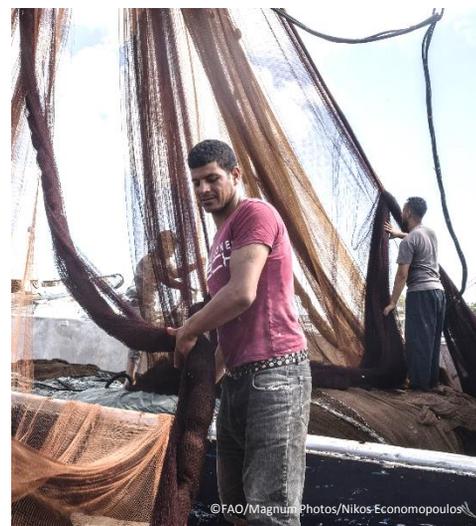




IMPROVING CAPACITY FOR FISHERIES PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT IN THE SOUTH-CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN

The Straits of Sicily is one of the most important fishing areas of the Mediterranean Sea, where significant fleets operate with high fish production. However, the available knowledge on fishery resources and their ecosystems in the region is often scarce. This project was part of a longer-lasting programme (MedSudMed Project, “Assessment and Monitoring of the Fishery Resources and the Ecosystems in the Straits of Sicily”), which was created to strengthen national and regional research capacities and to promote scientific cooperation in the southern part of the central Mediterranean for the assessment and monitoring of fishery resources. The project aimed to consolidate and further develop the results achieved so far, and to launch additional cooperative work. MedSudMed became operational in 2001, based on requests by countries in the the Straits of Sicily and funding from Italy. Since 2007 the project is also cofunded by the European Union (EU) Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG-MARE). The present report highlights the achievements obtained during the 5th year of financial contributions by DG-Mare to the MedSudMed project.



WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The project successfully reinforced the basis for the cooperative management of shared multispecies fisheries in the four MedSudMed participating countries: Italy, Libya, Malta and Tunisia. This was achieved through the implementation of subregional research programmes, the establishment of scientific networks, and improved national capacity building. Fisheries scientists and staff in fisheries research institutions/administration acquired new technical skills in data collection, data processing and management, and fisheries assessment methods and management. In addition, great importance was given to the identification of nurseries and spawning grounds in the south-central Mediterranean Sea. Experts from the four participating countries contributed to this activity, resulting in enhanced scientific cooperation, data sharing and information flow; as well as the production of maps of the distribution of spawning areas and nurseries of several demersal and small pelagic species, defining potentially sensitive areas for these species.

IMPACT

Positive social and environmental benefits were gained from the project for countries and stakeholders, which are now better able to manage fisheries resources. In addition, all the activities devoted to the analysis and quantification of small-scale fisheries during the project were designed to improve the living conditions of small-scale artisanal fishers in Libya and Tunisia.

KEY FACTS

Contribution

USD 535 418

Duration

October 2016 – February 2018

Resource Partners

The European Union (EU)

Partners

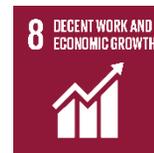
Istituto per l’Ambiente Marino Costiero-Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (Institute for Coastal Marine Environment-National Research Council), Italy; Marine Biology Research Centre, Libya; Ministry for the Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change, Malta; *Institut National des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer* (National Institute of Marine Science and Technologies), Tunisia

Beneficiaries

Fishery research institutes and fisheries sectors of the participating countries: Italy, Malta, Libya and Tunisia

ACTIVITIES

- Four sessions of MedSudMed Working Group on Small Pelagic Fisheries Resources (WG-SP) organized; and information on the spatial distribution of *Trachurus trachurus* achieved.
- FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No. 613, “Handbook for fisheries socio-economic sample survey - principles and practice” published.
- Three sessions of MedSudMed Working Group on Demersal Fisheries Resources (WG DEM) and four sessions of WG-SP organized, focusing on fisheries resources and fisheries, to progress towards the characterization of fisheries as baseline knowledge for fisheries management in the area.
- Development of programme for fisheries socio-economic data collection in Tunisia supported, to verify and test feasibility of socio-economic survey at national scale, and provide national research institutions and fisheries administrations with data on socio-economic aspects of fisheries and expertise to collect and analyse them.
- Stock assessment of *Parapenaeus longirostris* and *Merluccius merluccius*, and preliminary stock assessment of *Trachurus trachurus* and *Mullus barbatus* carried out.
- MedSudMed Working Group on Demersal Elasmobranchs established, resulting in improved knowledge on demersal elasmobranchs, sharing of survey data, and preparation of distribution maps for elasmobranchs in the entire project area.
- Eight MedSudMed documents and meeting reports finalized and disseminated; 17 scientific articles submitted for monography of scientific peer-reviewed journal, *Hydrobiologia*.
- Distribution maps of density and biomass of elasmobranchs produced; as well as distribution maps of spawning areas of *Engraulis encrasicolus* and *Sardinella aurita*.
- Eight training courses conducted, covering several aspects of fisheries sciences, including methods for basic biology investigations and data processing for mapping spatial distribution and stock assessment; more than 100 were experts trained.
- First Summer School in Quantitative Fisheries Stock Assessment organized, together with the other FAO Marine and Inland Fisheries Branch-led Mediterranean Projects, the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean and the European Commission Joint Research Center.



Project Code

FAO: GCP/INT/269/EC

ID Donor: SI2.741737

Project Title

MedSudMed Year 5 Assessment and Monitoring of the Fisheries Resources and the Ecosystems in the Straits of Sicily

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