exercise will improve the overall planning performance of the Project and will facilitate the implementation of the single research activities.

55. The proposal to have multiannual long-term planning (based on 3-4 years) will take the Project into a new phase. After some discussion the Coordination Committee agreed to take advantage of the existing Working Groups of the Project to draft the long term proposals regarding the small pelagic and demersal resources. The agenda of the forthcoming Working Groups will therefore include a specific session to

identify the common research programmes, the tentative calendar, the strategy to be adopted and the methodologies to be used.

56. The GFCM representative acknowledged the proposal indicating that this planning exercise would have a positive impact on the Project in the area and will also foster the cooperation on a longer term basis. This proposal, even if focusing on specific technical issues, will fit well within the new proposed GFCM framework and may strongly contribute to its development.
57. The Italian National Focal Point, Mr Fabio Fiorentino, fully agreed with the work plan presented and further underlined the importance to define a long term strategy for the development of Project's programme. In this context he proposed to initiate studies on the potential production of long-living species in areas characterized by low fisheries exploitation. This study could contribute to identifying biomass-based reference points to drive the formulation of advice for fisheries management. The Committee acknowledged the importance of the proposal and suggested the inclusion of this study in the list of activities to be discussed during the next Working Group on demersal fisheries resources.
58. The representative of Malta, Ms Leyla Knittweis, agreed with the idea that the Project should move forward to fisheries management issues and mentioned the importance of integrating socio-economic issues into the work plan for the medium term, and try to involve stakeholders in order to better address the management issues. This would be a very important step in support of the formulation of common advice for fisheries management in the Project area.
59. The EastMed Project Coordinator, Ms Constantina Riga, informed the participants that some work on collection of socio-economic data, as well as to involve stakeholders in the discussion framework of the EastMed Project has been initiated. She suggested that the experience gained by this Project should be put at the disposal of other Projects and in other areas of the Mediterranean Sea.
60. After wide discussion and comment on the content of Document CC/10/03, 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 and are hereby summarised:

- a. Organize a meeting to jointly analyse the data collected during the inter-calibration exercise at sea between the R/V Hannibal (Tunisia) and M/P Santanna (Italy);
- b. Organize the Working Group on demersal fisheries resources and particularly on *Parapenaeus longirostris*, devoting one session to the *Merluccius merluccius* and *Palinurus elephas*; one session will also be dedicated to the discussion on common research activities to be developed in the long-term;
- c. Organize the Working Group on small pelagic fisheries resources in the Project area; one session will be dedicated to the discussion on common research activities to be developed in the long-term;
- d. Support the definition of and discussion on a long-term work plan (on 3-4 year basis) for the Project. The discussion could be held in the framework of the two Working Groups;
- e. Follow up the research activities on *Octopus vulgaris*;
- f. Preparation of a final document summarizing the outcome of the *ad hoc* meeting on closed season for fisheries in the Project area and the relative follow up;
- g. Progress in the definition of a work plan for the inter-calibration exercise on acoustic survey and support the processing of both previous and newly collected survey data;
- h. 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*;
- i. Support the implementation of specific capacity development actions for Libya;
- j. Promote on-the-job training exercises and capacity building;
- k. Support to the FAO GFCM its Scientific Advisory Committee and all Sub-Committees should continue to be given, also in terms of scientific contributions.

Other matters (Agenda item n.7)

61. In the framework of the Project evaluation, the occasion was taken by the evaluation team to interview the national representatives, as well as representative of the Donor, MiPAAF, the FAO EastMed Project and Mr Fabio Massa both as FAO GFCM Secretariat representative and former MedSudMed Project Coordinator.

62. The Committee thanked the INSTM for hosting and contributing to the organization of the meeting.

Date and venue of the next Coordination Committee meeting (Agenda Item 8)

63. The date and venue of the next meeting of the Project Coordination Committee was discussed. Further to the kind invitation of the Maltese and Libyan representatives, the next meeting of the MedSudMed Coordination Committee will be held either in Malta or in Libya tentatively in March 2013. The date and venue will be communicated in due time by the Project. This proposal was welcomed by the Meeting participants.

Adoption of the report (Agenda Item 9)

64. This report was adopted on 14th March 2012.

List of Participants**ITALY**

Luca Bedin
 Officer
 General Directorate of Maritime
 Fisheries and Aquaculture, PEMAC VI
 Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies
 Viale dell'Arte, 16
 00144 Rome, Italy
 Tel.: +39 0659084050
 Fax: +39 0659084176
 Email: l.bedin@politicheagricole.gov.it

Angelo Bonanno
 Researcher
 IAMC – CNR
 Via del Mare, 3
 91021 Torretta-Granitola, Italy
 Tel.: +39 0924 40600
 Fax: +39 0924 40445
 Email: angelo.bonanno@iamc.cnr.it

Fabio Fiorentino
 MedSudMed National Focal Point
 IAMC – CNR
 Via L. Vaccara, 61
 91026 Mazara del Vallo, Italy
 Tel.: +39 0923 948966
 Fax: +39 0923 906634
 Email: fabio.fiorentino@iamc.cnr.it

LIBYA

Nureddin M. Esarbot
 General Director
 Marine Biology Research Centre
 P.O. Box 30830, Tajura (Tripoli)
 Tel: +218 21 3690001/3
 Fax: +218 21 3690002
 Email: benmosa@hotmail.com

Salem Wniss Zgozi
 Director of Fisheries Development Directorate
 Marine Biology Research Centre
 P.O. Box 30830, Tajura
 Tel: +218 21 3690001/3
 Fax: +218 21 3690002
 Email: salemzgozi@yahoo.com

MALTA

Leyla Knittweis
 Fisheries Control Directorate
 Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs
 Fort San Lucjan
 Marsaxlokk BBG 1283, Malta
 Tel: +356 22923302
 Fax: +356 21659380
 Email: Leyla.knittweis@gov.mt

TUNISIA

Othman Jarboui
 Researcher
 Institut National des Sciences et
 Technologies de la Mer
 BP 1035, 3018 Sfax, Tunisia
 Tel: +216 74 497117
 Fax: +216 74 497989
 Email: othman.jarboui@instm.rnrt.tn

Nader Ben Hadj Hmida
 Institut National des Sciences et Technologies de la
 Mer (INSTM)
 Route de Madagascar
 3000 Sfax, Tunisia
 Tel : +216 74 497117
 Email: naderhadj@yahoo.fr

Ridha M'Rabet
Director
Institut National des Sciences et
Technologies de la Mer
28 Rue 2 mars 1934,
2025, Salammbô, Tunisia
Tel: +216 71 730548
Fax: +216 71 732622
Email: ridha.mrabet@instm.rnrt.tn

FAO

Enrico Arneri
Project Coordinator
FAO MedSudMed
FAO - Fisheries and Aquaculture Resources Use
and Conservation Division
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, Italy
Tel: +39 06 570 56092
Fax: +39 06 570 55188
Email: enrico.arneri@fao.org

Matthieu Bernardon
Fishery Officer
FAO CopeMed II/ArtFiMed
Fisheries and Aquaculture Resources Use and
Conservation Division
c/o Subdelegación del Gobierno en Málaga: Paseo
de Sancha 64, Rooms 305-307,
29071 Málaga (Spain)
Tel: +34 695797666
Fax: +34 958989252
Email: Matthieu.Bernardon@fao.org

Luca Ceriola
Fishery Monitoring Expert
FAO MedSudMed
Fisheries and Aquaculture Resources Use and
Conservation Division (FIRF)
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, Italy
Tel: +39 06 570 54492
Fax: +39 06 570 55188
Email: luca.ceriola@fao.org

Henri Farrugio
FAO Consultant – Evaluation Team (OED)
Laboratoire ressources halieutiques IFREMER
Avenue Jean Monnet BP 171
34203 Sète
Tel : +33 499 573200
Fax : +33 499 573295
Email: Henri.Farrugio@ifremer.fr

Franco Franchini
FAO Consultant – Evaluation Team (OED)
Via M. Amari 52
00179 ROMA Italy
Tel: +39 06 7891782
Email: fran.franchini@tiscali.it

Argyris Kallianiotis
FAO Consultant – Evaluation Team (OED)
Director National Agricultural Research
Foundation - Fisheries Research Institute
64007 Nea Peramos Kavala-Greece
Tel.: +30 25940 22691
Fax: +30 25940 22222
e-mail: akallian@inale.gr; fri@inale.gr

Fabio Massa
FAO GFCM Aquaculture Officer
International Institutions and Liaison Service
Fisheries and Aquaculture Economics and Policy
Division
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, Italy
Tel: +39 06 570 53885
Fax: +39 06 57056500
Email: Fabio.Massa@fao.org

Nicoletta Milone
Fisheries Information Officer
FAO AdriaMed
Fisheries and Aquaculture Resources Use and
Conservation Division
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, Italy
Tel: +39 06 570 55467
Fax: +39 06 570 55188
Email: nicoletta.milone@fao.org

Konstantina Riga
Project Coordinator
FAO EastMed
Fisheries and Aquaculture Resources Use and
Conservation Division
Androu 1
11257, Athens, Greece
Tel +30 210 8847960
FAX +30 210 8837600
E-mail: konstantina.riga@fao.org

Annotated Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting and election of the Chairman

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 activities of the MedSudMed Working Groups, the on-going cooperative research work, the training sessions, and the relationship and cooperation of the Project at Mediterranean level.

4. Project Evaluation

Following the FAO Evaluation policy that establishes that all projects with a budget above USD 4 million should be evaluated at least once in their lifetime, the Project is going to be evaluated by an independent evaluation Team. The Terms of Reference of the FAO evaluation will be briefly illustrated. Occasion will be taken for the Coordination Committee to outline a global appraisal of the Project and provide some general orientation for the future.

5. FAO GFCM work plan for the next intersession period

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

6. Development of the Project's Programme for the next period

The work plan of the Project 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 development. Particular attention will be given to the follow-up of MedSudMed Working Groups and initiatives on the demersal fisheries resources, particularly crustaceans. The international cooperation, the relationship with other projects at basin level, 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.

7. Other matters

8. Date and venue of the next Coordination Committee meeting

9. Adoption of the report

List of Documents

FAO-MedSudMed: CC10/01	Provisional annotated agenda
FAO-MedSudMed: CC10/02	Report on Project's Progress (June 2011 – February 2012)
FAO-MedSudMed: CC10/03	Development of the Project's Programme
FAO-MedSudMed: CC10/04	MedSudMed Project – Internal FAO Evaluation ToRs
FAO-MedSudMed: CC10/Info01	Provisional list of participants
FAO-MedSudMed: CC10/Info02	Report of the Ninth Meeting of the Coordination Committee. <i>MedSudMed Technical Documents N.26</i>
FAO-MedSudMed: CC10/Info03	Sub regional Working Group on Demersal Shared Stocks in the MedSudMed and CopeMed II area (Salammbô, Tunisia, 14-15 September 2011) - Meeting Memorandum
FAO-MedSudMed: CC10/Info04	MedSudMed and CopeMed II Working Group on <i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i> in the south central Mediterranean Sea (Salammbô, Tunisia, 12-13 September 2011) - Meeting Memorandum
FAO-MedSudMed: CC10/Inf.05	Stock Assessment Forms on Demersal Fisheries Resources, namely <i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i> . Data presented at the GFCM-SAC – SubCommittee on Stock Assessment on Demersal Species (Italy, 23-26 January 2012)
FAO-MedSudMed: CC10/Inf.06	Report of the MedSudMed and CopeMed II Working Group “Progress toward the stock assessment of <i>Merluccius merluccius</i> in the MedSudMed Project area” (Salammbô, Tunisia, September 2011).
FAO-MedSudMed: CC10/Inf.07	Stock Assessment Forms on Demersal Fisheries Resources, namely <i>Merluccius merluccius</i> . Data presented at the GFCM-SAC - Working Group on Stock Assessment on Demersal Species (Greece, 24-29 October 2011)
FAO-MedSudMed: CC10/Info08	Preliminary informative note on the inter-calibration exercise at sea for bottom trawl surveys between R/V Hannibal and F/V Santanna: sampling scheme and review/analysis of the available information on the spatial distribution of demersal fisheries resources in the straits of Sicily, with particular focus on occurrence and abundance of <i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i> and <i>Merluccius merluccius</i>
FAO-MedSudMed: CC10/Info09	Report of the MedSudMed Training course on Stock Assessment (Malta, December 2011)

FAO-MedSudMed: CC10/Info10	MedSudMed and CopeMed II Workshop on Fisheries and appraisal of <i>Coryphaena hippurus</i> in the Project areas (Palermo, Italy 05-06 July 2011)
FAO-MedSudMed: CC10/Info11	Report of the MedSudMed working group on small pelagic fisheries resources in the south-central Mediterranean sea
FAO-MedSudMed: CC10/Info12	Report of the MedSudMed Workshop on closed seasons in the south-central Mediterranean Sea.
FAO-MedSudMed: CC10/Info13	Major activities of the FAO Regional Projects. Documents presented at the FAO GFCM-SAC 14th session (Sofia, Bulgaria, 20-24 February 2012).
FAO-MedSudMed: CC10/Info14	MedSudMed. 2011. Identification sheets of early life stages of bony fish (Western Libya, Summer 2006). GCP/RER/ITA/MSM-TD-18. MedSudMed Technical Documents No 18
FAO-MedSudMed: CC10/Info15	MedSudMed. 2011. Report of the workshop on octopus stocks and related fisheries in the MedSudMed Project area. GCP/RER/010/ITA/MSM-TD-22. MedSudMed Technical Documents. No 22
FAO-MedSudMed: CC10/Info16	List of Documents

Report on the Project's Progress (June 2011 – February 2012)

Introduction

This paper provides an overview of the main activities carried out by the Project MedSudMed between June 2011 and February 2012, 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. During the reporting period, funds were provided to FAO by the Regione Siciliana (Italy) to carry out specific actions on crustaceans in the south-central Mediterranean in the framework of the MedSudMed Project activities. These funds have been used to reinforce the effectiveness and the activities carried out in the framework of MedSudMed. This paper also includes the activities carried out on crustaceans in the framework of the specific action supported by the Regione Siciliana. The work programme and recommendations of the 9th Meeting of the MedSudMed Coordination Committee (Mazara del Vallo-Capo Granitola, Italy, 18-19 May 2011) were implemented (CC/10/info 02).

Moreover, according to the ruling procedures of FAO, due to the total budget and the life span of the Project, MedSudMed has to be subject to an external evaluation (also foreseen in the Project Document). The FAO Office of Evaluation, the Fisheries department and Project management agreed in mid-2011 that an evaluation in the first half of 2012 would contribute to outline the results achieved and challenges to be considered for the future development of the Project. The objective of the final evaluation is to provide accountability to the participating Member Countries, resource partners including the Italian MiPAAF, the Regione Siciliana, and FAO on the extent of Project's results, including outputs, outcome and impacts – actual and potential – to date.

The evaluation will also draw lessons and formulate recommendations for the potential future role and strategies of the Project, aiming at enabling all key stakeholders to take decisions regarding the utilization of Project results as well as on the design and implementation of similar projects in the future. Relevance of and perspectives for MedSudMed's continuation will also be assessed. The Evaluation Team has been selected and has started to gather information and participate in briefing meetings (CC/10/04).

The activities carried out during the inter-committee period comply with the methodological framework of the Project and its mandate for this phase. The activities in the intersessional period were strongly affected by the political situation which occurred in Tunisia and Libya during 2011. This report details the main outputs of the Project activities and the results achieved with direct reference to the following Project Objectives:

- 1) Support the scientific standardization of the methodologies applied in the relevant studies related to fishery resources and to the relationships between fishery resources and biotic and abiotic factors;

- 2) Improve the scientific knowledge on fishery resources and their ecosystem in the Project area through the finalization of the research activities program;
- 3) Strengthen the national expertise through on-the-job training and working groups, and support the national research institutions in enhancing scientific expertise;
- 4) Strengthen and support scientific cooperation between the different experts and institutions involved in the Project activities;
- 5) Strengthen the technical and scientific cooperation at Mediterranean level, among the participating countries and between the Project, the FAO General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean and Black Sea (FAO GFCM) and other FAO Regional Projects.

The activities presented are grouped according to four main components, as follows, which may cover one or more Project Objectives:

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 2011 the Project implemented a series of activities dealing with field work and data processing methodology. During the intersessional period, on the basis of standardised protocols previously agreed, field work and on-the-job training exercises 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 an inter-calibration exercise at sea between the Tunisian vessel “R/V Hannibal” and the Italian vessel “M/P Santanna”. The inter-calibration was carried out from 08-19 July 2011 in GSA 13. Forty sampling stations were performed in parallel by the two vessels and data on catch and on performance of the fishing gears were gathered. Samples of target species (*Parapenaeus longirostris* and *Merluccius merluccius*) were also collected. Tunisian and Italian experts from the Institute National des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer (INSTM) of La Goulette and of the Istituto per l’Ambiente Marino Costiero-Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (IAMC-CNR) of Mazara del Vallo were on board the “R/V Hannibal” and “M/P Santanna” respectively. Experts on technology and net operational measurements from the Istituto di Scienze Marine-CNR (ISMAR-CNR) also participated in the activities at sea on board the two vessels (CC/10/info 08).

After the inter-calibration exercise, a meeting between experts of the research institutes responsible for the work at sea was organized (Italy, 10-11 January 2012). During the meeting discussion was held on the data available and preliminary results. The future work in terms of joint data analysis was preliminary agreed on during the meeting. The initial results of the inter-calibration, including inter-calibration factors for the two vessels, were presented during the meeting of the Sub-committee on Stock Assessment of the FAO GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee.

MedSudMed organised, in cooperation with the CopeMed II Project, a Working Group for the assessment of *Parapenaeus longirostris* stock in the south-central Mediterranean. The Working Group was held on 12-13 September 2011 in Salammbô, Tunisia, kindly hosted by the INSTM. The Working Group was attended by eight researchers from the south-central and western Mediterranean research institutes involved in MedSudMed and CopeMed II. The Working Group updated the joint stock assessment on *P. longirostris* in GSAs 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 carried out in 2009 and 2010 (Malta, October 2009; Italy September 2010). The classic stock assessment analysis was also broadened by integrating available economic data in order to strengthen the technical advice for the management of fisheries exploiting *P. longirostris* in the Project area. Some economic and catch data from Tunisia, Malta and Italy (south-Sicily) were pooled together to run a preliminary bio-economic analysis of the fisheries exploiting *P. longirostris*. The results of the joint stock assessment of *P. longirostris*, including the management advice proposed were presented at the FAO GFCM SAC SCSA Working Group of Demersal Species (Greece, October 2011), (CC/10/info 04 and CC/10/info 05).

A Working Group on *Merluccius merluccius* and related fisheries was organised in cooperation with the CopeMed II Project. The Working Group was kindly hosted by the Institut National des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer in Salammbô, Tunisia, (14-15 September 2011). The Working Group was organized to initiate a joint preliminary stock assessment exercise on this species in the area. The existing knowledge on *M. merluccius* was reviewed, including trend and properties of the catch, biological parameters, fishing segments targeting the species. National catch data from Tunisia, Malta and Italy (south-Sicily) on *M. merluccius* were jointly analysed at sub-regional level by experts from the participating countries. Preliminary results of the joint stock assessment of *M. merluccius* were presented at the SAC SCSA Working Group of Demersal Species (Greece, October 2011) (CC/10/info 06 and CC/10/info 07).

In addition, the Project organised the second meeting of the Sub-regional Working Group on Shared Demersal Fisheries Resources (17 September 2011, Salammbô, Tunisia). The meeting was organised in cooperation with CopeMed II. The main objective of the meeting was to discuss issues related to demersal fisheries shared resources in the Projects' area. Particular importance was given to the discussion on the joint assessment carried out in the framework of MedSudMed and CopeMed II and to the planning and completing joint activities regarding the shared demersal stocks and their fisheries. The species to be investigated and tentatively jointly assessed in the framework of the Projects were identified by sub-region. Specific activities to be jointly carried out in the MedSudMed area and the species to focus on in the short and medium term were preliminary agreed on (CC/10/info 03).

MedSudMed continued to support the identification of shared stocks of *Octopus vulgaris* in the south central-Mediterranean. During the intersessional period the work plan to carry out the genetic comparison of *O. vulgaris* samples collected in the entire Project area was agreed on and the preliminary procedure for the analysis was initiated. Collaboration with the University of Oviedo is being established for the genetic analysis of the above mentioned samples. Experts from the INSTM of La Goulette will be involved.

An *ad hoc* meeting on closed seasons for fisheries currently occurring at national level in the south-central and western Mediterranean was organized. The meeting was organized in Tunis, Tunisia (15-16 February 2012) kindly hosted by the Institut National des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer (INSTM). The objective of the meeting was to discuss the case study of the Gulf of Gabès with a view to the future harmonization of closed seasons for fisheries in the MedSudMed Project area. The current fishing operations taking place in the national and international waters of the area were described, especially in terms of seasonality, and management tools affecting the fisheries were discussed. The output of the meeting was a road map for future activities addressing this issue. Experts and representatives of the national administrations from the MedSudMed area participated in the meeting. (CC/10/info 12).

Given the importance of demersal crustaceans for the fisheries in the south-central Mediterranean Sea, the activity to prepare a review on demersal crustaceans was started. The experts to be involved in the finalisation of the review were identified. A preliminary draft focusing on biology and fishery of Spiny lobster (*Palinurus elephas*) to be used as template for the other species to be included in the review was developed.

1.2. MedSudMed Component on Small Pelagic fish

As for the previous years and following the requests formulated during the 9th MedSudMed Coordination Committee (May 2011), efforts were made by the Project in pursuing the improvement of 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 the intersessional period, particular importance was given to enlarging and consolidating the group of researchers involved in studies on this group of species. In this view, a Working Group on small pelagic fishery resources was organised in Capo Granitola (10-11 January 2012) kindly hosted by the IAMC-CNR. During the Working Group the activities carried out at national level on small pelagic species were reviewed and proposal for cooperative activities were jointly formulated. The current protocols for national acoustic surveys and data processing were described and an update was given on the MEDIAS protocol. The feasibility of an inter-calibration exercise at sea for acoustic surveys in the Project area was discussed. The WG also analysed the possibility to set up a study to clarify the possible presence of stock sub-units of Sardine (*Sardina pilchardus*) in the MedSudMed area using several methodologies. The meeting was attended by the designated experts from the countries participating in the MedSudMed Project. The meeting agreed to bring the proposal to the attention of the next MedSudMed Coordination Committee (CC/10/info 11).

The Project organized, in cooperation with CopeMed II, a Workshop on “Fisheries and appraisal of *Coryphaena hippurus* in the south-central and western Mediterranean Sea”. The meeting was held in Palermo (Italy) on 5-6 July 2011. The Workshop aimed at initiating a process that in the medium term would facilitate a better description of the main characteristics of fisheries and the stock of *Coryphaena hippurus* in the Mediterranean region. The national activities carried out and/or currently implemented on *C. hippurus* in the south-central and western Mediterranean were reviewed together with the data available at national level on this species. The knowledge gaps to be filled to understand the biology and population dynamics of this species in the Mediterranean region were identified. The foundation was laid for a process toward the common analysis of the available data on *C. hippurus* stock and fisheries (CC/10/info 10).

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 competencies 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.

In December 2011, following a specific request formulated during the 9th Coordination Committee meeting, the Project organized and held a training course on the basic concepts and models used for stock assessment. The course was held in Malta from 12-16 December 2011 in collaboration with the Malta Ministry of Resources and Rural Affairs. The training course was extended to the countries participating in the other FAO Projects in the Mediterranean and it was attended by 28 young scientists from 11 Mediterranean countries.

On-the-job training was carried out during the inter-calibration at sea for scientists from the INSTM of La Goulette and IAMC-CNR of Mazara del Vallo (July 2010) on the procedure and setting used in the MEDITS surveys, as well as on the operational measurements of the fishing gear; particular attention was also attached to the description of settings commonly used for sampling at depth > 200 m. Overall 10 scientists from the INSTM and IAMC-CNR were trained on: setting of the technical equipment for measuring the gear characteristics during fishing operations (e.g. vertical and horizontal opening, distance from the bottom); setting of fishing gears; collection and storing of data on the operational gear characteristics.

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 MedSudMed 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 preliminarily discuss technical issues and plan possible activities.

In order to strengthen international and regional cooperation the Project interacts closely with the FAO Regional Projects AdriaMed, ArtFiMed, CopeMed II, EastMed and MedFisis and MedSea Large Marine Ecosystem (MedSea-LME)” Project funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). In particular, 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 12th AdriaMed Coordination Committee meeting (March, 2011); ii) AdriaMed Working Group on small pelagics (Italy, September 2011); iii) AdriaMed Study Group on Stock Assessment (Italy, July 2011) iv) AdriaMed Working Group on Demersals (Albania, October 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*, *Merluccius merluccius*, *Coryphaena hippurus* and of the second Sub-regional Working Group on Shared Demersal Stocks in the Projects’ areas were co-organized by the two Projects.

In addition, several coordination meetings were also held with the other FAO Regional Projects AdriaMed, ArtFiMed, CopeMed II and EastMed throughout the year (the last one being on 26 January 2012) to consolidate and envisage common activities. In this respect the Project also participated in the fourth Coordination Committee meeting of CopeMed II (May 2011) and the second Coordination Committee of EastMed (April 2011), where additional synergies were identified.

In the framework of FAO decentralisation MedSudMed is reinforcing collaboration with the subregional (SNE) and regional (RNE) FAO offices in the north African countries by liaising periodically, by supporting joint initiatives on fisheries and sharing information on the activities and results of the Project.

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/10/info 13). 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:

- Working Group on stock assessment of Demersal Species (Chania, Crete, Greece 24-29 October 2011);
- Working Group on stock assessment of Small Pelagic Species (Chania, Crete, Greece 24-29 October 2011);
- 2nd Transversal WG on By-catch, Antalya, Turkey, 7-9 Dec 2011;
- GFCM - SAC - Sub-Committees meetings (Rome, Italy 23-26 January 2012);
- GFCM – 14th session Scientific Advisory Committee (Sofia, Bulgaria 20-24 February 2012).

4. Project Communication

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

Since its publication, the Project's website is being continually 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 specific section describing the main activities carried out in the framework of the Project is under renewal. In this context the Project began the adaptation of the web pages into the Italian and Arabic languages.

The list of Technical Documents available on the Project web site has been updated and more than 15 MedSudMed Technical Documents are now available as .pdf files. Over the last year, an average of 7000 pages was visited each month and around 180 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 intersessional period:

- Identification sheets of early life stages of bony fish (Western Libya, Summer 2006). GCP/RER/010/ITA/MSM-TD-18. *MedSudMed Technical Documents*, No. 18: 161pp.
- Report of the workshop on octopus stocks and related fisheries in the MedSudMed Project area (Salammbô, Tunisia, 18-20 November 2008). GCP/RER/010/ITA/MSM-TD-22. *MedSudMed Technical Documents*, No. 22: 59 pp.
- MedSudMed. 2010. Report of the Ninth 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-26. *MedSudMed Technical Documents*, No. 26: 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 December 2012. Additional funds were also provided to MedSudMed in 2011 by the Regione Siciliana (Italy) 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 will 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 will be 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 2012 action will be taken to facilitate the finalisation of the FAO evaluation of the project (CC10/04).

The activities proposed in this document take into account the objectives and results achieved so far and the recommendations received during the 9th Coordination Committee meeting (May 2011, Mazara Del Vallo-Capo Granitola, Italy). The indications collected from the countries during a series of 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 10th 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 in support of fisheries management, 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 are 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 second meeting of the Sub-regional Working Group on Shared Demersal Stocks organised in cooperation with CopeMed II in 2011 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 on *Merluccius merluccius*. Likewise, an ad hoc activity on Spiny lobster (*Palinurus elephas*) is foreseen to explore the possibility of a common study on this species in the Project area. The meetings could be organised in September 2012.

- 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 supported the execution of an inter-calibration exercise at sea between the R/V “Hannibal” (Tunisia) and the R/V “Santanna” (Italy) according to the details agreed by national experts (CC/10/Info 08). As follow up, the processing of the data collected during the exercise at sea to obtain inter-calibration factors and a spatial distribution of the species sampled is foreseen. The inter-calibration factor will be then applied to obtain distribution maps of the target species considered (i.e. *Parapenaeus longirostris* and *Merluccius merluccius*) in the south-central

Mediterranean using the existing time series of survey data in Tunisia, Malta and Italy. The organisation of a meeting to present the methods adopted and results obtained will be considered as well. During the meeting, the possible use of time series of survey data to complement the stock assessment analysis of the two species based on commercial catch data will also be discussed. The activity is tentatively planned in May 2012. However, the possibility to carry out the meeting in the same week of the Working Group on Demersal Species will be considered

- 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 finalise the genetic comparison of Octopus samples collected in the south-central Mediterranean. During the next period, the Project will support on-the-job training/ for the expert of the INSTM involved in genetic studies.

- 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.

- Closed season for fisheries in the Gulf of Gabès

Following the outcomes of the discussion held on closed seasons for fisheries in Salammbô (Tunisia, 15-16 February 2012 - CC/10/Info 12) and the emerging need of harmonising the management strategies in the Project area, MedSudMed will provide technical assistance to the preparation of a document to be circulated and agreed by national experts. The document will include, in line with the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries principles, the outcomes of the meeting held in Salammbô and one or more proposals for the harmonisation of closed season for trawl fisheries operating in the Gulf of Gabès (GSA 14). A specific meeting could be foreseen to promote and facilitate the discussion at sub-regional level involving representatives of national fisheries administrations and research institutions.

b) Small pelagic fisheries resources

- 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 cooperative surveys at sea carried out on board of the R/V Urania and R/V Maria Grazia in Libyan waters during 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. The results of the work will be integrated in the survey report to produce one or two MedSudMed Technical

Documents. In particular, a synthesis of existing data and information on ichthyoplankton will be carried out and the possibility of mapping the concentration and retention areas at sub-regional level will be explored. Likewise, a description of the main oceanographic and chemico-physical features of the area surveyed will be tentatively produced. A synthesis of existing data and information on small pelagic fish biomass will be carried out and the possibility to produce sub-regional maps of spatial distribution of for the main species of small pelagic fish will be explored.

- Working Group on small pelagic fisheries resources

According to the outcomes of the first meeting on small pelagic fish held in Capo Granitola (Italy, 10-11 January 2012 – CC/10/Info 11) and in consultation with the participating institutes, the Project foresees the organisation of the second MedSudMed Working Group on Small Pelagic Fisheries Resources. The meeting will be aimed to: i) discuss and plan joint research activities from the scientific and technical point of view; ii) review and discuss on the results of the joint activities carried out; iii) and on current knowledge on fisheries targeting small pelagic fish in the participating countries. The meeting could be tentatively held in the second half of 2012.

- Inter-calibration of acoustic surveys and data interpretation

Great attention has been given by MedSudMed to specific actions on small pelagic fisheries resources and to the standardisation of survey and data processing procedures for this group of species. As follow up of the Working Group on small pelagic fisheries resources (Capo Granitola, Italy, 10-11 January 2012 – CC/10/Info 11), the Project, in cooperation with the participating institutes, will support the organisation of and inter-calibration exercise at sea for acoustic survey between the Tunisian R/V Hannibal and the Italian R/V Dalla Porta. To this extent, the main target species (*Sardina pilchardus*), the sampling period (June-July 2011) and the possible sampling area (GSA 12 or 13) were preliminary identified and agreed on by national experts (CC/10/Info 11). Wherever possible, calendars of acoustic surveys at sea carried out by the different participating institutes will be coordinated in order to optimise the human and economic resources available. MedSudMed will also support the joint analysis of survey data. This activity could be carried out taking advantage of the MedSudMed Working Group on small pelagic fisheries resources.

- Identification of shared stocks

As follow up of the discussion held during the Working Group on small pelagic (Capo Granitola, Italy, 10-11 January 2012 – CC/10/Info 11) the national experts underlined the need to define the occurrence of possible stock sub units of Sardine (*Sardina pilchardus*) in the Project area. On this regard, emphasis was given to the possibility to combine various methods for discriminating population and stocks units e.g. studies on fish morphometry, genetics, otolith microchemistry and amino acid content. As follow up MedSudMed will coordinate the definition of a work plan for the sampling and processing of samples of Sardine from the countries participating in the Project. Advantage could be taken of the MedSudMed Working Group on Small Pelagic for the discussion on the work plan.

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 could include:

- The continuation of on-the-job training during the surveys at sea (e.g., acoustic, ichthyoplankton and trawl surveys) and data processing;
- Support to participating Institutes in capacity development on specific topics related to the statistical processing of data for stock assessment and population dynamics.
- Specific training activities (e.g. on fish ageing) could be jointly organised with the other FAO Mediterranean Projects
- The organization of *ad hoc* training programmes upon request of the participating institutes.

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.

Wherever possible and on the basis of budget availability, the Project will continue in providing the equipment necessary to the Institutes for the implementation of the Project 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 to disseminate the knowledge on fisheries resources with particular focus on demersal crustaceans will be finalised.

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 and EastMed will be sought, also taking into consideration the indications received during a coordination meeting among the FAO Mediterranean Regional Projects (Sofia, Bulgaria February 2012). Several coordination meeting of the Mediterranean Regional Projects have already been planned in 2012 in order to identify possible synergies and consolidate and coordinate common activities. Areas of cooperation have been indicated for surveys at sea and.

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.

Moreover, the Project will participate in the Coordination Committees of the other regional Projects through 2012 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. In particular synergies in the framework of the future GFCM Work Plan will be sought.

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.

