



GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION  
FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN  
COMMISSION GÉNÉRALE DES PÊCHES  
POUR LA MÉDITERRANÉE



**Conclusions of the ad hoc meeting to launch the  
GFCM Aquaculture Multi-stakeholder Platform (AMShP)**

**Izmir, Turkey, 12–13 December 2013**

### **Background**

These conclusions have been developed as an outcome of the ad hoc meeting to launch the GFCM Aquaculture Multi-stakeholder Platform (AMShP) held in Izmir, Turkey, on 12–13 December 2013 and organized by the GFCM Secretariat in collaboration with the Turkish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock. The meeting gathered more than 60 participants from Algeria, Croatia, Greece, France, Israel, Italy, Montenegro, Morocco, Romania, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey as well as representatives of international and intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, farmers, farmers' organizations and experts from Mediterranean and Black Sea countries.

In recent years, challenges for the sustainable development of aquaculture in the Mediterranean and Black Sea have drawn the attention of the GFCM, which has launched a series of initiatives addressing the sustainability of coastal and marine aquaculture in its economic, social and environmental dimensions as well as governance. As a result, an in-depth reflection has started to identify new working methods supporting the development of aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea and to consolidate the work of the GFCM Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ).

At its thirty-seven session (May 2013, Croatia), recognizing the need to urgently tackle environmental and socio-economic concerns in order to ensure the sustainable development of aquaculture in its competence area, the GFCM decided to set up a regional aquaculture multi-stakeholder platform (AMShP) to enhance dialogue and facilitate visioning, priority-setting and consultation.

On the occasion of the ad hoc meeting to launch the GFCM Aquaculture Multi-stakeholder Platform (AMShP), participants discussed common challenges and opportunities for Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture and identified key elements for implementing this instrument at the regional level.

The GFCM AMShP is based on a long-term vision of sustainable aquaculture development shared between GFCM Members, including all aquaculture stakeholders and partner organizations. It should provide an environment where national issues are addressed with the aim of providing regional solutions. All its activities should be in line with the principles enshrined in the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF), and in particular with the provisions of Art. 9 on aquaculture development following an ecosystem management-based approach. The platform is also consistent with the GFCM Framework Programme, more specifically with its work programme (WP3) on Promoting the role of aquaculture for food security and economic growth.

The AMShP builds upon the major outputs and results achieved by AquaMed and other GFCM projects on aquaculture such as InDAM, SHoCMed, LaMed and MedAquaMarket as well as by SIPAM.

Participants have agreed on the following aspects relating to the AMShP: (i) nature and scope of the AMShP; (ii) main challenges, objectives and beneficiaries; (iii) benefits; and (iv) functioning and general approach.

## I. Nature and scope of the AMShP

The AMShP is proposed to act as:

- A **consultative body** supporting the CAQ in providing advice to the GFCM.
- A **working space** for dialogue and exchange of experience, information and knowledge among private, public and civil society stakeholders in order to propose innovative solutions to challenging issues relating to aquaculture development;
- A **pragmatic instrument** permanently open to researchers, national administrations, farmers and farmers' organization, interested private and public stakeholders, NGOs, civil societies and to other economic sectors and initiatives similar in scope, as appropriate;
- A **meeting point** between producers, researchers and administrators enabling the participation of farmers and farmers' organizations in decision-making and facilitating discussion among different thematic groups;
- A tool providing a **common ground** to capitalize on outcomes, best practices and lessons learnt from other relevant projects and initiatives and promote a level playing field;
- A **link** with other international and national/mirror platforms or similar structures;
- A **regional hub** to share results and outputs between members and with all GFCM partner organizations.

## II. Main challenges, objectives and beneficiaries

### *Challenges*

The AMShP should address the following challenges:

- Overcome aquaculture constraints linked to regional social and economic circumstances and conditions;
- Implement ecosystem management-based tools and support an integrated coastal zone management approach;
- Improve markets for aquaculture products and the diversification of the industry, considering the need to integrate small and medium-size producers in order to access markets and modern supply chains;
- Foster interaction and cooperation among different development systems at various levels of sector maturity in the region;
- Improve working conditions in aquaculture and promote aquaculture workers' welfare.

### *Objectives*

The AMShP should support the activities undertaken by the GFCM in the field of aquaculture in order to facilitate a wider involvement of aquaculture stakeholders and contribute to CAQ technical advice to the GFCM to promote the sustainable development of aquaculture in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

In particular, the Aquaculture Multi-Stakeholder Platform should:

- Provide assistance to GFCM Members in the development of policies, strategies, planning and of harmonized aquaculture legislations/ regulations;
- Promote a level playing field in the region providing for an equal access to markets;
- Promote public knowledge and improve the social image of aquaculture and aquaculture products in order to improve social acceptability and to valorize the aquaculture sector;
- Foster industry-driven research and dialogue among research and industry and support an efficient use of research outputs and dissemination of knowledge;
- Support innovation, knowledge transfer and capacity-building in the GFCM area;
- Foster dialogue and information sharing between aquaculture and other economic sectors (such as tourism) in order to identify problems and shared solutions and avoid possible conflicts;
- Develop strategies to assess the environmental interactions of aquaculture, according to present and expected levels of production including possible mitigation measures and valorize positive effects such as ecological services;
- Improve and increase domestic aquaculture production to ensure self-sufficiency and food security, in line with sustainable development principles.

### ***Beneficiaries***

The main beneficiaries of the work carried out by the AMShP will be:

- Stakeholders and decision-makers dealing with aquaculture and other decision-makers involved in related sectors;
- Stakeholders in the value chain: farmers, farmers' organizations and related industry actors;
- International and regional organizations;
- Research and education institutions;
- Capture fisheries sector;
- Consumers and civil society at large.

## **IV. Benefits for Mediterranean and Black Sea countries**

The AMShP should help:

- Support the organization of activities in order to improve decision-making between farmers, associations and public administrations;
- Strengthen harmonization and compliance to regulations;
- Improve strategies to be implemented by the departments in charge of fisheries and aquaculture (or other equivalent bodies);
- Bring regional and specific solutions to country-level issues;
- Direct international funding resources to national challenges;
- Facilitate partnerships and cooperation between countries of different subregions within the GFCM area (e.g. South–North; Mediterranean–Black Sea, etc.);
- Strengthen capacity in the field of research and development, and support partnerships in research projects;

- Support the harmonization of national legislations;
- Minimize space competition in coastal zones.

## V. Functioning and general approach

### *Institutional status*

The institutional status of the AMShP should be defined at the ninth CAQ session (March 2015, Morocco).

### *Strategic approach*

The Aquaculture Multi-Stakeholder Platform should operate through the following strategic areas:

- Allocated zones for aquaculture and spatial planning;
- Aquaculture and environment interactions;
- Disease management and aquatic animal health;
- Governance and regulatory frameworks;
- Quality and safety of products, markets and consumers;
- Research, knowledge sharing and technology transfer;
- Sustainable feed production and management;
- Technology innovation and diversification;
- Social responsibility; and
- Empowerment of aquaculture farmers' organizations

To ensure better functionality, efficient work and optimal results, these strategic areas will be articulated according to four main forums based on cross-cutting issues, thus avoiding overlaps between strategic areas:

- Forum 1: **Regulatory framework** for strategic areas a) and d);
- Forum 2: **Environment and disease management** for strategic areas b) and c);
- Forum 3: **Quality and market of aquaculture products** for strategic areas e), j) and i);
- Forum 4: **Technology and feed production** for strategic areas f), g) and h);

Communication strategies and capacity-building are transversal issues to be tackled within each of the ten strategic areas outlined.

### *Modus operandi*

During a phasing-in period (until March 2015), the activities of the platform shall be coordinated by the GFCM Secretariat in collaboration with the CAQ Working Groups coordinators. An **ad hoc steering committee** will be in charge of facilitating this work. The steering committee will perform its functions on a voluntary basis, using mainly online facilities (e-mail, SharePoint, web, etc.), and support the activities of the GFCM Secretariat carrying out the following tasks:

- Prepare a concept note for a project proposal, including fund-raising options for the support of the platform activities;
- Identify immediate and long-term actions to make the platform operational building upon existing knowledge and cooperation in each strategic area;

- Stimulate participation from the industry and farms, research institutions as well as any other interested partner who could be actively involved in each strategic area;
- Develop position papers and propose, facilitate and assess projects that reflect the interests and activities of the strategic areas;
- Explore possible interactions between strategic areas and synergies with other regional platforms and/or national/mirror platforms;
- Explore possibilities to organize a high-level event in 2014 or early 2015 to discuss key aquaculture issues, foster political will for a regional strategy on sustainable aquaculture and enhance the visibility of the regional platform. A preparatory meeting could be held during the first quarter of 2014, in cooperation with GFCM partner organizations and other possibly interested partners (such as Eurofish, IUCN, EATiP, FEAP, WWF, CIHEAM, Infosamak, etc.).

### *Steering Committee*

The AMShP ad hoc Steering Committee is composed of the following members:

1. Mr Javier Ojeda (Spain)
2. Mr Jean Paul Blancheton (France)
3. Ms Giovanna Marino (Italy)
4. Mr Yannis Pelekanakis (Greece)
5. Mr Hayri Deniz (Turkey)
6. Mr Hichem Kara (Algeria)
7. Mr Hassan Nhhala (Morocco)
8. Mr Mohammed Hadj Ali Salem (Tunisia)