STRATEGY FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDITERRANEAN AND BLACK SEA AQUACULTURE

Three targets
Selected outputs
Proposed activities
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In the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, aquaculture is an active and growing sector which plays a major role in achieving food security, employment and economic development while reducing the dependence on often overexploited wild stocks. According to some national aquaculture strategies, the production in Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries is expected to exceed 4 600 000 tonnes in 2020–2030.

However, this rapid growth poses challenges for the overall sustainability of the sector in the long term and raises concerns from different points of view. Sustainable aquaculture means ensuring not only that the industry is economically and environmentally sustainable but also that farms operate in a socially and culturally responsible manner. Current challenges in terms of governance, spatial planning, economic and market issues, ecological and environmental concerns as well as the globalization of the aquaculture production market have highlighted the need for a regional strategy towards the sustainable development of aquaculture in the Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries.

In a blue growth perspective, aquaculture constitutes a strategic sector for future development. It holds great potential for many coastal countries and communities in the Mediterranean and Black Sea region. If managed and governed properly, it can provide multiple benefits in terms of nutritious food and positive socio-economic outcomes. Since Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture consists of various culture systems at varying stages of development, a holistic approach is needed to ensure that aquaculture is developed in a way that reconciles all the principles of sustainable development, taking into account the complexity and specificities of aquaculture across the region.

Acknowledging this growing trend and in line with its mandate, the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) has recently adopted Resolution GFCM/41/2017/1 on a strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture. This integrated regional aquaculture strategy is the fruit of extensive consultations that were held as part of a co-construction process. The aim was to secure equal terms of competition and discuss minimum common criteria in order to address cross-cutting and transboundary issues in relation to aquaculture in Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries. By facilitating cooperative processes and fostering synergies, the strategy should help the sector deliver its full potential by 2030.

The strategy envisions a future for Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture where the industry will be globally competitive, sustainable, productive, profitable and equitable.

This strategy should help Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries in formulating harmonized aquaculture activities and action plans, paying special attention to current regional, subregional, national and local aquaculture priorities as well as to emerging challenges at different levels, while taking into account existing national and supranational strategies and legal requirements.

The international community recently recognized that, in light of emerging global challenges, further progress needs to be achieved in order to secure an efficient cooperation towards sustainable development. On 1 January 2016, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — adopted by world leaders at a historic United Nations Summit in September 2015 — officially came into force. The SDGs should mobilize efforts over the next fifteen years towards a more prosperous and sustainable world. In particular, SDG 14 which aims to “conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development” underlines the crucial importance of conservation and sustainable use of marine...
environment. It is worth mentioning also other SDGs of particular relevance for Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture, such as SDG 2 on food security, SDG 6 on safe and accessible water, SDG 8 on sustainable economic growth and decent employment, SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production, SDG 13 on climate action, SDG 15 on biodiversity, forests and desertification and SDG 17 on global partnership.

Along with these efforts, the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) concluded with the historic adoption, in December 2015, of the Paris Agreement. For the first time in history, 174 nations and the European Union jointly committed to undertake ambitious actions to combat climate change and adapt to its effects.

As a United Nations specialized agency, the FAO supports these global efforts and contributes to the implementation of the SDGs. In particular, the quest for securing a productive and sustainable aquaculture to achieve food security is enshrined in FAO Strategic Objective 2 (SO 2) which is to “make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable” as well as in the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF), which also promotes responsible aquaculture. Moreover, the Blue Growth Initiative aims at addressing food security and poverty alleviation thanks to the production of quality capture and aquaculture fish through integrated, sustainable and socio-economically sensitive processes.

In the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, the need to achieve sustainable aquaculture is enshrined in the mandate of the GFCM, the regional fisheries management organization with competence for this area. The Agreement for the establishment of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM Agreement) clearly states indeed that “responsible aquaculture reduces stress on living marine resources and plays an important role in the promotion and better use of aquatic living resources, including food security”.

SDG 14 TARGET 7: BY 2030, INCREASE THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES AND LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FROM THE SUSTAINABLE USE OF MARINE RESOURCES, INCLUDING THROUGH SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF FISHERIES, AQUACULTURE AND TOURISM
Establishment of a Task Force in charge of preparing a strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture (Aquaculture Task Force). Preparatory work building upon the outcomes of the Regional Conference “Blue Growth in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea: developing sustainable aquaculture for food security” (Italy, December 2014) and the strategic areas of the GFCM Aquaculture Multi-Stakeholder Platform (AMShP).

First meeting of the Aquaculture Task Force and launch of a consultative process involving national focal points and experts. Agreement on preliminary key elements (working areas, actions, management tools and roadmap).

Presentation and endorsement of the outcomes of the Aquaculture Task Force at the fortieth session of the GFCM.

Second meeting of the Aquaculture Task Force to discuss structure and contents, priority actions, timeframe, cooperation and technical assistance needs.

Presentation of the draft strategy at the tenth session of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ) and endorsement.

Adoption of the strategy as Resolution GFCM/41/2017/1 on a strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture.
2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The implementation of the strategy is guided by the following principles, which are enshrined in the GFCM Agreement and in place at the FAO level:

**Sustainability:** The FAO vision for sustainable food and agriculture is “that of a world in which food is nutritious and accessible for everyone and natural resources are managed in a way that maintain ecosystem functions to support current as well as future human needs”.

**Best available knowledge:** The implementation of the strategy should be based on the best available knowledge, including on aquaculture trends, ecosystems and marine environment, as well as on relevant information from a variety of sources. Efforts to collect available and quality information should be deployed.

**Objectivity and transparency:** The collection, analysis and dissemination of information on the status and trends of aquaculture, ecosystems and marine environment should respect confidentiality requirements. Transparency in decision-making processes and related activities should be promoted. Uncertainty associated with information on aquaculture status and trends should be expressed.

**Timeliness:** The collection, analysis and dissemination of information on the status and trends of aquaculture, ecosystems and marine environment should be ensured as timely as possible.

**Participation and cooperation:** Cooperation among relevant stakeholders and existing structures and mechanisms should be promoted in order to create synergies and avoid duplications of existing knowledge and initiatives. The implementation of the strategy should follow the same the participatory and consultative approach applied in the preparation phase.

**Adaptability and level playing field:** Activities should be adaptive enough to permit adjustments, as necessary, and take into account the different stages of regional maturity of the sector as well as the different legal frameworks in the Mediterranean and Black Sea region. The capacity of developing states in the region should be duly taken into account during the implementation and a level playing field should be sought in order to guarantee parity, impartiality and equal opportunities to all parties involved.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the strategy is intended to be part of a process that is consistent with national and supranational aquaculture strategies in Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries.

The strategy is implemented through knowledge and result sharing with institutions, national and supranational projects. Bilateral initiatives are also considered and technical assistance provided where there is a need to build national capacities so that existing commitments can be fulfilled equally.

The GFCM, through its relevant subsidiary bodies, will regularly assess the progress made by monitoring the achievement of the strategy targets, activities and outputs, and reviewing and, when appropriate, revising and updating expected outputs and providing guidance on the implementation.
The overarching objective of the strategy is to unlock the potential of the aquaculture sector in the region. This should be achieved through three targets addressing a range of transboundary key vulnerabilities and cross-cutting issues, based on the pillars of sustainable development. Each target contains a set of outputs that should be obtained by implementing select activities considered as instrumental to efficiently achieve the targets and overarching objective.

**TARGET 1: BUILD AN EFFICIENT REGULATORY AND ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK TO SECURE SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT**

The international community has acknowledged on several occasions that good governance in aquaculture would contribute to increase social acceptability and improve the confidence of stakeholders, hence unlocking the socio-economic potential of the sector and enabling the various actors to benefit from new opportunities.

It is widely recognized that, in Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries, the main challenges for aquaculture development are the lack of streamlined administrative management and of dedicated regulatory frameworks, the overlapping of legislations and authorities, insufficient long-term planning and the lack of participatory and transparent decision-making processes.

Marine spatial planning is of crucial importance to ensure, in a concerted manner, the allocation of space for aquaculture and integrate aquaculture activities within other coastal uses. In this regard, the GFCM has adopted Resolution GFCM/36/2012/1 on Guidelines on allocated zones for aquaculture (AZAs) which considers the implementation of AZAs as a priority for the responsible development and management of aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. However, such implementation in the region is still limited by a number of barriers, such as the lack of sound spatial planning, struggle over marine space, competing coastal utilizations and users, and interactions with tourism, local communities, environmental conservation, small-scale fisheries and oil and gas industry.

In the context of Target 1, the strategy helps ensure that aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea is: a) regulated by a sound and functioning system and by the implementation of specific regulations governing the sector; b) based on transparent participatory decision-making mechanisms; and c) developed in a consistent way based on maritime and coastal spatial planning principles and integrated with the activities of other coastal users.

**Output 1.1: Improved aquaculture regulatory frameworks and streamlined public sector management**

This output reinforces regulatory frameworks dedicated to aquaculture by addressing gaps and weaknesses in processes and governance and by improving dialogue and stakeholder participation in decision-making. The following activities are being implemented to achieve this output:

**Activities to support the improvement of regulatory frameworks and enhance administrative efficiency**

a. Preparation of **regional guidelines for sound regulatory systems**, including guiding principles, good practices and key elements for a sustainable growth of the aquaculture sector (e.g. specific laws and measures on social rights and fair working conditions). This activity is expected to provide Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries with minimal basic requirements for governance-related issues such as licensing, spatial planning and competitiveness and ensure a level playing field.
b. Compilation of successful practices on licensing processes simplification at the regional and global level in order to carry out a benchmarking of models and options for good governance. This activity will offer the necessary support and practical solutions to help Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries improve their administrative procedures.

c. Organization of training and national capacity-building programmes for operators and decision-makers at the local and regional level. This activity will enhance the role of aquaculture in national and regional development plans (e.g., human health, local and national economy) and raise awareness on good governance systems and procedures in aquaculture. Workshops may be also organized to improve interinstitutional cooperation.

d. Monitoring progress of aquaculture development in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. This activity is aimed at monitoring the implementation of sustainable aquaculture development according to identified sustainability indicators.

e. Establishment of a regional network (or/and forum/workshop) on aquaculture governance among Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries and partner organizations in order to address regulatory issues in a concerted manner and share experience and knowledge. This activity is expected to provide an enabling environment for cooperation among key decision-makers on aquaculture-related issues with a view to strengthening efforts towards a regional harmonization of regulations.

Activities to enhance the accountability of policy-making and implementation processes

f. Preparation of guidelines to enhance the involvement of aquaculture farmers’ organizations (AFOs) in aquaculture management. These guidelines will include provisions aimed at strengthening stakeholder participation mechanisms in decision-making processes so to ensure proactive inputs and enhanced accountability of the actors involved.

g. Support to the establishment of national and regional participatory tools such as multi-stakeholder platforms. These participatory tools are expected to foster a strong regional network involving national aquaculture experts, partners and research organizations, to stimulate dialogue, and to facilitate knowledge sharing at different geographic levels in order to provide regional solutions to the main gaps and priorities identified at the national level.

Output 1.2: Integrated aquaculture in coastal zones

This output promotes and reinforces the integration of aquaculture in coastal zones, supporting in particular a wider implementation of AZAs. The following activities are being implemented to achieve this output:

a. Implementation of technical cooperation projects and mechanisms to support the effective implementation of AZAs in the region. This activity includes capacity-building and training to support Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries in achieving an effective implementation of AZAs and to facilitate proactive planning, based on the GFCM resolution on AZAs. This could be tailored to specific requirements, as appropriate, and should be integrated in the marine spatial planning process of the European Union.

b. Preparation and dissemination of an AZA toolkit. The toolkit will illustrate the benefits of AZAs and provide information on their implementation and management in order to maximize existing scientific knowledge on AZAs in the region. It will be based on existing technical achievements and knowledge and tailored to the specificities of the region.
TARGET 2: ENHANCE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN AQUACULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT WHILE ENSURING ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

The need to enhance interactions between aquaculture and the environment has been highlighted in several international and regional fora. At the regional level, the GFCM has recognized the importance of striking a balance between minimizing effects on the environment and supporting a growing aquaculture production in coastal zones.

The Mediterranean and the Black Sea share a unique aquatic ecosystem and are characterized by complex aquaculture-environment interactions. Aquaculture impacts on the environment at the local scale could negatively influence ecological services provided by the environment and have an effect at wider scales. For this reason, environmental impact assessment prior to the establishment of aquaculture operations is critical to address these impacts before they occur; on the other hand, monitoring the environment surrounding farming facilities at sea is essential to evaluate effects and impacts on the environment and on aquaculture itself. However, many countries in the region do not have a permanent environmental monitoring system in place for aquaculture activities and there is a lack of cooperation among farmers and institutions for monitoring. Moreover, poor harmonization of norms and standards increases difficulties to perform such monitoring.

In addition to this, escapee accidents are relatively frequent, entailing risks of pathology spread and biosecurity threats. Concerns have been expressed recently with respect to antibiotic and antimicrobial resistance and this worldwide issue calls for the responsible use of successful
treatments and for the prevention of diseases. However, poor capacity in implementing risk analysis, scarce guidelines on control and prevention as well as insufficient application of standards for the prevention and control of contaminant processes along the value chain generally hamper existing efforts.

Moreover, the Mediterranean and Black Sea area is quite vulnerable to climate change, which entails likely changes in temperature, eutrophication, harmful algae blooms, water stress, sea level rise, acidification and diseases. These threats could have an impact on the aquaculture sector. This calls for specific science-based information in order to evaluate vulnerability to climate change and associated phenomena and identify suitable adaptation and mitigation measures.

In the context of Target 2, the strategy helps ensure that aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea is: a) fully integrated into an environment where ecological services provided are preserved; b) able to secure adequate health and welfare to farmed aquatic animals; and c) supported by thriving cooperative research and technological development, the results of which are efficiently transferred to farmers.

Output 2.1: Mitigated impacts on the environment and improved environmental protection

This output supports producers in their efforts to reduce or mitigate impacts on the environment, increase efficiency and productivity, improve food safety, enhance the quality of farmed products, and increase the social benefits deriving from aquaculture. The following activities are being implemented to achieve this output:

a. Preparation of guidelines on risk analysis methods and data recording. These guidelines will highlight the importance of monitoring and collecting data on specific aspects of aquaculture activities. Environmental issues that are usually not subject to monitoring and recording could also be taken into consideration (e.g. on alien or non-indigenous species [NIS], escapees, pathogens, drugs and feed, etc.).

b. Provision of training and technical assistance on the implementation of EMP. This aims at fostering national capacity-building on the implementation of EMP within AZAs and at increasing awareness on the practical use of management and monitoring tools.

c. Production and dissemination of a toolkit for the harmonization of minimum common criteria on allowable zones of effects and environmental quality standards. This toolkit will complement and update existing standards and requirements on environmental monitoring, taking into consideration climate change and related phenomena that could represent threats to aquaculture.

d. Implementation of plans oriented to “climate-smart aquaculture activities”. The plans aim at supporting aquaculture activities that have a positive effect on global warming, contributing to the preservation of ecological services provided by the environment, and maximizing the positive effects of aquaculture on the environment. They could leverage on initiatives implemented at the local, national and regional level – such as extensive aquaculture in lagoon areas, marine protected areas and mussel culture – that take into consideration carbon footprint and sustainable models for bioremediation with a view to securing carbon sequestration and preserving the environment.

e. Preparation of guidelines on the promotion of aquaculture best management practices. This will increase awareness and responsibility among farmers on the conservation of environmental integrity. Best management practices will focus on minimum standards related to the farming of the main reared species, including stocking density, feed management, water quality and monitoring, harvest calendar, drugs management, disease and implementation of surveillance plans.
Output 2.2: Responsible aquatic animal health and welfare management

This output aims at harmonizing actions to tackle challenges related to aquatic animal health and welfare following an approach tailored to the specificities of aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Good farm management should ensure fish health while maintaining food safety and food quality and minimizing the potential impacts on human health and the environment. The following activities are being implemented to achieve this output:

a. Provision of capacity-building for aquaculture farmers in the field of risk analysis (including risk assessment, management and communication), adaptive management, diagnosis, biosecurity measures, sanitary and food security (responsible use of registered, recorded and traceable medicaments and vaccines). This will improve the capacities of farmers to tackle disease prevention and potential risks and hazards posed by farming operations.

b. Development of systems and protocols for the early diagnosis of pathogens, with the support of certified, equipped and competent laboratories. This activity will strengthen the capacity to contain the spread of diseases.

Output 2.3: Enhanced research and knowledge sharing on aquaculture

This output aims at improving the efficiency of research based on actual needs for the sector and at promoting the transfer of research outputs, enhancing dialogue between industry, research and stakeholders and strengthening cooperation to enable better coordination in research activities. The following activities are being implemented to achieve this output:

a. Preparation of a research work plan to strengthen aquaculture-driven research and technical development. This plan should foster the establishment of pilot demonstrative centres in the region, showcasing different production methods in aquaculture for the attention of potential investors as well as cooperative research and knowledge sharing on cross-cutting and transboundary issues. It should also include a programme to transfer the results of applied research supporting the use of research and technological development patents and performance assessment. The selection of research priorities should be based on end-user needs as well as on strategic research and innovation priorities (for example, epidemiology of aquatic animal pathologies, vaccines, feed technologies, good practices in restocking, efficient water resources use and maintenance of water quality, integrated multitrophic aquaculture, recirculating aquaculture, etc.).

b. Provision of technical assistance and cooperation to implement innovative farming technology (such as recirculation systems, integrated systems of aquaculture production and processing). This will ensure that applied research results are regularly transferred to farmers.

c. Organization of a workshop on challenges posed by climate change and ocean acidification to Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture. This activity is aimed at taking stock of emerging and new challenges, based on the current body of knowledge and ongoing projects, and at discussing best practices to integrate climate change adaptation, mitigation and innovative options into aquaculture activities that could be adapted to the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

d. Implementation of a regional research to assess the vulnerability of aquaculture to climate change and to map risks and associated phenomena, including ocean acidification. This should enable to identify context-specific adaptation and mitigation measures and implement a regional monitoring system.

e. Set-up of a database of aquaculture experts to be made available to public administrations and aquaculture farmers.
Market-oriented production is key to secure a sound, attractive and fair market for aquaculture products and to build a positive image of aquaculture and its products in the region. This helps enhance the competitiveness of the industry and capitalize on the increasing demand for high quality and value-added seafood products.

However, in Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries, aquaculture remains a highly fragmented sector with uneven negotiation power along the value chain. Small-scale producers are indeed predominant and there is a majority of small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs), mostly family owned. Producers still lack the ability to proactively respond to emerging market issues and to government regulatory initiatives, and market data collection and dissemination for production planning, marketing plans and supply-demand forecasts are lacking. As a response, small-scale producers have established AFOs which can play a key role in facilitating the integration of SMEs into modern supply chains.

Producers in riparian countries also suffer from competition on the domestic and global markets. Consumers are now devoting more attention to seafood safety, quality, freshness and traceability. While compliance with standards on food safety and hygiene and adequate monitoring would help minimize food-borne health hazards, certification and traceability could serve as mechanisms for food quality assurance and contribute to consumer responsive aquaculture production. At the international level, the Codex Alimentarius international food standards, the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture
Certification and the World Trade Organization Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures address the need to ensure food safety and quality.

In addition, there is insufficient awareness of corporate social responsibility in the sector. Marketing strategies should be supported at the national and regional levels to promote Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture and improve the image of farmed products, both in the region and worldwide.

In the context of Target 3, the strategy helps ensure that aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea is: a) a flourishing industry based on a level playing field and producing safe and healthy food products sold to informed consumers; b) a market-oriented sector based on sound market data; and c) integrated into modern supply chains and supported by efficient AFOs.

**Output 3.1: A market-driven aquaculture sector development**

This output aims at facilitating the integration of SMEs into modern supply chains and helping aquaculture farmers capitalizing on industry and market opportunities in order to multiply positive socio-economic returns. The following activities are being implemented to achieve this output:

**Activities to respond to market requirements shifting from a production-oriented to a market-oriented approach**

- **a.** Enhancement of national and regional aquaculture data collection and statistical systems. This activity foresees a regular assessment of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture production, trade and general market data. It will leverage on the current information system for the promotion of aquaculture in the Mediterranean (SIPAM) in place at the GFMC and address the socio-economic implications of aquaculture. It is expected to be carried out in cooperation with relevant AFOs, national aquaculture multi-stakeholder platforms, partner organizations, as well as national and supranational institutions involved in aquaculture and market data collection.

- **b.** Organization of training and capacity-building for aquaculture farmers on market requirements and innovation in shellfish and finfish aquaculture in order to increase competitiveness, especially for SMEs. Topics include financial management, production planning, access to credit, aquaculture insurance, monitoring of aquaculture market and trends, logistics and packaging practices, food safety and quality, certification and traceability, species diversification and product differentiation, added value and processed products, integration of aquaculture with other business activities such as tourism, restaurant industry, non-food aquaculture activities and blue biotechnologies.

**Activities to enhance the role of aquaculture farmers’ organizations and multi-stakeholder platforms in marketing and promotion**

- **c.** Organization of cooperative pilot actions with aquaculture farmers and AFOs at the national level for the implementation of concerted activities (collection and dissemination of market data and information, provision of technical assistance, technology transfer and training, promotion sales, etc.). Results are expected to be widely disseminated with a view to enhancing the visibility of AFOs.

- **d.** Facilitation of the establishment of multi-stakeholder platforms at the national level to foster dialogue and cooperation.

**Output 3.2: Safety and quality of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture products**

This output aims at promoting safety and quality in aquaculture products in line with existing international standards. The following activities are being implemented to achieve this output:

- **a.** Preparation and dissemination of guidelines and technical protocols on seafood safety for Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture products, in line with existing international standards.

- **b.** Provision of technical assistance to countries on compliance with international
standards, in order to improve national legal frameworks related to safety and hygiene of aquaculture food products, in line with the Codex Alimentarius and WTO principles.

c. Provision of technical assistance to countries in the field of food quality, aquaculture certification and traceability, in line with the Codex Alimentarius and the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification.

Output 3.3: Enhanced aquaculture and aquaculture products marketing and communication

This output aims at supporting marketing and communication strategies to increase consumer knowledge and improve the image of farmed products and at promoting corporate social responsibility. The following activities are being implemented to achieve this output:

Activities to develop a marketing and communication strategy to promote Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture and aquaculture products

a. Development of regional communication and marketing initiatives. This can include collaboration within business-to-business segments (producers, traders, retailers, organizations and media) through joint marketing or cooperative initiatives, promotional campaigns targeting the general public, especially younger generations, and the production of material promoting the region as well as nutritional and healthy characteristics of aquaculture products. Such campaigns would need to be preceded by a market analysis to ensure that the messages and target groups are correctly identified.

b. Provision of technical assistance on developing and implementing national communication and marketing plans. This can include joint promotion campaigns, training of relevant stakeholders and promotion of their participation in national and regional initiatives. This activity would contribute to boost domestic consumption of aquaculture products in Mediterranean and Black Sea countries.

Activities to promote aquaculture corporate social responsibility

c. Organization of training and national capacity-building on aquaculture corporate social responsibility and social risk management for farmers and decision-makers. This activity will contribute to promoting health and welfare schemes as well as a safe work environment, in line with the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work of the International Labour Organization (ILO).
THE STRATEGY IN BRIEF

Aquaculture is a flourishing industry which plays a key role in Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries, under a blue growth perspective. According to current trends in aquaculture production and to some national aquaculture strategies, the production of farmed seafood is expected to substantially increase in the region over the next decades. This calls for a careful planning in order to ensure the long term social, economic and environmental sustainability of the sector.

In light of emerging global challenges, the international community has been involved for decades in a common endeavour in favour of sustainable development and cooperation. The 1995 Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and, more recently, the 2016 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are two milestones of this widespread mobilization.

In the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, the need to promote blue growth and develop sustainable aquaculture to ensure food security has been reiterated on several occasions. Acknowledging this growing trend and in line with its mandate, the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean has recently adopted Resolution GFCM/41/2017/1 on a strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture.

This regional strategy has been developed as part of an extensive consultation process. It envisages a future for Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture where a level playing field is achieved and the promotion of the sector is ensured so that it is more competitive, sustainable, productive, profitable and equitable. It is expected that it will help Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries in formulating harmonized aquaculture activities and action plans, paying special attention to current priorities and specificities at the local, national, subregional and regional level.

Based on three targets and associated outputs and activities, the strategy will be implemented as part of a process that is consistent with national and supranational aquaculture strategies in Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian countries.

- **TARGET 1:** Build an efficient regulatory and administrative framework to secure sustainable aquaculture development
- **TARGET 2:** Enhance interactions between aquaculture and the environment while ensuring animal health and welfare
- **TARGET 3:** Facilitate market-oriented aquaculture and enhance public perception